



LIFELINK

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COMMUNICATION AND CONVERSATION: FINDING THE RIGHT WORDS

Open conversation about stress and suicide is one of the most helpful ways to reduce barriers and “break the code of silence” stemming from misperceptions and negative attitudes. This conversation may take many forms, from frank one-on-one talks between Sailors and peers, leaders, or family members, to command discussions in formal or informal training settings; and public awareness efforts through media channels. No matter what form the conversation takes, words matter—and they can make a critical difference in how the message impacts others.

When discussing stress and suicide it’s important to be conscious of phrasing that can be perceived as judgmental or discouraging to those we are trying to help. Researchers and experts around the world have examined the potential effects of commonly used words on vulnerable audiences, which include the possibility of contagion, negatively influencing an at-risk person, even when then intent is positive. Constructive wording, however, can help foster a culture supportive of psychological health and seeking resources when needed.

Here are a few examples to help you find the right words:

- **Death by suicide vs. committed suicide:** Using the term “commit” when talking about suicide criminalizes the act and implies judgment, which may discourage others from speaking up and seeking resources. “Death by suicide” is an objective phrase, framing it in the context of health rather than a crime.
- **Non-fatal attempt vs. unsuccessful attempt:** Similar to the above, “non-fatal” describes the attempt objectively, while “unsuccessful” signifies another failure while implying that death is a desirable outcome.
- **Emphasizing the importance of every single life vs. focusing on rising numbers:** Suicide prevention is not about numbers, as any life lost to suicide is one too many. Describing an increase in numbers using alarming language (“epidemic,” “spike”) can normalize it to vulnerable service members and frame it as a trend or viable option. By placing the emphasis on what we can do to help each other (peer and leadership support, reducing access to means, etc.), we reshape the conversation to focus on ongoing actions vice short-term statistics.

Whether in everyday conversation or a media story, *what* we say when it comes to suicide is just as important as *how* we say it. For more tips, download Navy Suicide Prevention’s [What’s in a Word? How to Talk about Suicide](#), and [What’s in a Word? Best Practices for Reporting on Suicide in the Media](#). Additional recommendations for reporting on suicide are available on the Suicide Prevention Resource Center, [here](#).



Jeff Bacon's cartoon for Navy Suicide Prevention Month

SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH HIGHLIGHTS

Crisis Response Plan Guidance
suicide.navy.mil

Never Walk Alone, Part 1
[All Hands Magazine](#)

Public Health Center Co-hosts Suicide Prevention Awareness Webinar
Navy.mil

A Place to Start, for you and Every Sailor, Every Day
NavyNavStress

Every Sailor, Every Day
Navy.mil

An Intensely Personal Issue
NavyNavStress

LIFELINK NEWSLETTER

LIFELINK SPOTLIGHT

USS Nimitz (CVN 68): #YouCanTalkToMe



Suicide Prevention Month is an opportunity for commands to refresh and reenergize their efforts to promote cohesion and break down barriers to supporting psychological health. It moves beyond a month-long observance, launching year round, tailored engagement.

USS Nimitz (CVN 68) Sailors want their shipmates to know that there is always someone willing to listen, and no one has to fight their battles in silence. Every Sailor, every day can be a part of the movement from “awareness to action,” helping to affect a cultural change so that resilience and acceptance remain ongoing priorities. To that end, they developed #YouCanTalkToMe, a social media campaign that includes blog posts and videos to encourage their shipmates to feel comfortable talking to someone about their stressors.

In addition to promoting resources, such as SafeTALK and those available on the ship, the #YouCanTalkToMe series features inspirational stories shared by Nimitz Sailors, encouraging bystander intervention and open conversation to reduce barriers and negative perceptions.

In one video, a Sailor recounts his journey to overcome severe stress and suicidal thoughts, sharing the signs he exhibited in order to help others recognize when a shipmate may be struggling. Two other stories share the experiences of Sailors who connected the dots when they believed their shipmates were struggling with suicidal thoughts, breaking the silence and encouraging them to seek help.

Nimitz’s effort is about more than just intervening to prevent suicide. It’s about the many ways Sailors can be proactive when it comes to their health, and being there for each other on a daily basis. “Whether it’s a friend or a shipmate or a family member...don’t be afraid to talk to somebody about it. We’re all human.”

Bravo Zulu, shipmates! To read more, check out www.nimitznews.wordpress.com/youcantalktome.

RESILIENCE CORNER

Building Resilience in the Face of Injury or Illness

While the day-to-day life in the Navy can be stressful, navigating those stressors combined with the challenges of wounds, illness or injury can make even the most resilient Sailor or family member feel overwhelmed. Adapting to a new normal takes patience and determination, and it can also be an opportunity to perhaps inspire other wounded, ill and injured shipmates to thrive in the face of adversity.



