



# LIFELINK

## NEWSLETTER

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### Self-Referral: Seeking Help Early is a Sign of Strength

The Navy’s non-disciplinary self-referral process allows you to seek help and remain an active duty Sailor. The intent of a self-referral is to provide you with a means of intervening in the progression of alcohol abuse early enough to get help before a problem becomes more advanced and difficult to resolve without risk of disciplinary action. More information, including contact info for the Navy Alcohol Abuse Prevention, (NAAP) office, is available on the NAAP website at <https://go.usa.gov/xEejq>. Refer to **OPNAVINST 5350.4D** for details and official policies.

The following list answers some frequently asked questions about self-referral.

**What exactly constitutes a self-referral?** A self-referral is an event personally initiated by the member. A member may initiate the process by disclosing the nature and extent of their problem to one of the following personnel who is actively employed in their capacity as a qualified self-referral agent: Drug and Alcohol Programs Advisor (DAPA); Commanding Officer, Executive Officer, Officer-in-Charge, or Command Master Chief (CMDM)/Chief of the Boat (COB); Navy Drug and Alcohol Counselor (or intern); Department of Defense medical personnel, including Licensed Independent Practitioner (LIP); Chaplain; or Fleet and Family Support Center Counselor.

**When should someone consider self-referring?** A member should consider self-referring if they desire counseling and treatment to address potential, suspected, or actual alcohol abuse or misuse.

**What could make a self-referral invalid, in which case the member would not be shielded from disciplinary action?** To be valid, the self-referral must be made only to one of the qualified self-referral agents listed above; it must be made with the intent of acquiring treatment, should treatment be recommended as a result of the screening process; and there can be no credible evidence of the member’s involvement in an alcohol-related incident (ARI).

**What do we mean by “non-disciplinary”?** This means that a member may not be disciplined merely for self-referring and participating in the resulting process of screening and treatment, if recommended. It doesn’t mean that a member is necessarily shielded from the possible administrative consequences of treatment failure or the administrative or disciplinary consequences of refusing to participate in treatment recommended by the post-referral screening process.

**Does making a self-referral count as an ARI?** No.

**Will other people know if I self-refer?** Yes. The member’s chain of command, and others on a need-to-know basis, will be informed.

**Will a self-referral mean that the Navy looks at other parts of my life/job performance?** Alcohol use issues are complex, and evaluation and treatment require a holistic view. Relevant information on the member’s work and personal life may be required as part of the screening and treatment processes.

**Can I re-enlist if I’ve self-referred?** Yes.

**What are the levels of alcohol treatment?** If treatment is recommended, the command will coordinate with the appropriate SARP facility based on availability, locality, and type of treatment needed. Levels of treatment are: Level 0.5 Early Intervention/Education Program; Level I Outpatient Treatment; Level II Intensive Outpatient/Partial Hospitalization (IOP) and Level III Inpatient Treatment.

**Will I lose my security clearance for self-referring?** No. Your security clearance may be jeopardized if your screening recommends treatment and you subsequently refuse that treatment.



## Lifelink Spotlight

### Real Stories: A Framework for Depicting Suicide in the Entertainment Industry

By Elly Stout, MS

Suicide Prevention Resource Center Director

For more than 15 years, **SPRC** has helped connect prevention practitioners to the latest evidence and tools for safe and effective suicide prevention messaging. We were part of developing the first national **recommendations for news media reporting** on suicide and continue to help promote them. We also provided key input on the National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention's **Framework for Successful Messaging**.

As part of our ongoing work to provide resources, SPRC participated in an **Action Alliance** meeting with suicide prevention experts and entertainment industry representatives to identify guidance for depicting suicide in entertainment storylines. The result was released this week: the first-ever **National Recommendations for Depicting Suicide**. This new resource can assist all of us in the field to help promote authentic portrayals of people affected by suicide that convey hope and recovery.

We know that certain messaging about suicide can inadvertently increase risk, while messaging that features stories of hope and recovery can have a beneficial effect on people who are struggling. The new Action Alliance recommendations draw on suicide prevention best practice, tailored for practical use in the entertainment industry.

So what does this mean for those of us in the suicide prevention field? Even if we don't connect with large broadcast networks, many of us regularly encounter creative individuals who want to use their talents to raise awareness and promote suicide prevention. Whether we're working with the town playwright, our local PBS station, or family or friends who work in the entertainment industry, we all have opportunities to share this important resource. Let's help promote stories that acknowledge the complexity of suicidal thoughts and behaviors, depict hope and recovery, encourage those who are struggling to reach out, and resonate more deeply with the real experiences many of us have had.

