

#BeThere for Every Sailor, Every Day.



FY-20 1 SMALL ACT TOOLKIT

For local engagement during 2019 Navy
Suicide Prevention Month and FY-20

Released by Navy Suicide Prevention Program, OPNAV N170F



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FOREWORD

Shipmates,

As the director of the 21st Century Sailor Office, I would like to thank you for your commitment to helping our Sailors live healthy and meaningful lives. Like many of you, I have lost a shipmate to suicide, and like all of you I have resolved to make a difference in the lives of my family, friends and shipmates – not only in asking the tough questions and being there for them, but also in talking about mental health openly, honestly and supportively, just like I would about physical health.

We know our commitment to suicide prevention lasts throughout the year. However, Suicide Prevention Month is an important time to come together as One Navy Team to highlight the ways we can connect with each other to preserve our psychological health and emotional wellness. Though we often look to statistics for calls-to-action, suicide prevention is not about numbers. One Sailor lost to suicide is one too many – and felt by many, including shipmates, friends, family and the entire Navy community. Each of us has the power to make a difference. One small act of kindness can be life-saving. We must remain committed to ACT – Ask, Care, Treat. Be willing to **Ask** your shipmates the hard questions about how they're feeling and if they're okay. Show them you **Care** by actively listening without judgment and paying attention to additional warning signs, like statements about not wanting to live, feeling like a burden, feeling hopeless or discussion of lethal means. Help them get to **Treatment** immediately and escort them to a medical professional or Navy chaplain for safety. We can all utilize positive, preventative measures to care for our shipmates through continuous, honest, active listening and communication.

We must also lead by example and demonstrate the power of taking care of ourselves holistically. We must have the courage and strength to seek help for our own stressors (which preserves our psychological toughness). We must remain committed to one another and to fostering a culture where we communicate stressors openly, honestly and without fear of judgment or reprisal. This year we are also recognizing the Defense Suicide Prevention Office theme "Small Steps Save Lives," an important reminder of the role that practicing lethal means safety plays in keeping ourselves and our shipmates safe during times of increased stress.

Leaders, suicide prevention coordinators, health promotion coordinators, providers and engaged shipmates are critical disseminators of this important message that serves to help preserve Sailor readiness and wellbeing long after Suicide Prevention Month is over.

Very Respectfully,
Rear Adm. Philip E. Sobeck, USN
Director, 21st Century Sailor Office, OPNAV N17





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BACKGROUND

In 2012, the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs, through DSPO and Veterans Affairs Mental Health Services, expanded the weekly recognition of National Suicide Prevention Week to the entire month of September. Navy launched its first Suicide Prevention Month (SP Month) in September 2012. Since then, the Navy has made every September its launchpad for that fiscal year's suicide prevention efforts. To be clear, Suicide Prevention Month is *not* designed to prevent suicide on a single day, week or month. Rather, efforts aim to educate audiences and motivate behavior change through the application of tools that can enable prevention at the individual, community and fleet levels throughout the fiscal year.

Navy Suicide Prevention Program's award-winning Every Sailor, Every Day (ESED) campaign leads the charge for Navy's Suicide Prevention Month efforts and continued engagement throughout the year. ESED aims to reshape the conversation about stress and suicide in the Navy community by promoting proactive engagement and open dialogue and empowering behavior change by engaging Sailors, Civilians and Family Members with practical ways to navigate stress, build resilience, recognize risk and warning signs and keep each other safe.

TOOLKIT PURPOSE

This toolkit is designed for suicide prevention coordinators (SPCs), health promotion coordinators, leaders, providers and anyone who wants to support Navy's suicide prevention efforts. It contains graphics, talking points, event ideas and other materials to refresh local engagement beginning in September 2019 and continuing throughout FY-20, in alignment with the campaign's focus areas. By using the resources and products in this toolkit and on the program's website, you will help your shipmates and community members:

- Promote safe discussion of psychological health and suicide;
- Recognize early warning signs of psychological health concerns in themselves and others, and understand how to seek help and intervene
- Identify sources for treatment and support, and feel comfortable seeking those resources without fear of judgment or impact to their career or security clearance eligibility
- Become familiar with lethal means safety precautions during periods of increased risk or stress;
- Become familiar with Navy's resources, policies and training supporting stress navigation and suicide prevention; and
- Practice simple ways to strengthen their physical, psychological and emotional health and wellbeing and make a difference in the lives of every Sailor, every day.

WHERE TO ACCESS *EVERY SAILOR, EVERY DAY* CAMPAIGN RESOURCES

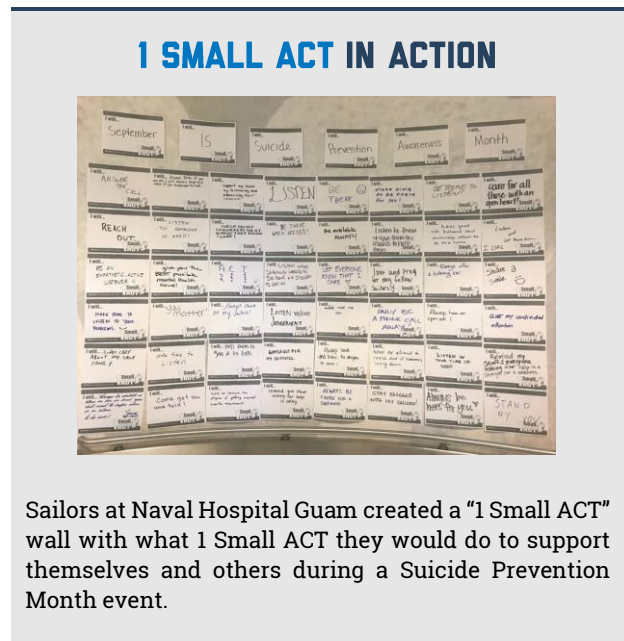


- Website: www.suicide.navy.mil > Every Sailor, Every Day
- Blog: navstress.wordpress.com
- Facebook: www.facebook.com/navstress
- Twitter: www.twitter.com/navstress
- Flickr: www.flickr.com/photos/navstress
- YouTube: www.youtube.com/user/navstress

OUTREACH, ENGAGEMENT & EVENT IDEAS

Efforts to engage and educate your shipmates about stress navigation and suicide prevention can help promote a culture supportive of psychological health, emotional wellness, protective factors, connectedness and seeking help. The ideas below can be implemented locally during September or any time of year to educate and engage your community on suicide prevention and the importance of being there for every Sailor, every day. **SPCs are responsible for working with their command resilience teams (CRT) to ensure that command engagement is ongoing** and fully integrated into other wellness efforts, using September as an opportunity to reenergize the conversation and set the tone for the upcoming year. Send us a description of suicide prevention efforts to be featured in the Lifelink Spotlight by: tagging us in your Facebook or Twitter content; using the hashtag '#1SmallACT' on Instagram, Facebook or Twitter; or emailing us at suicideprevention@navy.mil.

