



# LIFELINK

## NEWSLETTER

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### What Does Inclusion Mean for Your Team?

*Editor's note: The following is an article from Master Chief Petty Officer Operations Specialist Jerald D. Baker. Master Chief Baker is the Navy's Lead Command Climate Specialist and currently serves as the 21st Century Sailor Office (OPNAV N17) Senior Enlisted Advisor. For more information, see the [Navy Office of Inclusion and Diversity website](#).*

We are building a Culture of Excellence (COE) in the Navy. Culture is based on our behavior and the norms we create with our people. How you treat the people you serve with is how command climate develops. One of the most important things you can do to build a healthy command climate is to foster inclusivity.

Inclusivity means a culture where all team members are valued and can contribute freely. It's where people can achieve their maximum potential because they are included and respected. During my time as a Command Climate Specialist (CCS), I've learned a lot about organizational culture from the units I visited. One story stands out as a great illustration of how to show real inclusivity in our workplaces.

I was conducting a site visit to a ship. While there, I was invited to attend a Sailor Morale Advocacy Resilience Team (SMART) meeting. The SMART meeting was described to me as being a "Command Resilience Team (CRT) meeting on steroids." Not only were the regular CRT members there, but there were also representatives from the presidents of the Chief Petty Officers Association, First Class Petty Officer Association, the Coalition of Sailors Against Destructive Decisions and the Junior Enlisted Association. The Commanding Officer was there as the Chairman, as well as the Executive Officer and Command Master Chief (CMC), who led this particular meeting. In short, the whole organization was represented – from the most senior to the most junior Sailors.

During the meeting, a young Petty Officer Second Class stood up and stated that the ship's schedule had been very hectic, and the crew had not had a lot of time to themselves to "get in trouble" as they prepared for deployment. The young Sailor pointed out that the recent force move of all single Sailors from the barracks back to the ship was coupled with an upcoming leave period prior to deployment. This would mean that the Sailors would find themselves idle onboard during this downtime, he said.

He was concerned that if left to their own devices, this would be a recipe for a potential uptick in alcohol-related incidents (ARIs).

The CMC heard this and looked around the room. "What can we do?," he asked. The team immediately started discussing steps they could take to mitigate an uptick in ARIs and deglamorize drinking.

Before the meeting was over, there was a plan in place to get game consoles for the ship and to work on tickets for local events and concerts during the leave period. It was all because a young Sailor saw a potential issue and was unafraid to talk about it, even to the most senior officers in his chain of command. That wouldn't have happened in an environment that wasn't inclusive. On that ship, everybody was comfortable with sharing their ideas to make the team better. They trusted that their leaders would listen and act on what they heard.

**We are all leaders in our Navy, and we all have a responsibility to be inclusive — not out of a compliance mindset but out of an ambition for excellence.** Inclusivity has a significant and positive impact on whether our Sailors stay in the Navy. It also increases our competitive advantage and makes us a more lethal force.

The demands of Navy life mean that sometimes we are going to spend more time with our Shipmates than we will with our family and civilian friends. Having healthy professional relationships that are founded in respect and inclusivity is key to how well our team will work together.

Develop a culture in your workplace that allows free thought, seek out opportunities for feedback from your more junior colleagues, and implement the good ideas that come from others; then, watch your command grow into a more inclusive team.



## Lifelink Spotlight

### External Resources to Help SPCs

The Navy Suicide Prevention Program offers many Navy-specific resources on their [website](#), including information on required Suicide Prevention General Military Training (GMT), links to policy documents and downloadable information and materials to assist Suicide Prevention Coordinators (SPCs). The website also links to several organizations outside of the Navy that have tools, training and resources to help. Some of the featured organizations include:

**Military OneSource** is the 24/7 connection to information, answers and support to help reach goals, overcome challenges and thrive. Military OneSource provides information on a wide variety of topics, including money management, spouse employment and education, parenting, relocation and deployment, in addition to psychological health resources. Contact Military OneSource at 1-800-342-9647.

The **Veterans Crisis Line** is a free, confidential resource that's available to anyone. Caring, qualified responders are specially trained to help veterans of all ages and circumstances. Help is available through call, chat or text 24/7. Call 1-800-273-8255.

The **Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC)** is the only federally supported resource center devoted to advancing the implementation of the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention. SPRC offers consultation, training, and resources to enhance suicide prevention efforts in states, Native settings, colleges and universities, health systems and other settings and organizations that serve populations at risk for suicide.

**Real Warriors Campaign (RWC)** promotes a culture of support for psychological health by encouraging the military community to reach out for help whether coping with the daily stresses of military life or concerns like depression, anxiety and posttraumatic stress disorder. The campaign links service members, veterans and their families with care and provides free, confidential resources. Contact RWC at 1-866-966-1020.

**American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP)** raises awareness, funds scientific research and provides resources and aid to those affected by suicide. AFSP is dedicated to finding better ways to prevent suicide, creating a culture that's smart about mental health and bringing hope to those affected by suicide. Contact AFSP at 1-888-333-2377.



