



# LIFELINK

## NEWSLETTER

### Page 1

Protect Your Health, Career:  
Understand CBD, Hemp Policy

### Page 2

August Plan of the Week Notes,  
Lifelink Spotlight

### Page 3

Plan Grassroots Activities Now for  
Suicide Prevention Month

## Protect Your Health and Career: Understand CBD, Hemp Policy

By Ms. LaNorfeia Parker

Director, Navy Drug Detection and Deterrence

Imagine being discharged from the military for something you did not realize was prohibited. Having to face an administrative separation for drug use can be a devastating thing to a Sailor. Understanding the facts about new policy clarifications on hemp and cannabidiol (CBD) products can protect your health and Navy career.

Current policy prohibits Sailors from using hemp-derived products, including CBD, regardless of the product's claimed or actual THC concentration or whether the product was lawfully purchased or used under the law that applies to civilians. Unless a Sailor has a valid prescription, Navy policy is "zero tolerance" for CBD use.

Sailors are encountering CBD products in the commercial marketplace. There has been a boom of advertising around these products, and they are widely available. Make no mistake – commercially-sold CBD may contain tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) which can cause a positive drug test. "Popping positive" could be career ending, which will affect a Sailor immediately and could have long-lasting effects such as access to future veteran's benefits. A positive urinalysis result can be a serious stressor that, in combination with other factors, could potentially increase the risk of suicide.

Risk factors for suicide are complex but often consist of a chain of events leading an individual to feel anguish and hopelessness, with the capacity to be lethal. There isn't usually "one thing" that makes an individual turn to self-harm. We know that Sailors who die by suicide are typically undergoing multiple stressors at home and at work. Those stressors may also increase the risk of substance misuse. Make sure you are educating those around you on this and other Navy drug use policies and watching out for fellow Sailors who may have an issue with substance use. If you can minimize the risk of unintended misconduct, it's one small ACT to help keep you and your shipmates safe.

We understand – Navy life is stressful, and Sailors need constructive ways to navigate that stress. While hemp and CBD products claim to provide benefits such as reduced anxiety, improved sleep and increased relaxation, the research is unclear. There are other proven, safe and legal ways to navigate stress that won't run the risk of a positive drug test.



Check out this post on the NavyNavStress blog that details stress reduction techniques. Recommended tactics include:

- **Exercise regularly.** Cardio and strength training reduce stress levels and keep you mission ready.
- **Get good sleep.** Poor sleep or not enough sleep has a significant negative impact on wellbeing.
- **Eat healthy.** A good diet helps keep your body and mind in shape.
- **Participate in relaxing activities.** Breathing-based meditation and yoga, for example, can improve symptoms and reduce anxiety.
- **Stay connected.** The support of friends and family improves psychological health when facing stress.

For help with a substance or alcohol use issue, contact your local Drug and Alcohol Program Advisor (DAPA) or call 1-866-U-ASK-NPC. More information on Navy drug policy is also available at [www.ddd.navy.mil](http://www.ddd.navy.mil). If you think someone is in crisis and may be at risk of suicide, contact the Military Crisis Line (call 800-273-TALK and Press 1 or text 838255), escort them to the nearest chaplain, provider or leader, or call 911 if danger is imminent.



## Lifelink Spotlight

### Sailors Share Best Practices for Navigating First Deployments

By Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Danielle A. Baker, Amphibious Squadron Five Public Affairs

For many junior Sailors that are new to the fleet and have never deployed, being thousands of miles away from their family and home in the middle of the ocean can be very nerve-wracking. Many have no idea what to expect or how to get through it.

“I was scared,” said Chief Boatswain’s Mate Andre Wilkes, assigned to Beach Master Unit (BMU) 1, recalling his first deployment in 1999. “I was newly married and I was nervous.”

Wilkes said the one thing that helped him get through his deployment the most was the people on the ship around him.

“It comes back to the people you’re with,” said Wilkes. “We’re all missing our families at home so we all had to find ways to make the time go by... If somebody was having problems at home, it was like we all came together to help this person.”

Wilkes said the biggest thing that helped him each day was finding and creating a daily routine that worked for him.

“You just have to find a routine that makes the days pass by,” said Wilkes. “For me, I get up and go to the gym early in the morning. After that, I check my emails and then go to work. I just try to find ways to occupy my time.”

Gunner’s Mate 2nd Class Kimberly Herbert, a Sailor aboard the Harpers Ferry-class amphibious dock-landing ship USS Harpers Ferry (LSD 49), said having a routine and finding ways to improve was a great way to get through deployment.

“Yes, you miss your family terribly but as long as you try to stay busy and don’t always think about them, you’ll get through it,” said Herbert. “Try to think about the next step and what you’re going to do. How can I improve myself here to help improve my family back home?”