- Spread the Word** and share the 30 Days of Small ACTs Calendar by printing and posting the 2019 30 Days of Small ACTs Calendar (pgs. 23-24) in high traffic areas. Consider sharing each Small ACT with your social networks and encourage shipmates and family members to share theirs. Social media images for each Small ACT are located on our [Flickr](#) page and have both [Twitter](#)- and [Facebook](#)-/Instagram-optimized graphics. This printable calendar and corresponding social media graphics include ways to practice lethal means safety, prioritize self-care and healthy coping skills, invest in health and wellbeing, engage in peer support, reach out to shipmates and more. For some friendly competition and to highlight the relationship between physical and psychological fitness, 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. You can also work with your base or ship social media account operators to share each day's Small ACT from our Facebook and Twitter accounts to promote participation among Navy family and community members.



Sailors at Naval Hospital Guam created a "1 Small ACT" wall with what 1 Small ACT they would do to support themselves and others during a Suicide Prevention Month event.

- Share Stories of Hope and Recovery** to demonstrate that help works and life counts. Visit www.realwarriors.net and www.maketheconnection.net for testimonials from active duty service members, veterans and family members who have recovered from psychological health crises and are living full, productive and meaningful lives. Use the best practices provided in this toolkit to foster a positive narrative. Possible stories to share include:
 - Video profile: Technical Sgt. Joshua Williamson: <https://www.realwarriors.net/personal-stories/joshua-williamson>

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- Being Vulnerable Allowed Me to Get Help: <https://maketheconnection.net/stories/831>
 - It Can't Hurt to Talk to Somebody: <https://maketheconnection.net/stories/798>
 - She Sought Help for Her and her Family: <https://maketheconnection.net/stories/686>
 - Video profile: Sgt. 1st Class David Parish: <https://www.realwarriors.net/personal-stories/david-parish>
- **Invest in Peer-to-Peer Conversations** by hosting small group discussions about topics like having open, honest conversations about psychological health, personal stressors, healthy coping skills and reaching out to personal networks for support when stress is high. Use the 'Sailors on the Street' video PSAs as ice breakers, or the Stress Navigation Plan included in this toolkit (pgs. 13-14) as a conversation starter and discussion guide. In the conversations, highlight the importance of treating each other with respect during the conversations and listening to what everyone has to say. For some, it might be the first time discussing psychological health and it might be a little awkward for them initially. If accessible, bring gun locks, campaign posters and resources to share and pass out. The video PSAs can be located on Navy Suicide Prevention's [YouTube channel](#) or [website](#). Order free ESED materials to give to participants, such as the Stress Continuum Thermometer Magnet (NAVPERS 600034) and the Life Counts Magnet (NAVPERS 60008A) or Business Card (NAVPERS 60009A). Procedures and the form to order these and other campaign items available free of charge from the Naval Logistics Library are available [here](#).

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

STRESS NAVIGATION PLAN

Effective stress navigation doesn't start once stress becomes a distraction, it starts by planning ahead and exploring available resources proactively. This Stress Navigation Plan is a personal list of positive strategies and support resources that you can turn to during times of increased stress and adversity. It can also be used as a "conversation starter" when a shipmate is encountering difficulty and may benefit from resources to enable healthy decision-making.

USE THIS PLAN DURING TIMES OF:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transition and changes Work or career stress Relationship issues Financial stress Feelings of despair/loneliness Grief or loss 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
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CONSIDER THESE STRATEGIES OR ACTIONS WHEN YOU'RE FEELING STRESSED:

- Do a workout
- Watch a favorite movie
- Get outside
- Read a book
- Call a friend
- Listen to music

SIGNS TO HELP RECOGNIZE WHEN YOU'RE STRESSED:

- PHYSICAL SIGNS** change in energy level, muscle tension, etc.
- EMOTIONAL SIGNS** negative thoughts, feeling overwhelmed, easily agitated, etc.
- SOCIAL OR BEHAVIORAL SIGNS** spending less time with friends/family, increased use of alcohol or tobacco, etc.

ASK YOURSELF:

WHAT ARE YOU GRATEFUL FOR TODAY?

WHAT IS ONE THING YOU LOOK FORWARD TO ACCOMPLISHING IN THE FUTURE?

Use our updated Stress Navigation Plan as a conversation starter, discussion guide or personal reference to help address topics like psychological health, personal stressors, healthy coping skills and reaching out to personal networks for support.

- **Send Sailors Home with Messages of Hope** by conducting a weekend send-off. Work with base security and recruit a group of Sailors to hold ESED posters or signs with messages of hope, outreach and/or crisis resources, risk factors and warning signs, lethal means safety tips, stress navigation tips, motivational messaging, contact information for local or national crisis resources such as the Military Crisis Line, SAMHSA's Helpline, Give An Hour, Crisis Text Line etc. and at exit gates on Friday afternoons during peak outgoing traffic times (1430-1600). Reach out to your local drug and



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alcohol program advisor (DAPA) to potentially coordinate with responsible drinking send-offs to promote a range of healthy behaviors (alcohol misuse is a risk factor for suicide).

