



# LIFELINK

## NEWSLETTER

### Page 1

Fall into Healthy Stress Navigation with "Sailors on the Street"

### Page 2

November Plan of the Week Notes, Lifelink Spotlight

### Page 3

Postvention is Prevention, News You Can Use

## Fall into Healthy Stress Navigation with "Sailors on the Street"

Self-care isn't just important, it's essential.

Picture this: You're feeling overwhelmed at work. You have overdue projects piling up, both at work and at home. Perhaps you are deployed or deploying soon and your "to do" list feels endless. It seems like there aren't enough hours in the day, so you skip lunch one day. Then maybe you skip the gym the next, and then by Friday you have cut the number of hours you're sleeping to four hours per night.

Any of this sound familiar?

When we're stressed, self-care is typically the first thing to go, and that only makes matters worse. Good self-care can be a challenge for many and is unique for everyone, but overall includes basic activities that promote physical and emotional well-being.

Autumn is a great time to "fall" in love with taking care of your mind, body and spirit by taking the time to re-evaluate, adjust and establish a cohesive self-care strategy and routine. And this fall, you can gain some inspiration and motivation from your shipmates.

This October, the Every Sailor, Every Day campaign launched a series of "Sailor on the Street" videos, with Sailors from around the fleet sharing some of their personal tips, hacks, opinions and personal experiences with stress, stress navigation and self-care. Real Sailors giving their real take. All videos feature Small ACTs and actionable steps that you can take to help navigate stress, such as reaching out to the [DoD BeThere Peer Support Call and Outreach Center](#) or doing a quick breathing exercise.

You can check out some of the things your shipmates are doing to get a handle on stress by watching these new videos on the Navy Suicide Prevention Branch [YouTube channel](#). Hear some of the ways that your fellow Sailors help out their shipmates in need of stress relief in [episode one](#). Learn some tricks to maintain both psychological and physical fitness in [episode two](#). And, get some pointers on who you can talk to during challenges and how Small ACTs can make a difference in [episode three](#).

Like all Every Sailor, Every Day products, these videos are not a one-off, standalone effort to educate Sailors about stress

navigation. Rather, they offer a sustainable and flexible way to start conversations about stress navigation and self-care strategies between peers and leaders. These videos can be used as ice breakers for Operational Stress Control and/or life-skills trainings and other small group discussions. They can also be shared on social media to help generate conversations and awareness about the importance of self-care strategies.

Don't let self-care "fall" by the wayside this autumn. Even when it seems like every moment should be dedicated to work and personal responsibilities, take some time to incorporate the things that help you unwind and stay healthy. And encourage your friends, family, and shipmates to do the same. Get out and do something for yourself with the people in your life you care about. Take a walk with a friend. Cook one of your favorite meals with a friend or loved one. Work out with a shipmate who may be feeling like their plate is full. Or just be there to listen to someone who needs to talk. 1 Small ACT can make a big difference.

Look out for the Every Sailor, Every Day "Sailor on the Street" videos on the Armed Forces Network and Direct-to-Sailor television. 29-second and 59-second versions of each of the three episodes are accessible on YouTube and can be downloaded from the [Defense Video Imagery Distribution System \(DVIDS\)](#).

For more useful tips on how to navigate stress and build a resilient Navy, check out the NavyNavStress blog [here](#).



## Lifelink Spotlight

### Have Your Fellow Warrior's Back

Traumatic experiences such as injuries can make service members feel as if life may never be the same again. Mental fitness after trauma requires the support of family, friends, loved ones and health care professionals. For Maj. Jeremy Haynes, "Realizing that was like removing a boulder from my rucksack. I no longer carry my burdens alone, and that's what allowed me to achieve my goals."

US Army Maj. Jeremy Haynes was shot four times in a firefight while serving in Afghanistan in 2014. He was told that he would never be able to walk again nor have feeling in his body from the waist down, if he even survived his injuries.

When Haynes' wife, US Army Reservist Sgt. 1st Class Chelsea Haynes, learned that he may never walk again, she says that in spite of seeing other spouses leave under the same circumstances, she made the conscious decision to stay by his side no matter what.

Maj. Haynes felt both physically and mentally paralyzed after his experience, and he constantly felt like he "struggled to reach the top of [his] hill." He experienced depression and even contemplated suicide. His wife knew that she needed to share responsibility with her husband in his recovery and encourage him to trust the process. "Jeremy's journey wouldn't be easy for any of us... As a caregiver and soldier, I knew that my warrior trusted me to have his back," she says.

Maj. Haynes knows that his journey to recovery is a marathon and not a sprint, and understands the importance of resilience. His dedication to his wife, children, country and his recovery motivate him to never give up. This dedication allowed him to take his first steps after his injury just a few months after it occurred. He has learned that mental health care is an integral part of the process of healing both his physical and invisible wounds, and he knows that there is strength in reaching out for help.

Learn more about Maj. Jeremy Haynes' experiences at the [US Army](#) website and at [Real Warriors Campaign](#).



