



# LIFELINK

## NEWSLETTER

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## How a \$20 Bar Tab can turn into a Million Dollars-Worth of Stress

Imagine you went to close out your bar tab before heading home on a Saturday night and the bartender said, "That'll be \$10,000." You stare at the bartender, stunned. As he starts to correct his statement, you let out a sigh of relief, assured that there is no way that's your tab. The bartender continues: "I meant \$1 million."

Research shows that the initial cost of driving under the influence (DUI) can average \$10,000 – and that's just within six months of the incident. That money may be spent on initial fees which include bail, car towing, DUI classes, court-imposed fines, attorney fees, ignition interlock devices and more. But the financial stress doesn't stop there.

When the fictitious bartender corrects himself to say \$1 million, he's referring to the bigger picture. After receiving a DUI, depending on the state, annual auto insurance rates increase significantly. In California, for example, the average Good Driver insurance discount is \$1,307. After receiving a DUI, the same driver might pay up to \$4,001 more. That is an annual increase of \$2,694, which would likely total tens of thousands of dollars over your lifetime. And that's just the tip of the iceberg. Say you're planning to retire from the Navy as an E-7 at age 39. Your military retirement pension of one-half of your base pay will amount to \$996,000 over 40 years. Your commissary and exchange privileges will save you an estimated \$52,000 and medical insurance savings will equate to about \$61,000 over that time period. That totals a real loss of **\$1 million** over your lifetime if you are separated from the Navy for a DUI.

Knowing the financial burdens – in addition to the health, career and safety risks – would you still drink and drive? Or would you remember how hard you've worked to earn your living and your rank? Plan for a safe ride home *before* you go out for the night—and stick to it. The Keep What You've Earned campaign's **Pier Pressure** mobile application has the tools you need to drink responsibly, including a blood alcohol content estimator, calorie calculator (which tells you how many pushups it will take to burn off those beers) and one-click access to Uber and Lyft ride-sharing apps. Pier Pressure is available on the **Apple App Store** and **Google Play**.

Drink responsibly and keep what you've earned. Don't let a \$20

tab turn into a \$10,000 (or \$1,000,000) budget-buster. Even driving minimally buzzed can increase your risk for a car accident by 46 percent. Know your limit before you get there, don't try to "keep up" with others and plan in advance for a safe ride home. You've earned it, don't waste it.

*April is both Alcohol Awareness Month and Stress Awareness Month. For more tips on responsible drinking brought to you by Navy Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention's Keep What You've Earned campaign, click [here](#). If you think you may be struggling with alcohol, contact your local Drug and Alcohol Program Advisor (DAPA). For additional tips to help you, your shipmates and your family navigate stress, visit the NavyNavStress blog at <https://navstress.wordpress.com>.*

**BONUS:** The Keep What You've Earned campaign has an infographic series that you can share through your command or personal social media accounts illustrating the financial impacts of a DUI. Visit the campaign's **Flickr page** to access them today.



## Lifelink Spotlight

### Veteran Helps Advance the Conversation on Means Safety

As Army veteran Jay Zimmerman notes, a service member's firearm is "almost like another appendage." Zimmerman understands military culture and has a love for firearms, stemming from frequent hunting trips with his grandfather while growing up in the Appalachian region. Today he's advocating for service members and veterans to take practical steps to promote safety when it comes to firearms and dealing with stress or psychological health concerns.

A former Army medic, Zimmerman served in multiple combat zones. His service weapon was essential to his and his comrades' safety. But after navigating psychological health challenges and losing a good friend and fellow soldier to suicide, he reached a crisis point. His relationship with his wife, with whom he reconnected during the heat of his crisis, drove him toward the decision to seek help. He now champions the impact that taking simple precautions has had on his life, like storing his guns safely so that he can't make any "rash decisions" when he hits a rough patch. In a recent **National Public Radio story**, Zimmerman explains that he stores his guns disassembled and separately from ammunition. He's also made a special arrangement with friends "if things get really bad" so that they can hold onto his weapons until he feels like it's safe to reclaim them.

Zimmerman is now a peer counselor at a local VA medical center and has connected with a meaningful purpose. He travels to speaking engagements and conferences across the country sharing his personal story and encouraging service members and vets to take similar precautions when they're not feeling like themselves. He also coaches therapists and clinical providers on how to productively discuss means safety with patients.

Zimmerman recognizes the perceptions that may influence a service member's decision to voluntarily store their personal firearms or practice safety at home (such as storing them disassembled). He notes that many are worried that they'll "lose the gun that [they] carry pretty much all the time." But he emphasizes that this isn't the case, illustrating how this personal decision can be both empowering and life-saving. His decisions to seek help and protect himself have led him to a fulfilling life after the Army, raising his daughter and supporting other veterans who may not feel comfortable speaking with "someone in a white coat."

Firearms are the most commonly used and highly lethal means (methods) of suicide across military and civilian populations. Practicing simple steps to promote means safety can be life saving, such as those that Jay Zimmerman promotes. Check out his story [here](#). For more information on means safety, follow the *Every Sailor, Every Day* campaign on **Facebook**, **Twitter** and **Wordpress**, or visit the Navy Suicide Prevention website [here](#).