- **Promote the Importance of Physical Activity and Social Connection as Protective Factors Against Suicide** by organizing a group workout aboard your ship or installation to illustrate both as ways to navigate stress, strengthen psychological health and reinforce peer connection and support networks. Ideas include:
 - A high-intensity interval training (HIIT) style workout using one of the Navy Operational Fitness and Fueling Systems (NOFFS) in this NavyNavStress blog [post](#).
 - A 5K fun run with campaign resources displayed at the starting line/finish line and water stations along the route, including messages of hope, educational materials and contact information for support services. If gun locks are available at your installation or military treatment facility (MTF), provide some as giveaways for participation and display the ESED campaign's lethal means safety posters (links on pgs. 21-22)
 - A yoga class with a "Small ACT Selfie" station where participants can write and share how they practice self-care in their daily lives. Signs are available for download and print [here](#). After personalizing their sign, encourage participants to snap a selfie or group photo and share on social media, tagging ESED social channels (@Navstress for Twitter, and @U.S. Navy Operational Stress Control for Facebook), or using the hashtag #1SmallACT for Instagram. Participants can also send their selfies to suicideprevention@navy.mil with their names and event information for inclusion in the ESED campaign's [1 Small ACT Photo Gallery](#). Following the event, collect the signs and post them throughout high-traffic areas as reminders of the simple ways we can support others and our own psychological health.
- **Spread the Truth and Share the Facts** by working with your command's social media POC and/or installation public affairs office to share educational content and any suicide prevention command events on the command's official pages with the #1SmallACT hashtag. You can offer the sample social media included in this toolkit (pgs. 11-12). Corresponding digital graphics that can be included with the social media messages are located on our Flickr account, here: <http://flickr.com/photos/navstress>. Share the content with your social media networks as well and encourage shipmates, friends and family members to do the same.
- **Connect with the Local Community** by hosting a command-sponsored community service event. Helping others is a great way to build relationships and instill meaning, both Principles of Resilience, as well as find a renewed sense of purpose and contribution. Moreover, community relations (COMREL) is a way to Be There for others in the community, can help Sailors thrive during periods of transition and strengthen belonging – both to the community and within the command.

SAILOR ASSISTANCE AND INTERCEPT FOR LIFE (SAIL) PROGRAM

The SAIL program is an outreach effort that provides rapid assistance, ongoing clinical case management, care coordination and reintegration assistance for Sailors identified during the 90 days after a suicide-related behavior (SRB), the period of highest risk. SAIL is designed to supplement, not replace, mental health treatment. SAIL Case Managers are Fleet and Family Support Center (FFSC) counselors who initiate and provide a series of caring contacts with Sailors at 3, 7, 14, 30, 60 and 90 days following an SRB. SAIL Case Managers also maintain a collaborative relationship with health care providers and command leadership.

SAIL boosts the resources available to Sailors and provides additional support to commands to help reintegrate Sailors after an SRB. Many Sailors prefer a caring contact from outside the command and appreciate the anonymity and support from a voice not inside the “skin of the ship.” A local SAIL Case Manager will contact the Sailor and educate them on the program and SAIL services. Once that contact is made, the Sailor can decide whether to participate in the program.

SAIL is not treatment. Rather, SAIL is a support network to assist the Sailor in navigating support services throughout their recovery process. Suicide prevention requires ongoing efforts to promote health and a sense of community.

During Suicide Prevention Month, SPCs should invite the local SAIL Case Manager to the command to meet the CO. If there is an opportunity such as an All Hands Call or GMT, invite the SAIL Case Manager to talk about the SAIL Program and answer any questions the CO may have.

SAILOR ASSISTANCE AND INTERCEPT FOR LIFE



Why SAIL?

- Evidence shows that SRBs significantly increases the risk of suicide, and evidence-based interventions are needed within the immediate months following SRBs (90 days) to ensure a Sailor’s safety.
- Programs that encourage support, provide ongoing caring contacts and help people navigate medical systems following an SRB reduce deaths by suicide.
- The most effective programs provide a range of different elements of support and collaboration with multiple stakeholders.
- According to the Navy Suicide Prevention Annual Multi-Disciplinary Case Review, about 40 percent of Sailors who died by suicide had a previous SRB.



SAMPLE CONTENT

Plan of the Day/Week Notes

The below plan of the week notes can be used during Suicide Prevention Month and throughout the year. For additional notes aligning suicide prevention and psychological health with other health topics addressed by the ESED campaign, subscribe to [Lifelink Newsletter](#).

- Navy leaders have great influence and impact on their shipmates' sense of connectedness. Front-line supervisors in particular can make a difference because of their unique position—the close quarters and long hours that characterize much of Navy life means lots of day-to-day contact and many opportunities to really get to know your teammates. Supervisors are also knowledgeable about significant events Sailors are experiencing, such as promotion, deployment or family status. Read more about the supervisor's role in suicide prevention here: <https://navstress.wordpress.com/2019/02/27/suicide-prevention-and-supervisors-the-front-line-when-things-get-tough/>
- Addressing psychological and behavioral health needs is essential to maintaining personal and mission readiness, and your ability to be there for others. However, concerns about career implications may lead to apprehension about seeking help. The truth is there are DoD-level policy protections in place to help prevent negative career impacts for those who seek proactive help. In fact, less than 1% of security clearance denials or revocations involve psychological health concerns or behavioral health support. Seeking help is a sign of strength. Further, it's an indicator of the good judgment and reliability needed to maintain a security clearance.
- Take a moment to understand how to reduce access to lethal means. Reducing access to lethal means of suicide and self-harm is key if a person is at risk of suicide. Storing medications and firearms safely and always disposing of medications properly are small steps you can take to help save lives. Many suicide attempts happen during a short-term crisis and 90% of all attempters who survive do NOT go on to die by suicide later. Reducing access to lethal means saves lives.
- Alcohol misuse has consistently been associated with suicidal behavior, according to the National Institutes of Health. Consuming alcohol can lower inhibitions, increase impulsiveness and impair judgment. Alcohol misuse can also lead to social withdrawal, and all of these attributes can lead to greater suicide risk. Seeking help early is a sign of strength. The Navy's non-disciplinary self-referral process allows Sailors to seek help and remain an active duty Sailor. The intent of a self-referral is to provide Sailors with a means of intervening in the progression of alcohol misuse early enough to get help before a problem becomes more advanced and difficult to resolve without disciplinary action. Learn more and get answers to some frequently asked questions at <https://navstress.wordpress.com/2019/04/17/self-referral-seeking-help-early-is-a-sign-of-strength/>
- Suicide Prevention Month is an opportunity to reenergize the conversation and set a positive tone about being there for yourself and others for the upcoming fiscal year. Use this month to find everyday ways to make a difference in the lives of others—and ways to carry that forward into the coming months. Bringing a shipmate a cup of coffee, sharing a meal together, asking how someone is doing or lending a listening ear may seem small, but they can have a big impact when someone is