## 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 November:*

1. Maintaining physical fitness is an important part of self-care. For some, the transition from summer to fall can make physical fitness a bit tricky to navigate. Make seasonal changes to your exercise routine as the weather changes. Some outdoor activities that you may have avoided during the hot summer are perfect in cooler fall temps. More tips on how to navigate stress as the season changes are available at [navstress.wordpress.com/2016/11/16/seasonal-self-care-for-military-families/](http://navstress.wordpress.com/2016/11/16/seasonal-self-care-for-military-families/).
2. Preparing for family gatherings during the holidays can be stressful. Curious cousins or obnoxious uncles can make family dinners a disaster, but only if you let them. Plan ahead and alleviate the potential stress before it happens. Find tips for dealing with family interactions at [navstress.wordpress.com/2016/12/20/dont-let-arguments-spoil-your-holiday-meal/](http://navstress.wordpress.com/2016/12/20/dont-let-arguments-spoil-your-holiday-meal/)
3. Do you find yourself running through alternative scenarios of past events in your head or worrying about the future? Mindfulness may be a helpful way for you to focus on the present and relieve stress. It can also have positive effects on your physical health. Learn more about mindfulness at [www.hprc-online.org/articles/Mindfulness-in-military-environments](http://www.hprc-online.org/articles/Mindfulness-in-military-environments).
4. If you or a fellow Sailor are in crisis, the Military Crisis Line can provide the free and confidential support and resources that you need. You can call 1-800-273-8255, text 838255, or visit the website at [www.militarycrisisline.net](http://www.militarycrisisline.net) for 24/7 support.

## New Suicide Prevention Resources

New suicide prevention resources will soon be available on [www.suicide.navy.mil](http://www.suicide.navy.mil). These resources include the new Navy Suicide Prevention Handbook (formerly the Commanding Officer's Suicide Prevention Program Handbook), which will serve as an all hands reference guide on policy requirements, program guidance and educational tools to strengthen local suicide prevention efforts. Other resources include targeted gatekeeper training for defense counsels, families, transient personnel unit staff, instructors and hospital corpsmen. These groups have an increased need for comprehensive suicide prevention, risk assessment and safety planning training due to their frequent contact with at-risk Sailors. Visit [www.suicide.navy.mil](http://www.suicide.navy.mil) > **Command & Leaders** to access these tools beginning mid-November. For more information, email [suicideprevention@navy.mil](mailto:suicideprevention@navy.mil).

## After a Suicide, Postvention is Prevention

### News and Resources

Understanding and Coping with Natural and Human-made Disasters  
[Real Warriors](#)

Mantastic Movember  
[Guard Your Health](#)

Living with Depression: How to Cope with Symptoms  
[Defense Centers of Excellence](#)

When Does Grief “End” in the Loss of a Loved One to Suicide  
[American Foundation for Suicide Prevention](#)

Crisis Center Follow-Up Calls Reduce Risk of Suicide  
[Suicide Prevention Resource Center](#)

Social Support: Your Total-Fitness Strategy  
[Human Performance Resource Center](#)

Be Kind to Yourself: Understanding and Implementing Self-Compassion  
[Defense Centers of Excellence](#)

Evidence-Based Trauma-Focused Psychotherapy  
[Real Warriors](#)

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

### Current and Upcoming Events

**International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day**  
Nov. 18

**Warrior Care Month**  
Nov.

**Military Family Appreciation Month**  
Nov.

**SPC Training Webinars**  
Nov. 16, 8 a.m. CST  
Dec. 6, 10 a.m. CST  
[Register here](#)

Losing a shipmate to suicide is among the most difficult issues a Sailor could face. Various emotional reactions such as anger, guilt, shame, betrayal, and sadness may affect those left behind. Grief differs for everyone, and for Sailors, it can be difficult to maintain a balance between grieving and mission demands. Postvention is essential for psychological wellness in the aftermath of losing someone to suicide.

Postvention describes the actions occurring after a suicide to support those affected by the loss. Postvention efforts can vary based on situations, and may include thoughtfully informing Sailors about the death to minimize speculation, providing one-on-one outreach to those most affected by the suicide, encouraging utilization of support resources and monitoring for reactions.

A supportive environment that ensures psychological and emotional resilience is essential after experiencing suicide. The emotional and psychological effects do not simply go away after the memorial service is over and duty calls again. The **Principles of Resilience** can assist with the recovery process following a suicide, helping promote a healthy grieving process and a return to mission-readiness.

- **Predictability** – Suicide is not necessarily predictable, but a command’s commitment to a healthy and supportive environment can be. Encourage speaking up and model it as a sign of strength. Ensure that support resources such as chaplains, medical, Deployed Resiliency Counselors and/or **Special Psychiatric Rapid Intervention Team (SPRINT)** are available and accessible.
- **Controllability** – After a suicide, it’s normal for things to seem out of your control. The grieving process may seem overwhelming. Be patient with yourself and with those around you who may be grieving differently. Remember that it is okay to set limits and say “No” to things that may hamper the healing process.
- **Relationships** – Our connections with peers and loved ones can be protective factors during challenging times, providing us with a sense of community, hope and purpose. Ask your shipmates how they are doing—and actively listen. Start the conversation and be there for “Every Sailor, Every Day.”
- **Trust** – Trust plays a critical role in withstanding adversity and extends beyond individual relationships. The presence of trust before and after a tragedy promotes a supportive command climate and can help preserve mission-readiness while promoting emotional health.
- **Meaning** – Following a suicide, it’s common to search for answers. While you may never understand the events leading up to the tragedy, leaning on the support of your shipmates and leaders can help strengthen the recovery process by sharing meaning and fostering hope.

November 18 is International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day, a day in which those affected by suicide loss gather in their local communities to find comfort and share stories of healing and hope. Find information on local events on the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention website [here](#). For other suicide postvention resources and support, visit:

- Suicide Prevention Resource Center: [sprc.org](#)
- BeThere Peer Support Call and Outreach Center: [betherepeersupport.org](#)
- Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors: [taps.org](#)

### RELATIONSHIPS

#### Stay Connected

Interpersonal relationships are the glue that keeps units, families and communities together through rough seas. Loss of important relationships and a sense of belonging can increase stress and lead to cracks in one’s foundation of resilience.