## National Recommendations for Depicting Suicide



## 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. April is Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month (SAAPM). The Navy is continuing the theme "Protecting Our People Protects Our Mission," established by the DoD Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Office and underpins the idea that our people are our most important strategic resource and that operational excellence depends on supporting our personnel, protecting our shipmates and safeguarding team cohesion. Learn more at [https://www.navy.mil/submit/display.asp?story\\_id=109109](https://www.navy.mil/submit/display.asp?story_id=109109).
2. Throughout the month of April, the Navy, along with the rest of our nation, is observing SAAPM. It's up to all of us to target destructive behaviors with active prevention and create healthy norms and communities for our One Navy Team. Check out what Rear Adm. Philip E. Sobeck, Director, 21st Century Sailor, N17, OPNAV has to say about SAAPM in this podcast: <https://www.navy.mil/podcast/podcasts.asp?id=8604&t=>.
3. April is Alcohol Awareness Month, and awareness is key to the practice of mindful and responsible drinking. If you decide to drink, take a conscious approach to consuming alcohol. Mindful drinkers may drink less, but the emphasis isn't on how much alcohol is consumed. It's about an overall healthier relationship with it. Get more tips from the Keep What You've Earned campaign at <https://navstress.wordpress.com/2018/04/02/mindfulness-monday-staying-in-the-moment-during-alcohol-awareness-month/>.
4. April is also Stress Awareness Month and there is no better time for you and your family to check in with each other and yourselves. Take some time to know your zone and learn some strategies for how to keep yourself in the Green at <https://navstress.wordpress.com/2016/04/18/stress-awareness-month-know-your-zone>.
5. Summer PCS season is right around the corner. Predictability and controllability can help you navigate PCS stress. Check out this article for a full list of PCS stress-busting tips at <https://navstress.wordpress.com/2015/06/25/nailing-down-the-details-tips-to-reduce-pcs-stress/>.

## News and Resources

The New Plan to Prevent Veteran Suicides: New Grants, Better Research, More Community Focus  
[Suicide Prevention Resource Center](#)

Rethink Your Risky Behaviors for Better Healthy and Performance  
[Human Performance Resource Center](#)

Suicide Prevention Awareness: It's Not Only About Deployments and Combat  
[Real Warriors Campaign](#)

When Alcohol Use Becomes Alcohol Misuse: Supporting Service Member Self-Referral  
[Psychological Health Center of Excellence](#)

Emerging Technology Improves Ability to See 'Invisible' Wounds  
[Health.mil](#)

Your Chaplain is a Frontline Resource  
[Real Warriors](#)

Recognizing and Seeking Help for Substance Misuse  
[Real Warriors Campaign](#)

Influence Your Stress and Relaxation Responses  
[Human Performance Resource Center](#)

Understanding and Managing Reactions from Experiences of Sexual Assault  
[Real Warriors Campaign](#)

Understanding and Identifying Substance Use Disorders  
[Military OneSource](#)

## Current and Upcoming Events

### SPC Training Webinars

Apr. 25, 12 Noon CDT  
May 9, 6PM CDT  
[Register here](#)

### Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month

April

## Training Helps Families Navigate Stress

Stress is characteristic of service in the Navy, with deployments, reintegration and relocations causing tension for both Sailors and their families. The ability to efficiently navigate stress and build resilience is an integral part of maintaining mission readiness for Sailors and promoting psychological well-being. In addition to the stressors associated with military life, Navy families also deal with typical family stressors: raising children, maintaining their home, dealing with teenagers and handling spousal conflicts.

April is National Stress Awareness Month, and being cognizant of your stressors is essential. Adequately addressing stressors helps prevent chronic and prolonged exposure to stress and its adverse impacts on our health and overall well-being. Navy families now have a training available from the Operational Stress Control (OSC) Program which offers numerous tools and resources to help Sailors and their families navigate stress and build resilience during and beyond the rigors of military life. This training addresses the impact that stressors have on Navy families, focusing on challenges faced by Navy Spouses and their children with tips on how to navigate them.

The Navigating Stress for Navy Families training emerged from needs directly expressed by Sailors and commanders. The **Navy Family Framework** recognizes the importance of integrating Navy spouses and families into education, awareness and support services and understands the role that they play as part of the Navy community. The Navigating Stress for Navy Families training is aligned with this framework, acknowledging that family readiness is key to mission readiness. The training is provided by veteran OSC Mobile Training Teams (MTTs) who have experienced similar challenges in military life. The training is modeled after OSC-required trainings for deck plate and senior leaders that are also delivered by these MTTs.

The course is an hour-long interactive conversation that provides useful and practical tools and techniques to families by introducing realistic scenarios. The course aims to improve families' ability to navigate stress together by:

- **Helping to strengthen spouses, Sailors and families;**
- **Identifying problems with stress early;**
- **Identifying best practices and further developing skills for building resilience and stress mitigation; and**
- **Identifying available resources to help with stress issues.**

Early identification of stress problems is vital. **The Stress Continuum Model** helps Sailors and their families readily pinpoint their stress "zone" so that they can take appropriate action, such as talking to a trusted friend when reacting to temporary stress. The earlier a Navy family identifies where they are in the Stress Continuum, the easier it is to bounce back. The goal is not to be 100% stress-free, but to learn how to build resilience so that stressors do not immediately move a family into the Red Zone.

Navigating Stress for Navy Families is currently available via in-person training. OSC and Commander, Navy Installations Command (CNIC) are working to develop a webinar format for the course as well. For more information or to schedule training, email [oscmteast@navy.mil](mailto:oscmteast@navy.mil) or [oscmttwest@navy.mil](mailto:oscmttwest@navy.mil). Additional OSC resources including education materials, policy and curricula descriptions can be found on the program's [website](#).