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feeling disconnected. 1 Small ACT can make a difference and save a life. For more ways to be there for every Sailor, every day, visit www.facebook.com/navstress or www.twitter.com/navstress













- Cultivating a healthy work-life balance is one thing you can do to navigate the stress of Navy life and 1 Small ACT you can do to prevent burnout. The ideas of work-life balance may seem at odds with the duties of a U.S. Navy Sailor. When the Navy calls, Sailors answer. Unpredictable schedules, lengthy hours and assignments away from home are some of the many challenges Sailors face. However, there are ways to optimize your own work-life balance, no matter what your job in the Navy. Some top tips for Sailors, leaders and families can be found here:
<https://navstress.wordpress.com/2019/05/13/mental-health-month-finding-work-life-balance-in-the-navy/>
- Did You Know? Suicide risk is highest in the 90 days following a suicide attempt or other suicide-related behavior (SRB). Access to care is critical, but in some locations can be difficult due to manning and other factors. The Sailor Assistance and Intercept for Life (SAIL) program prevents care from falling through the cracks. Annually, an average of 35% of Sailors who died by suicide had previous mental health care but for various reasons declined to continue those services or didn't return to care when problems resurfaced. SAIL is that continuous caring contact during the first 90 days after an SRB to ensure the Sailor has ongoing resources and support. SAIL is not therapy and does not replace therapy or the care the Sailor may receive from medical and chaplains. It is risk assessment, safety planning and all the additional resources that FFSC offers to support our Sailors.













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Social Media Messages and Graphics

Use the following social media messages on personal or command/organization-operated social media accounts. For additional messaging throughout FY-20, like us on **Facebook** and **Twitter** to share directly from our pages. Additional graphics are available on **Flickr**.

Platform	Message	Graphic (Click to Download)
	<p>Disposing of prescription medications properly and promptly reduces access to lethal means of suicide. It's #1SmallACT you can take to keep you and your loved ones safe. #smallstepssavelives</p>	
	<p>Suicide prevention is working hand-in-hand to help those at risk. Know the warning signs. Practice asking the hard questions. Reach out. Offer support. Follow up. Need a conversation starter? Not sure what to say? Try: "Maybe it's me but I was wondering if you were all right."</p>	
	<p>Practicing self-care is something that should be done 365 days a year. One way to revamp your routine: Try taking a walk – outside in the fresh air if you can. If you are having a mental block, feeling frustrated or feeling like life's daily stressors are piling up, get outside for a quick, distraction-free 10-minute walk.</p>	
	<p>You know your shipmates best. If you see even a small change in their behavior, trust your gut. Reach out, ask how they are doing and actively listen to their response. If needed, connect them with the resources like the Military Crisis Line, Navy chaplains or local outreach resources.</p>	
	<p>Less than 1% of security clearances are revoked or denied for mental health reasons. Be proud of yourself for seeking help and be candid during a clearance process.</p>	
	<p>Break the silence! If you've noticed behavior out of the norm, ACT! Reach out, offer hope and support, and connect them with people & resources that can help, like the Military Crisis Line. Call 24/7: 1-800-273-8255, press 1, text 838255 or chat https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/get-help/military-crisis-line</p>	

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	<p>Refreshers are good. Quiz yourself. Do you know the signs? #ISPATHWARM #1SmallACT</p>	
	<p>ACT when you notice a change – no matter how small it may seem. #trustyourgut #1SmallACT</p>	
	<p>Did you know? Seeking help to promote personal wellness and recovery can favorably impact a person's security clearance eligibility. #KnowTheFacts #ShareTheFacts #1SmallACT</p>	
	<p>Although some are planned in advance, the majority of suicides and attempts are impulsive reactions to stress. Limiting access to lethal methods can be life-saving. #smallstepsavelives #1SmallACT</p>	
	<p>Did You Know? Suicide risk is highest in the 90 days following a suicide attempt or other suicide-related behavior.</p> <p>Annually, an average of 35% of Sailors who died by suicide had previous mental health care but for various reasons declined to continue those services or didn't return to care when problems resurfaced. SAIL prevents care from falling through the cracks and is that critical caring contact during the first 90 days after an SRB to ensure the Sailor has ongoing resources and support.</p>	

Stress Navigation Plan

STRESS NAVIGATION PLAN

Effective stress navigation doesn't start once stress becomes a distraction, it starts by planning ahead and exploring available resources proactively. This Stress Navigation Plan is a personal list of positive strategies and support resources that you can turn to during times of increased stress and adversity. It can also be used as a "conversation starter" when a shipmate is encountering difficulty and may benefit from resources to enable healthy decision-making.



USE THIS PLAN DURING TIMES OF:

Transition and changes



Work or career stress



Relationship issues



Financial stress



Feelings of despair/loneliness



Grief or loss

CONSIDER THESE STRATEGIES OR ACTIONS WHEN YOU'RE FEELING STRESSED:

- Exercise
- Get outside
- Call a friend
- Watch a favorite movie
- Read a book
- Listen to music

SIGNS TO HELP RECOGNIZE WHEN YOU'RE STRESSED:



PHYSICAL SIGNS change in energy level, muscle tension, etc.



EMOTIONAL SIGNS negative thoughts, feeling overwhelmed, easily agitated, etc.



SOCIAL OR BEHAVIORAL SIGNS spending less time with friends/family, increased use of alcohol or tobacco, etc.



ASK YOURSELF:

WHAT ARE YOU GRATEFUL FOR TODAY?

WHAT IS ONE THING YOU LOOK FORWARD TO ACCOMPLISHING IN THE FUTURE?



SEVERE OR PROLONGED EXPOSURE TO STRESS MAY LEAD TO STRESS INJURY. WHILE MOST STRESS INJURIES HEAL OVER TIME, IF LEFT UNTREATED THEY MAY PROGRESS INTO MORE SERIOUS PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH IMPACTS.