One tool to help Wounded Warriors and their families build and maintain resilience is to create a Stress Navigation Plan. This plan is intended to be private, and it outlines your personal list of positive strategies and support resources. Go to www.navy.navstress.com to download a template, then once completed, keep it in a safe place so you can reference it when you are feeling down.

A second way to support your resilience is to enroll in Navy Wounded Warrior – Safe Harbor. This program provides non-medical resources and support to guide active duty and retired Sailors and their families through recovery, rehabilitation and reintegration. One such program, adaptive athletic reconditioning, trained and guided 39 wounded, ill and injured Sailors to compete in the fifth annual Warrior Games in Colorado and the inaugural Invictus Games in London.

Above all, remember that asking for help, whether for physical or emotional issues, is a sign of strength. We don’t always have control over what life throws at us, but we can learn how to identify stress reactions and take measures to deal with them. There are multiple resources supporting wounded, ill and injured service members and families, including:

- Your chaplain, chain of command or ombudsman
- Fleet and Family Support Centers
- Military OneSource www.militaryonesource.mil
- Naval Center for Combat and Operational Stress Control www.nccosc.navy.mil
- Navy Operational Stress Control www.navy.navstress.com
- Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center WII Programs <http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcphc/wounded-ill-and-injured/Pages/wii.aspx>

LIFELINK NEWSLETTER

STARTING THE CONVERSATION TO PREVENT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

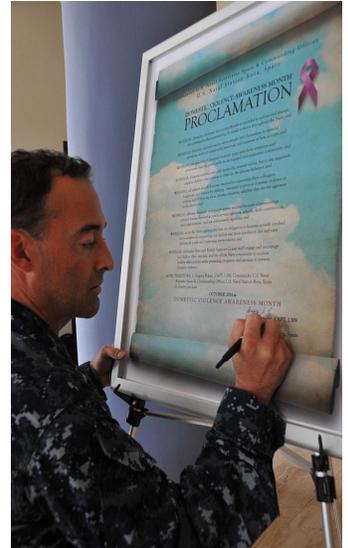
Accumulating stress may intensify family or relationship issues, increasing the chance for unhealthy or unsafe patterns to develop. However, it is important to remember that stress is never an *excuse* for domestic violence, and it should not be accepted as a byproduct of military family life.

Domestic violence can be sexual, emotional, financial, physical or psychological. Helping our shipmates and loved ones recognize the behavior and characteristics in a partner that may indicate risk or likelihood of domestic violence can promote informed decision-making. These indicators include previous history of domestic violence, controlling behavior, intimidation, unreasonable jealousy, unpredictable mood changes, alcohol and drug abuse, and more.

Preventing domestic violence begins with healthy relationships—not only between spouses or partners, but between peers as well. Like many other issues impacting personal wellbeing, it takes strength and support to come forward when experiencing domestic problems, and it starts with a supportive culture.

While it may be difficult to determine whether a peer or loved one is experiencing domestic violence (the signs are not always physical), by reaching out to him or her, you may open the lines of communication and help them take the first step to seeking assistance. Listen, without judgment, and stay calm. Remind the person that they have your support, and avoid trying to offer advice or help them conceal the problem from professionals who may be able to assist. Most importantly, know where the resources are. Support is always available through the National Domestic Violence Hotline, Military OneSource victim advocates, Navy's Family Advocacy Program, chaplains and more. If the person is in immediate danger, call 911.

For Navy Domestic Violence Awareness Month resources, click [here](#).



Capt. Greg Pekari, commanding officer of Naval Station Rota, signs a proclamation declaring October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

UPCOMING EVENTS

U.S. Navy 239th Birthday
October 13

Domestic Violence Awareness Month
October

SPC Basic Training Webinar
October 8
October 29
[Register Here!](#)

Contact Navy Suicide Prevention

[Email Us](#) | [Website](#)

Follow Operational Stress Control Online...



Life is worth living!

Click here for your lifeline.
1-800-273-TALK (8255 Option 1)
Prevent Suicide

MORE NEWS YOU CAN USE

A Pair of Crutches and a Message of Caring [Navy Medicine Live](#)

Suicide Prevention Month Considerations for Military Members [DVIDS](#)

Stay Healthy by Eating Right, Exercising More and Getting Restful Sleep [DCoE](#)

Hampton Roads Sailors Walk Out of the Darkness for Suicide Prevention [Navy.mil](#)

Enhancing Resilience and Recovery of Reservists [NavyNavStress](#)

Suicide Prevention via Self-Care [Navy Medicine Live](#)

FCC/C10F Sailors Participate in Suicide Awareness Run [Navy.mil](#)

NCCOSC Supports Suicide Prevention Month Events by Talking Resilience [Navy.mil](#)

NMCP Staff Brings Suicide Awareness to Forefront [Navy.mil](#)

Public Health Center Co-hosts Suicide Prevention Awareness Webinar [Navy.mil](#)