## 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 February:*

1. For teens and young adults, dating can be both exciting and confusing. What may start out as teasing or harassing behavior in a relationship can set the stage for physical violence. Teens and young adults may have difficulty recognizing when a relationship turns abusive. They may think abuse is a normal part of a relationship and may be ill-equipped to handle complex situations and confusing emotions. February is Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month. Military OneSource offers a toolkit for service providers and leaders at <https://go.usa.gov/xdYrs>.
2. Winter weather continues, and the Naval Safety Center reminds travelers to practice deliberate consideration of safety in winter conditions. Get plenty of sleep, ideally 6-8 hours before a road trip. Share the details of any road trip with family members or friends. Test your battery and make sure tires and fluids are ready for dropping temperatures. Keep your gas tank at least half-full to avoid gas line freeze. Learn more at <https://go.usa.gov/xdYYQ>.
3. Think heart disease won't affect you until later in life? Think again. Research has found that heart disease is much more common in young service members than previously thought. Heart disease usually develops slowly, and someone with a problem might not have symptoms for decades. You can do something about heart disease now. February is Heart Health Month, so take this time to evaluate your level of risk and learn what you can do to increase your heart health. More information is available at <https://go.usa.gov/xdYYG>.
4. February 24-29 is National Eating Disorders Awareness Week. There is a difference between disordered eating and an eating disorder; however, disordered eating behaviors may become self-perpetuating and progress into a full-blown eating disorder. Eating disorders can have very serious psychological and medical consequences, and can be fatal. Eating disorders are also often highly treatable and particularly responsive to early intervention treatments. Talk to your Primary Care Manager (PCM), and learn more about eating disorders at <https://www.usna.edu/MDC/Eating-Disorders/index.php>.

## News and Resources

16-Year-Mark Cap Removed from GI Bill Transferability  
[Navy.mil](#)

Ring the Alarm: The Crisis of Black Youth Suicide in America  
[Suicide Prevention Resource Center](#)

Helping Military Teams Manage Acute Stress  
[Psychological Health Center of Excellence](#)

Joint Chiefs Say Mind, Body, Spirit All Part of Total Force Fitness  
[Health.mil](#)

Best Practices in Care Transitions for Individuals with Suicide Risk  
[Suicide Prevention Resource Center](#)

Faith Leaders' Guide to Self-Care After a Suicide  
[National Action Alliance](#)

Present-Centered Therapy Versus Trauma-Focused Treatment for PTSD  
[Psychological Health Center of Excellence](#)

Is Vaping Safe?  
[Human Performance Resources by Champ](#)

Integrating Substance Abuse and Suicide Prevention  
[Suicide Prevention Resource Center](#)

How Performance-Based Beliefs Become Self-Fulfilling Prophecies  
[Human Performance Resources by Champ](#)

Shining a Light on Those Wintertime Blues  
[Health.mil](#)

## Current and Upcoming Events

### SPC Training Webinars

February 13, 1PM CDT  
February 27, 8AM CDT  
[Register here](#)

## Five Tips for Building Resilience in Your Relationship

*Editor's Note: The following article is courtesy of the Real Warriors Campaign (RWC). RWC has more information to help active duty, veterans and families on a variety of topics on their website.*

Military life can be difficult for couples. Deployments, temporary duty assignments, PCS moves and transitioning to civilian life can be challenging times. The stress, separation and danger that come with uniformed service can take a toll on any personal relationship.



Yet, through it all, service members must stay mission-ready. Worries at home can distract a service member during important missions or training. Relationship resilience is critical not just to the well-being of service members and their spouses but to unit readiness. The following tips will help military couples build strong relationships now so they can weather the demands of military life, stay mission-ready and have a fulfilling home life.

**Communicate. Effective communication** is critical to the health of any relationship. Talk often and be honest with each other about your feelings to avoid misunderstandings that cause hurt, anger or resentment. Listening is an often over-looked part of good communication. Ask yourself if you're really hearing your partner or just waiting to talk. Maintain eye contact and listen to your partner's perspective—even show you understand by rephrasing your partner's views in a reassuring way—before sharing yours. Pay attention to nonverbal cues like tone and body language. This will make each partner feel valued and understood.

**Strengthen problem-solving skills.** Good problem-solving skills can help you make it through rocky times. Practice compromise during small conflicts, like deciding where to eat, so you can tackle larger issues in the future. Focus on solutions that work for both of you. Think of it as coming up with a winning strategy for your team instead of competing against your partner. Pick your battles. Know which issues are important and which ones to let go.

**Tap into your social networks.** Good partnerships encourage growth as a couple and as individuals. In fact, having a variety of **social relationships** outside your partnership can reduce stress and improve your well-being. It is good to lean on your partner but all your needs might not be met. Family, friends, other service members or military spouses can also give valuable support. Getting involved with activities you care about is a great way to build a social support network.

**Offer encouragement and support.** Life challenges can pull couples apart or bring them together. Partners who support and encourage each other during hard times will build resilient relationships. Show you have your partner's back when they are overwhelmed, stressed or in need of a break. Simple gestures to ease their burden are one way to show you care.

**Reach out for support.** Relationships take effort. Sometimes that means reaching out for support. Couples can build resilient relationships by participating in relationship-enrichment programs, reaching out to health care professionals about any psychological health concerns or talking with a chaplain. However, you don't need to wait until you are facing challenges to seek support. Be proactive. Many resources and programs can help prevent difficulties.

If you or your partner are feeling distress, reaching out is a sign of strength. Contact the **Psychological Health Resource Center** 24/7 to confidentially speak with trained health resource consultants. Call 866-966-1020 or use the **Real Warriors Live Chat**.