IS PATH WARM? KNOW THE WARNING SIGNS

- I** deation: Thoughts of suicide (expressed, threatened, written)
- S** ubstance abuse: Increased or excessive alcohol or drug use
- P** urposelessness: Seeing no reason for living or meaning in life
- A** nxiety: Anxiousness, agitation, nightmares or inability to sleep
- T** rapped: Feeling as though there is no way out of current situation
- H** opelessness: Feeling hopeless about oneself, others or the future
- W** ithdrawal: Isolating from friends, family, usual activities, society
- A** nger: Feelings of rage or uncontrollable anger, seeking revenge
- R** ecklessness: Acting without regard for consequences
- M** ood change: dramatic changes in mood, unstable mood

CONFIDENTIAL, 24/7 SUPPORT FOR STRESS:

MILITARY ONESOURCE:
call 1-800-342-9647
visit www.militaryonesource.mil

REAL WARRIORS LIVE CHAT:
call 866-966-1020
visit www.realwarriors.net/livechat

GIVE AN HOUR:
visit <https://giveanhour.org/get-help/>

CRISIS TEXT LINE:
text 741741

TO PROMOTE RECOVERY
IT'S OKAY TO SPEAK UP WHEN YOU'RE DOWN

SEEK GUIDANCE from a medical professional, support resource, counselor, or a Navy chaplain.

COMMUNICATE with a trusted shipmate or leader to harness support and promote safety.

PRACTICE the strategies you identified above.

IF YOU ARE IN CRISIS AND NEED IMMEDIATE HELP:

CALL Military Crisis Line for 24/7 confidential support at 1-800-273-TALK (8255) and Press 1

TEXT 838255

VISIT www.militarycrisisline.net for chat support.

SPREAD THE TRUTH: SUICIDE PREVENTION FACTS AND KEY MESSAGES

Share the following facts and key messages to reshape the conversation about suicide, encourage seeking help and promote a culture supportive of psychological health. Additional resources to help you convey this information, such as posters and digital graphics, can be found in this toolkit and on www.suicide.navy.mil.

- Protective factors are resources and aspects of our lives that promote healthy stress navigation and good coping skills.** They can be personal, external or environmental. Protective factors against suicide include a strong sense of community and belonging, strong connections with family and friends, comprehensive wellness and good health practices, a sense of purpose and fulfillment, access to health care, and good problem solving and coping skills.
- Self-care is an essential component of good health and can be thought of as a set of survival skills.** Self-care includes basic activities of daily living (such as eating a balanced diet, grooming, getting adequate sleep, exercising and attending to medical concerns). It also includes activities that can enhance psychological and emotional well-being, such as journaling, meditation, social connection, counseling or therapy.
- Risk factors for suicide are complex but consist of a chain of events leading an individual to feel anguish and hopelessness, with the capacity to be lethal (due in part to impacted judgment and access to means).** Risk factors include a disruption in primary relationship, loss of status, feelings of rejection or abandonment, increased substance use or abuse, pending legal/disciplinary actions, transition periods and access to lethal means.
- Annual case reviews consistently reveal that suicide risk is higher when Sailors are experiencing multiple stressors, including transitions, relationship issues and career or personal setbacks.** Active communication is important, especially when a Sailor is alone and away from his or her support networks.
- When it comes to warning signs, remember IS PATH WARM:** Ideation, Substance abuse, Purposelessness, Anxiety, Trapped, Hopelessness, Withdrawal, Anger, Recklessness, and Mood

DID YOU KNOW?



According to Navy Suicide Prevention Program's annual multi-disciplinary case reviews, a majority of Sailors who die by suicide experience a combination of stressors prior to death that have been historically associated with suicides in the Navy. These stressors include:

- Intimate relationship problems
- Loss (death of a friend or loved one, etc.)
- Disrupted social network
- Disciplinary and/or legal issues
- Work problems (performance and conduct, work relationships, etc.)
- Sleep problems
- Financial strain



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changes. These signs may indicate that a person is at immediate risk of suicide. You don't have to see every sign to intervene.

- **Practicing means safety by ensuring that highly-lethal methods of suicide are out of reach during times of increased stress has been proven effective at preventing suicide.** Highly-lethal methods of suicide include but are not limited to firearms and some prescription medications. For added safety during times of increased stress, store personally owned firearms with a gun lock in a secured safe separate from ammunition. Gun locks may be available at your local Fleet & Family Support Center. Dispose of unwanted, unused or expired medications by emptying them into a sealable plastic bag with used coffee grounds or another undesirable substance and throwing the bag and empty bottles in the trash. Use a dark marker to cross out your personal information from the label. The Military Health System has also established a year-round prescription drug take back program using safe, convenient and anonymous drop boxes placed at Military Treatment Facilities (MTFs). Check with your local MTF to see if they are participating in this program.
- **Per OPNAVINST 1720.4B, Sailors can work with their commanding officers and health professionals to arrange safe storage of their personal firearm during a high-risk period.** This applies to all Sailors (both active and reserve) and is in accordance with Section 1057 of the National Defense Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 2013.
- **Seeking help to promote personal wellness and recovery may favorably impact a person's security clearance eligibility.** Less than one percent of security clearance denials and revocations involve psychological health concerns. It's okay to speak up when you're down.
- **Most people who consider suicide do not want to die; they want their pain to stop.** Very few people who consider suicide are determined to end their life. Traumatic life events or jolting changes may surpass a person's ability to cope and cause feelings of hopelessness and burdensomeness. While treatment should be handled by a professional, you can take the first life-saving steps by reaching out, offering hope and seeking help.
- **Suicide risk is highest in the 90 days following an attempt or other suicide-related behavior. Access to care is critical.** The Sailor Assistance and Intercept for Life (SAIL) program offers a series of caring contacts, risk assessment and reintegration assistance following a suicide-related behavior to promote recovery. Participation is voluntary and does not replace mental health services, but is designed to bring together support and tools to reduce risk and promote resilience.
- **1 Small ACT can make a difference and save a life. Be there for Every Sailor, Every Day.** All members of the Navy community should lead by example and take proactive steps towards strengthening



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physical, psychological and emotional wellness on a daily basis, recognizing when it's necessary to seek help.