## Plan of the Week Notes

*Below are sample Plan of the Week notes aligning with topics covered by the Every Sailor, Every Day campaign during the month of April:*

1. Feeling tense? Take two minutes to sit in a comfortable upright position with your eyes closed or gazing at a neutral point. Count your inhales and exhales. When you reach eight, start again. For more quick stress busters, check out [www.facebook.com/navstress](http://www.facebook.com/navstress).
2. Analysis of the recent National Survey on Drug Use reveals a strong association between prescription drug misuse and suicidal ideation. You can decrease risk of misuse by properly disposing of your unused, unwanted or expired prescription drugs on Saturday, April 29th during National Prescription Drug Take Back Day. For local Take Back locations, visit [www.dea.gov](http://www.dea.gov). For more information on DoD Drug Take Back efforts, visit <https://go.usa.gov/xXQ5d>.
3. Regardless of the accused or survivor's gender, research indicates that sexual assault is associated with an increased risk of stress injury and/or suicide-related behavior. Sexual assault has been linked to both physical and psychological effects including depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Protecting Our People Protects Our Mission. Find resources to get involved here: <https://go.usa.gov/xXQRY>.
4. From financial troubles to substance abuse, relationship issues, return from deployment and more, the **Be There Peer Support Call and Outreach Center** can help. Dial 1-844-357-PEER or text 480-360-6188 to be connected with a peer counselor who will be there for you.

## Alarmed by a Friend's Social Media Post? Reach Out.

If you notice a friend posting thoughts about suicide on social media take the post seriously. Even if it seems like he or she may be joking or casually venting, remember that people may use humor to hide their pain. Reach out to your friend and ask if he or she is considering suicide. Let your friend know that you are concerned and care about their well-being, and offer that you are ready to listen if they need someone to talk to. Share contact information for resources such as a chaplain, trusted leader, or **Military Crisis Line** (1-800-273-TALK, Option 1). If you don't feel comfortable reaching out or if the post indicates that the person is at imminent risk, report it to the social media site's safety team so that a member of the team can reach out to the person and offer options for seeking help. Read more about reaching out to Facebook, Twitter and Instagram safety teams [here](#).

## Behavioral Health Quick Poll Launches this Month

### News and Resources

How Proper Medication Use Helps You Stay Mission Ready  
[Real Warriors Campaign](#)

Helping Your Military Child Navigate Transitions  
[NavyNavStress](#)

The Impact of Sleep Loss on Performance  
[HPRC](#)

MilParent Power Strengthens Families  
[Military OneSource](#)

How Stress Impacts Your Heart Health  
[NavyNavStress](#)

Frank Cable Supply Turns Stress to Success  
[Navy.mil](#)

Why Grit Matters  
[HPRC](#)

Learn to Recognize, Control Post-Deployment Anger  
[DCoE](#)

Navy's Pier Pressure Mobile App Makes a Perfect "Mixer" for Alcohol Awareness Month  
[Navy.mil](#)

### Current and Upcoming Events

**Stress Awareness Month**  
April

**Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month**  
April

**Alcohol Awareness Month**  
April

**Month of the Military Child**  
April

**Prescription Drug Take Back Day**  
April 29

**SPC Training Webinars**  
April 20, 1200 CT  
April 26, 1000 CT  
[Register here](#)

This month 42,000 Sailors will have the opportunity to participate in the Navy's Behavioral Health Quick Poll (BHQP).

The BHQP is developed by the 21st Century Sailor Office's **Operational Stress Control (OSC) Program** and is conducted every two years. The poll—which is approved by the Chief of Naval Operations—examines the amount and sources of stress Sailors are experiencing, how Sailors react to stress and its impacts, as well as perceptions and knowledge of available resources.

"We know that Sailors experience a myriad of challenges both on and off the job," said Leanne Braddock, Navy OSC Program Manager. "The Behavioral Health Quick Poll is an opportunity for Sailors to shape the programs and policies that can help them stay mission-ready and better respond to the challenges associated with Navy life."

Participation in the BHQP takes less than ten minutes. The poll consists of 17 multiple choice questions that are completed and submitted online. Sailors will be invited to participate at random using a computer-generated "token" and will be notified of their selection via email. Participation is anonymous and responses cannot be traced back to an individual.

"Operational Stress Control is a shared responsibility between Sailors, leaders and families," said Braddock. "Sailors' perceptions and insights are among the primary drivers behind our approach to developing tools that promote good physical, psychological and behavioral health."

The BHQP has been conducted since 2009. Results of previous polls have been used to identify trends and connections between sources of stress in the fleet and recommend operational changes to reduce stress; establish and revise OPNAV policy and requirements; create training courses for junior leaders, senior leaders and family members; and more.

The OSC Program seeks to create an environment where Sailors, commands and families can thrive in the midst of stressful operations. The OSC Program is governed by OPNAVINST 6720.1A and offers **courses for deckplate supervisors and unit leaders** to better enable them to build trusting relationships with their Sailors, identify and mitigate stress, and strengthen their commitment to every Sailor, every day.

In addition to these courses – which are delivered via mobile training team (MTT) at no cost to the command – the OSC Program conducts research on several key issues impacting Sailors in their personal and operational environments, such as **sleep deficits and the benefits of circadian watch bills**. The program also offers tips to navigate life's many challenges through its *Every Sailor, Every Day* campaign; a digital communications campaign run in collaboration with the Navy Suicide Prevention Program.

April is Stress Awareness Month. Participating in this year's Behavioral Health Quick Poll is a great way to help the Navy become more aware of the stress issues that Sailors are currently facing in order to better support you, your command and your family.

Learn more about the Behavioral Health Quick Poll and get tips to help you and your family navigate stress by liking Navy Operational Stress Control on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/navstress](http://www.facebook.com/navstress)), following on Twitter ([www.twitter.com/navstress](http://www.twitter.com/navstress)) and subscribing to the NavyNavStress blog (<https://navstress.wordpress.com>).