U.S. Navy Courtesy Photo

## 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 August:

1. As of Aug. 1, the Keep What You’ve Earned (KWYE) campaign’s Pier Pressure mobile application is no longer available for download or use. Drug and Alcohol Program Advisors (DAPAs) and other stakeholders are encouraged to help spread the word and ensure that Sailors are still connected with other KWYE responsible drinking resources. For more information, see the Navy Alcohol Abuse Prevention website at <https://go.usa.gov/xyTcW>.
2. Now is the time to plan for Suicide Prevention Month in September. Download materials, including the Every Sailor, Every Day (ESED) campaign’s FY 2019 “1 Small ACT” toolkit now from the Navy Suicide Prevention website at <https://go.usa.gov/xyu42>. The FY 2020 toolkit will be available soon.
3. Sailors on sea duty can take advantage of a college funding option still available in FY-19 through Navy College Program for Afloat College Education–Distance Learning (NCPACE DL). NCPACE is for Sailors assigned to Type 2 or Type 4 sea duty commands. Sailors can determine their eligibility for the program and apply through the NCPACE page in the MyNavy Education portal at <https://myeducation.netc.navy.mil/webta/home.html#nbb>.
4. The 101 Critical Days of Summer continues through Labor Day. Many locations are facing extreme heat. Sailors must be mindful of the risk of heat stroke and other heat-related illness at all times. Heat stress can affect anyone under the right conditions. Learn the signs of heat related illness and how to minimize the risk in this article from the Naval Safety Center at [https://www.navy.mil/submit/display.asp?story\\_id=110378](https://www.navy.mil/submit/display.asp?story_id=110378).
5. Real life stories of hope and recovery can motivate seeking help and taking safety precautions during times of high stress. After Army vet Jay Zimmerman lost a fellow soldier to suicide and reached a crisis point in navigating his own psychological health challenges, he not only sought professional help but took simple steps to prevent himself from making “rash decisions” when he hit a rough patch. Check out his story at <https://navstress.wordpress.com/2017/09/18/veteran-helps-advance-conversation-on-lethal-means-safety/>.

## News and Resources

Brain Biomarkers Could Help Identify Those at Risk of Severe PTSD

[National Institute for Mental Health](#)

Summer Safety: Suicide Prevention During the 101 Critical Days of Summer

[NavyNavStress](#)

Facts about Physician Depression and Suicide

[American Foundation for Suicide Prevention](#)

inTransition: Connect to Confidential VA Counseling for Sexual Trauma

[Psychological Health Center of Excellence](#)

Disaster Distress Helpline Provides Immediate Crisis Counseling for Mass Shootings

[SAMHSA](#)

Positive Attitude, Social Support May Promote TBI/PTSD Resilience

[Health.mil](#)

Get to Sleep, Doctor's Orders

[Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center](#)

Does Everything Happen for a Reason?

[Human Performance Resource Center](#)

Reducing Military Mental Health Stigma to Improve Treatment Engagement

[Psychological Health Center of Excellence](#)

## Current and Upcoming Events

### SPC Training Webinars

August 22, 10AM CDT  
September 5, 2PM CDT

[Register here](#)

### World Suicide Prevention Day

September 10

### 101 Critical Days of Summer

Memorial Day—Labor Day

## Now Is the Time to Plan

### Grassroots Suicide Prevention Month Activities

Suicide prevention is a 365-days-a-year responsibility. However, the increased awareness around the issue during September, Suicide Prevention Month, can make it a great time to revitalize and re-engage your shipmates.

Grassroots efforts are key to suicide prevention. These local-level initiatives are powerful, and they can make a real difference in how Sailors think and talk about suicide prevention. You don't have to be a Suicide Prevention Coordinator (SPC) or commander to help spread the word about resources and ways to help those in crisis, although you should coordinate with your SPC and your leadership if you're putting on an event. Here are some ideas to help you plan engagement activities now to be ready for September:

**Download or order materials now in advance of Suicide Prevention Month.** The **Navy Suicide Prevention** program's Every Sailor, Every Day (ESED) campaign has a suite of informational products available for download or order from the **Naval Logistics Library**. These include fact sheets, posters, social media graphics and even videos. Make sure posters are in high-traffic areas, or talk to your leadership about showing the videos at upcoming commander briefings or safety days.

**Plan to participate in and publicize the "1 Small ACT" photo gallery.** "1 Small ACT" is the ESED campaign's message to encourage Sailors to take simple actions to make a difference in the lives of others. It builds on the Navy's Ask, Care, Treat (ACT) model of intervention. The 1 Small ACT photo gallery features "Small ACT Selfies," which are Sailor submitted photos describing the actions they will take to make a difference. Find submission guidelines and materials [here](#).

**Coordinate hosting a "30 Days of Small ACTs" Challenge.** Print and decide where you'll post the 30 Days of Small ACTs Calendar on Sept. 1. The calendar includes ways to practice positive coping skills and self-care, psychological and physical well-being, peer support and more. For some friendly competition and to highlight the relationship between psychological and physical fitness, plan to encourage your shipmates to form small groups or teams and challenge them to complete as many of the ACTs on the calendar as they can. Talk with your base or ship social media account operators now about sharing each day's 1 Small ACT from the Navy Operational Stress Control (OSC) **Facebook** and **Twitter** accounts to promote participation among Navy families and community members.

### Plan and invite participants for guided small group discussions

Host small group discussions with your peers using the ESED campaign's "Sailors on the Street" videos as ice breakers. The videos can be accessed from Navy Suicide Prevention's **YouTube channel** or website. Use the ESED "**1 Small ACT**" toolkit to create a brief discussion guide based off the Stress Navigation Plan talking points and messaging best practices in the toolkit. Address stressors that are relevant to your command environment and shipmates, and include positive coping skills and contact information for local/national support resources.