- **If you notice anything out of the norm from your shipmate, one conversation—1 Small ACT—can open the door for support by breaking the silence and facilitating early intervention.** If you think a shipmate is having trouble navigating stress, ACT (Ask, Care, Treat):
 - Ask – Ask directly, “are you thinking of killing yourself?” or “does it ever get so tough that you think about ending your life?”
 - Care – Listen without judgment. Show that you care “I’m right here with you,” “nothing you’re going through changes how I feel about you, and how great I think you are” or “I care about you no matter what, and we’re going to get through this together”
 - Treat – Get help immediately and don’t leave the Sailor alone. Escort them to the nearest chaplain, trusted leader or medical professional for treatment.



BEST PRACTICES FOR SAFE SUICIDE PREVENTION MESSAGING

The manner in which suicide is discussed in any setting (training, everyday conversation, public messaging, media coverage, etc.) can either motivate positive behavior or contribute to risk. All discussion of suicide should follow guidelines for safe messaging, per the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention.

- **Use objective language.** Describing a suicide attempt as “successful,” “unsuccessful” or “incomplete” frames suicide death as a desirable state. Attempts are either fatal or non-fatal. Additionally, the term “committed suicide” frames it as a crime, which can increase barriers to seeking help by reinforcing negative attitudes. Use “die by suicide” or “death by suicide” instead.
- **Always foster a positive suicide prevention narrative.** Inclusion of data and statistics should not undermine the intent to convey a positive and action-oriented message that promotes understanding of suicide risk and protective factors, encourages active dialogue about suicide and psychological health and promotes help-seeking behavior. The vast majority of those who encounter stress, adversity and/or psychological health challenges do *not* die by suicide.
- **Use numbers with discretion.** A single life lost to suicide is one too many. Extensive discussion of numbers shifts the focus away from preventive actions that can save lives. Avoid presenting suicide as an “epidemic” or common occurrence among a particular community. This can normalize suicide to those at-risk, discouraging positive action and seeking help. Always include appropriate resources within every discussion of suicide, such as the Military Crisis Line.
- **Avoid glamorizing deaths by suicide.** Although “peace” may be a desirable state for those who are encountering adversity, stating that a person found peace by taking his or her life glorifies the act. Dying by suicide may sound more attractive to those who are struggling to cope with psychological pain when it seems like an escape. Always separate the person’s positive life accomplishments from his/her final act.
- **Avoid presenting suicide as an inevitable event or oversimplifying the cause.** Most suicidal people exhibit warning signs, which may be caused or exacerbated by mental illness and/or substance abuse disorders. However, no one should feel as though suicide is the inevitable solution. Discuss risk factors commonly associated with suicide to increase awareness and promote seeking treatment. It’s best to shift the focus away from speculated causes of a single case. Revealing unconfirmed details may lead to generalizations that could normalize the event and hinder postvention efforts.
- **Always provide information for assistance.** To promote help-seeking behavior, accompany discussions about suicide and psychological health with available resources including chaplain support, [Military OneSource](#), or the [Military Crisis Line](#).

Additional safe messaging tips are available at <http://suicidepreventionmessaging.actionallianceforsuicideprevention.org>.

TRAINING AND EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

Annual Suicide Prevention Month Webinar

On Sept. 24, 2019, time TBD, Navy Suicide Prevention Program will co-host a webinar training with Navy & Marine Corps Public Health Center's Health Promotion and Wellness Department. OPNAV N17's clinical psychologist will be presenting. This webinar is intended for leaders, suicide prevention coordinators and gatekeepers (chaplains, first responders, legal staff, etc.) who have frequent contact with at-risk Sailors.

You must have a common access card (CAC) to register for and attend this event. Registration details will be posted to ESED [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) pages and will be included in a [NavyNavStress blog](#) when it becomes available.

Throughout the year we will offer opportunities to hone your suicide prevention skillset. Visit www.suicide.navy.mil > [Command & leaders](#) > [Command Training Resources](#) for more information about available training resources and additional products to use in local suicide prevention trainings.

Annual Defense Suicide Prevention Office Outreach Recognition

DSPO will conduct its annual DoD Suicide Prevention Month Outreach Recognition to honor one exemplary installation from each of the services and one from either the Reserves or National Guard. This recognition honors the installations with the most dedicated and influential efforts commemorating Suicide Prevention Month. Recipients will be recognized for their efforts to be there for service members, their families and DoD civilians by educating, engaging and building community support for suicide prevention.

For recognition consideration, events must occur during the month of September 2019, though they may be sustained beyond that time to promote ongoing engagement. All Navy events must adhere to the safe messaging guidelines included on pg. 18 to ensure that they do not unintentionally place vulnerable individuals at increased risk and convey a positive narrative. Additionally, Navy events should promote one or more of the following ESED campaign concepts:

- The importance of lethal means safety and how to practice that safety during periods of increased stress;
- How to recognize suicide risk factors, protective factors and warning signs;
- Practicing proactive self-care techniques;







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- Encouraging early intervention and seeking help;
- Promoting open, positive and ongoing dialogue about stress, coping skills, psychological health and suicide;
- How to ask the hard questions and start conversations with shipmates, friends and loved ones; and
- Demonstrate practical applications of the "1 Small ACT," "Small Steps Save Lives" and/or "BeThere" messages.

All nominations must be submitted via email to Navy Suicide Prevention Branch at suicideprevention@navy.mil, specific submission requirements and deadlines will be posted to ESED [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) pages and will be included in a [NavyNavStress blog](#) when it becomes available.

ADDITIONAL POSTERS, GRAPHICS AND RESOURCES

The following posters address key campaign topics for 2019 Suicide Prevention Month and can be displayed throughout FY-20. They are available for download from the ESED campaign webpage on www.suicide.navy.mil ([suicide.navy.mil](http://www.suicide.navy.mil) > **Every Sailor, Every Day** > **Get Involved**) using the links below. Full-size versions can be bulk-ordered from the **Naval Logistics Library (NLL)** free of charge. Display them in high-traffic areas including work centers, passageways, bathroom stalls, barracks and mess halls. Links to digital versions of each graphic are also provided for use on social media. For additional posters and graphics, visit <https://go.usa.gov/xUwmC>.

Graphic Thumbnail	Description & Link
 <p>The thumbnail shows a poster titled 'Are you or someone you know on a path to suicide? Know the WARNING SIGNS!'. It features the IS PATH WARM mnemonic and instructions on what to do (ASK, CARE, TREAT). The poster includes a 'Small ACT' logo and contact information for the Military Crisis Line.</p>	<p>Warning Signs Poster</p> <p>Describes immediate warning signs of suicide using American Association of Suicidology's IS PATH WARM mnemonic device and details how to intervene.</p> <p>Social Media Graphic Poster</p>
 <p>The thumbnail shows a poster titled 'PROPERLY STORING YOUR FIREARM CAN HELP PREVENT SUICIDE'. It features an image of a handgun and provides instructions on how to store firearms safely. The poster includes a 'Small ACT' logo and contact information for the Military Crisis Line.</p>	<p>Lethal Means Safety Poster, Version 1</p> <p>Part of an ongoing series addressing ways to practice lethal means safety during times of increased stress.</p> <p>Social Media Graphic 1 Social Media Graphic 2 Poster</p>

 <p>Properly storing YOUR FIREARM can help PREVENT SUICIDE.</p> <p>A few moments to retrieve and unlock a secured firearm can interrupt the impulse and open the door for help.</p> <p>Store firearms unloaded with a gunlock in a secured cabinet, safe or case. Keep ammunition in a separate secured storage location.</p> <p>Per NAVADMIN 263/14, Sailors can work with their commanding officers and health professionals to arrange safe storage of their private firearms during a high-risk period.</p> <p>Help is always available through your local Navy chaplain, Fleet and Family Support Center or the Military Crisis Line at 1-800-273-TALK (Press 1).</p>	<p>Lethal Means Safety Poster, Version 2</p> <p>Part of an ongoing series of social media images addressing lethal means safety during times of increased stress. For use on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Google+ accounts operated by commands, organizations and/or individuals.</p> <p>Social Media Graphic Poster</p>
 <p>SECURITY CLEARANCES AND SEEKING HELP</p> <p>WHAT IS SF-86 QUESTION 7?</p> <p>Asking for help to answer an SF-86 Question 7 asks about seeking professional help for psychological health.</p> <p>WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR YOU?</p> <p>One of the many reasons someone seeks help is to get back to work for their loved ones and to help them get back to work for their loved ones.</p> <p>KNOW THE FACTS:</p> <p>Less than 1% of security clearance denials and revocations involve psychological health concerns.</p> <p>Seeking help to promote personal wellness and recovery may positively impact security clearance eligibility.</p> <p>WHAT DOES NOT NEED TO BE REPORTED?</p> <p>• Seeking help for psychological health concerns • Seeking help to promote personal wellness and recovery • Seeking help to get back to work for their loved ones and to help them get back to work for their loved ones</p>	<p>Security Clearance Poster, Version 1</p> <p>Promotes the positive impacts that seeking help for psychological health concerns can have on one's security clearance eligibility and includes guidance on treatment that does not have to be reported when answering the security clearance questionnaire.</p> <p>Poster Social Media Graphic 1</p>
 <p>SECURITY CLEARANCES AND SEEKING HELP</p> <p>WHAT IS SF-86 QUESTION 21?</p> <p>Asking for help to answer an SF-86 Question 21 asks about seeking professional help for psychological health.</p> <p>WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR YOU?</p> <p>One of the many reasons someone seeks help is to get back to work for their loved ones and to help them get back to work for their loved ones.</p> <p>KNOW THE FACTS:</p> <p>Having a psychological health condition or seeking professional help will not automatically disqualify you for a security clearance.</p> <p>Answer honestly! Seeking help demonstrates good decision-making, dependability, reliability and trustworthiness - characteristics that are needed for clearance eligibility.</p> <p>WHAT DOES NOT NEED TO BE REPORTED?</p> <p>• Seeking help for psychological health concerns • Seeking help to promote personal wellness and recovery • Seeking help to get back to work for their loved ones and to help them get back to work for their loved ones</p>	<p>Security Clearance Poster, Version 2</p> <p>Promotes the positive impacts that seeking help for psychological health concerns can have on one's security clearance eligibility and includes guidance on treatment that does not have to be reported when answering the security clearance questionnaire.</p> <p>Poster Social Media Graphic 2 Social Media Graphic 3</p>
 <p>1smallACT Every Sailor, Every Day</p> <p>Suicide Prevention Through Lethal Means Safety</p> <p>What is Lethal Means Safety?</p> <p>Lethal means safety is the practice of ensuring that highly lethal means of suicide are not used during times of increased stress, when risk of suicide is highest. Practicing lethal means safety has been proven effective at preventing suicide. Suicide risk means include but are not limited to firearms, prescription medications and chemical agents such as alcohol, carbon monoxide, and more.</p> <p>Firearms</p> <p>Firearms are the most common method of suicide in the U.S. and the military. To access and high lethality, however, research shows that there is a high potential for long-term recovery, the likelihood of a recidivist suicide attempt decreases.</p> <p>As part of a broader DOD strategy to prevent suicide and restore hope for the future, the DoD has created the Lethal Means Safety (LMS) program. The LMS program is designed to provide lethal means safety information to all active and reserve military personnel and their families. The program is designed to provide lethal means safety information to all active and reserve military personnel and their families. The program is designed to provide lethal means safety information to all active and reserve military personnel and their families.</p> <p>Prescription Drugs</p> <p>According to the Office of National Drug Control Policy, nearly one third of suicide attempts among veterans involve prescription medication. Prescribed medication is a common method of suicide and is often used to prevent lethal means safety, meaning that they are not removed during treatment. Navy Drug Detection and Deterrence (DDDC) is a program for detecting drug use on active and reserve military personnel and their families. The program is designed to provide lethal means safety information to all active and reserve military personnel and their families.</p> <p>Alcohol Disposal</p> <p>Alcohol is a central nervous system depressant and is a common method of suicide. Alcohol is a central nervous system depressant and is a common method of suicide. Alcohol is a central nervous system depressant and is a common method of suicide.</p> <p>Drug Box Disposal</p> <p>Since drug boxes are available at various military treatment facilities (MTF) for safe, convenient and confidential disposal of prescription drugs, visit www.health.mil for more information.</p> <p>Seeking Help is a Sign of Strength</p> <p>If you or someone you know is considering suicide, call the Military Crisis Line at 1-800-273-TALK (option 1), text 832822 or visit www.militarycrisisline.com.</p>	<p>Lethal Means Safety Fact Sheet</p> <p>Single page fact sheet addressing ways to practice lethal means safety, including firearm storage, use of gun locks and prescription drug disposal. Includes information on accessing free gun locks in the fleet.</p> <p>Fact Sheet</p>



#BeThere for Every Sailor, Every Day.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>1 Suicide Prevention Month starts today. Challenge yourself to 1 Small ACT each day to build healthy habits for yourself and to Be There for Every Sailor, Every Day.</p>	<p>2 De-stress with some belly breathing. Take long slow, deep breaths. As you breathe, gently disengage your mind from distracting thoughts and sensations.</p>	<p>3 Safe homes save lives. Under times of increased stress, store your firearm unloaded with a gunlock in a secured safe, separate from ammo. For more options, check out NAVADMIN 263/14.</p>	<p>4 What you say to a Navy chaplain stays with a Navy chaplain unless you decide otherwise. Text navy311@navy.mil in the "to" line to find chaplain support in your area.</p>	<p>5 Humor and laughter are good medicine for stress relief. Make it a habit to spend time with friends who make you laugh – return the favor by sharing funny stories with those around you.</p>	<p>6 Make a gratitude board. A gratitude board helps keep you grounded in the moment, thankful for what you already have while looking forward to your aspirations.</p>	<p>7 Did You Know: Facebook, Twitter and Instagram all have safety teams ready to assist if you see a concerning post from a friend. Take a few moments to learn about their protocols.</p>
<p>8 The Military Crisis Line is one of many outreach resources. Save the number (1-800-273-8255, press 1) in your phone. There's even a text message number too (838255).</p>	<p>9 Know who your Suicide Prevention Coordinator is? If not, take some time to find out and connect with them this week.</p>	<p>10 Share with a shipmate: Less than 1% of security clearances are revoked or denied for mental health reasons.</p>	<p>11 Talking to a peer can help you gain new trust and perspective to get over a setback. Make it a goal to check in with 3 people you care about this week.</p>	<p>12 Remind a shipmate or a loved one of something they have done that you truly appreciate. Caring is at the heart of connectedness.</p>	<p>13 "Mountain pose" can help you stay grounded. Stand tall with your feet hip-width apart, hands by your sides and palms forward. Relax and breathe deeply.</p>	<p>14 Look for ways to find meaning right where you are. A greater sense of purpose promotes healthy stress navigation, thoughtful decision making and better performance.</p>
<p>15 Don't push through dehydration. Even moderate levels can elevate feelings of anxiousness. Follow the 8x8 rule – get eight 8-ounce glasses every day this week.</p>	<p>16 Take care of yourself with a quick check up for the neck up. Visit vetselfcheck.org to take a confidential and anonymous self-check.</p>	<p>17 Gym time boosts your mental and physical health. Make working out a self-care priority this month. Team up with a friend for accountability.</p>	<p>18 Noticed small changes in a friend's behavior? You don't have to see every sign to ACT! Don't know what to say? Try: "This is awkward, but I'd like to know if you're really all right" to get the conversation rolling.</p>	<p>19 Share a meal with your family or shipmates. That sense of belonging when you share a meal is a protective factor against stress and suicide.</p>	<p>20 Stress piling up faster than normal? Take a few extra precautions to help keep you and your family safe. Visit your local FFSC for extra support.</p>	<p>21 Sleep Tip: Avoid big meals, caffeine, alcohol and sugary drinks before bed – they can throw off your sleep and increase stress.</p>
<p>22 To mentally prep for your next workday, try this tip: Go through your to-do list in your head while standing in line for or brewing your next cup of coffee.</p>	<p>23 Share with a shipmate: Disposing of prescription medications properly and promptly reduces access to lethal means of suicide.</p>	<p>24 Open up. Simply talking with a close friend about a problem can help you reframe it or find a solution.</p>	<p>25 Plan a fun game night with your buddies. Relieve stress with friendly competition, jokes and laughs.</p>	<p>26 Let three shipmates know you are there for them and they can ask for advice or just express themselves any time without worry.</p>	<p>27 Celebrate your accomplishments. Take a minute to look back on how far you've come and the achievements that make you proud.</p>	<p>28 Text or call someone who has gone the extra mile for you and just say "thanks." You can boost their mood and yours.</p>



#BeThere for Every Sailor, Every Day.

29 Alcohol not only impacts physical health, but also mental and emotional wellness if consumed irresponsibly. Instead of alcohol, focus on positive measures to counter stress like physical activity, listening to music, reading or meditation.

30 Keep it going! Follow us online for small ACTs to help you continue to strengthen your psychological well-being and prevent suicide all year long.

Navy Suicide Prevention Month is not just a 30-day blitz of suicide prevention efforts; it is the starting point for year-long conversations on how to be there for Every Sailor, Every Day.



Where to Get Help:

- Your local Navy chaplain, Fleet and Family Support Center (FFSC) or medical
- Military Crisis Line: call 1-800-273-TALK, press 1; text 838255; visit www.militarycrisisline.net
- Military OneSource: www.militaryonesource.mil
- Crisis Text Line: text 'HOME' to 741741
- Sailor Assistance and Intercept for Life ([SAIL](#))

Additional Sources of Information:

- Defense Suicide Prevention Office: www.dspo.mil
- Suicide Prevention Resource Center: www.sprc.org
- American Foundation of Suicide Prevention: www.afsp.com
- Human Performance Resource Center: www.hprc-online.org
- Navy & Marine Corps Public Health Center: <http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcphc/health-promotion/Pages/default.aspx>
- Real Warriors Campaign: www.realwarriors.net

ESED campaign resources and materials will be released throughout September and fiscal year 2020 on www.suicide.navy.mil. Follow us on [Twitter](#) @NavStress and [Flickr](#) @OPNAVN171, like us on [Facebook](#) @U.S Navy Operational Stress Control and subscribe to our [NavyNavStress](#) blog for more.