



# LIFELINK

## NEWSLETTER

**Page 1**  
 Communications between Line Leaders and Mental Health Providers

**Page 2**  
 LifeLink Spotlight  
 Resilience Corner

**Page 3**  
 Resolving for Financial Success, News and Resources, Upcoming Events

### Communications Between Line Leaders and Mental Health Providers

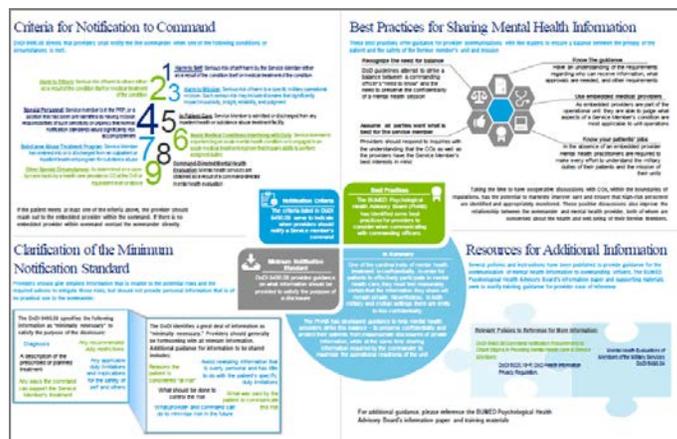
Upholding a culture that supports seeking help as a sign of strength is an all hands effort that is built upon trust, one of the five [Principles of Resilience](#). This trust must be cultivated between Sailors and their leaders through ongoing engagement and support, which will in turn help Sailors trust in the many resources available to them should they need additional care.

As we continue to make progress in breaking down the barriers that may prevent Sailors from seeking help for psychological health concerns, commanders must ensure that they are acting in ways that support Sailor wellness while enhancing unit readiness. To that end, Navy Suicide Prevention and the Bureau of Navy Medicine and Surgery (BUMED) recommend that all commanders familiarize themselves with the policies in place to balance their need to monitor the welfare of their unit with the confidentiality protections that medical providers must adhere by in the best interest of Sailors. In order for Sailors to gain maximum benefit from psychological health care services, they must feel reasonably certain that the details they share with a provider will remain private, helping to mitigate the potential decision to not to seek assistance out of fear of consequences. Line leaders and providers share in the responsibility of upholding Sailors' rights and promoting recovery.

Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 6490.08 provides guidance on information flow to balance the challenges between patient-provider confidentiality and the rights of commanders, outlining the level of detail a commander can access to ensure the well-being of their unit members and maximize unit readiness. Based on this instruction, BUMED's Psychological Health Advisory Board has developed a graphic outlining communications between the line and medical communities which is now available on the Suicide Prevention website ([here](#)). This graphic provides at-a-glance information on topics such as notification to commands, clarification of the minimum notification standard, best practices for sharing mental health information and additional resources. This tool is not only useful for commanders to facilitate a closer understanding of the decision making process providers must adhere to, but for key personnel (such as suicide prevention coordina-

tors) to help dispel misperceptions among their shipmates regarding mental health treatment.

To facilitate productive dialogue—and trust—between providers and commands, line leaders should seek to develop ongoing relationships with local health providers. Proactive discussion about policies and procedures will better serve both the commander and provider when making key decisions and determining ongoing support needed for Sailors during and beyond the reintegration process. Most importantly, Sailors will feel more comfortable seeking the resources available to them knowing that their leadership has a full understanding of what can and cannot be discussed. This is yet another way we can take proactive measures to improve the lines of communication and support *every Sailor, every day*.



Click the image to view and download the above graphic, outlining criteria and best practices for sharing mental health information between medical providers and line leaders.

*Extra! Embedded mental health provider discusses recent deployment experience and importance of command involvement on [Navy Medicine Live](#).*



## LifeLink Spotlight

This month we're spotlighting a true story of bystander intervention that was made possible by dedicated efforts between service members and chaplains to "connect the dots," bridging pieces of information from different resources together to ultimately save a life.

A Marine corporal noticed an alarming post from a Sailor on a social media app indicating that the Sailor might be suicidal and hesitant to seek help. Since all postings on this particular social network are anonymous, the corporal immediately found a way to engage the Sailor through the network's private direct messaging feature. The corporal made it his mission to consistently check in on the Sailor, whose identity was still unknown, providing encouragement and offering up a myriad of resources that he'd learned about in trainings. After continued conversations and offers to meet in person, the Sailor agreed to seek help with the promise that the corporal would accompany her to see a Navy chaplain. The corporal convinced the Sailor to provide her name and duty station, immediately sought the assistance of the base chaplain where she was located, and coordinated a meeting time. When the Sailor did not show up at the chaplain's office, the corporal, chaplain and religious program specialist started making calls and probing for information on the social media network. After nearly three dozen phone calls in three hours, searching rosters, calling commanding officers and persistent messaging through the social network app, they successfully located the Sailor and got her the immediate help she needed.

Through active engagement and communication, the confidence to ACT and the availability of the right resources, we can make a difference—and save lives. Support and encouragement from peers, even those who have never met face to face, can be a deciding factor between choosing to seek assistance or making an irreversible decision. Together, we can be there for every Sailor, every day.

*Help is always available. Chaplains provide a safe and confidential space for Sailors, Marines and their families to turn to when seeking help for stress and challenges, regardless of one's religious beliefs. To find a Navy chaplain near you, call 1-855-Navy-311. Visit [www.chaplain.navy.mil](http://www.chaplain.navy.mil) and click the confidentiality tab for more information on total confidentiality Navy chaplains provide you.*



## Resilience Corner

### How Stress Impacts Your Heart Health

Stress is a natural reaction; it is the body's way of coping with a perceived threat. We all experience stress from time to time, however, prolonged periods of stress can be unhealthy.



As part of the 'fight or flight' response, stress signals the body to produce more energy by elevating the heart rate and increasing production of LDL cholesterol and blood glucose. Stress can also lead to poor eating choices, missed workouts, and a lack of sleep. If stress is left unchecked, a combination of these factors may lead to high blood pressure, high cholesterol, or diabetes.

According to the 2013 Fleet and Marine Corps Health Risk Assessment, only 12 percent of active duty Navy respondents and 13 percent of active duty Marine respondents indicated that they experienced work stress. However, those numbers increased as time away from home station increased. To help manage stress follow these tips:

- \* Eat healthy, stay hydrated, and limit caffeine and alcohol.
- \* Exercise regularly to reduce stress, burn calories, and improve sleep.
- \* Get 7–8 hours of sleep
- \* Use relaxation techniques, such as deep breathing exercises.
- \* Check out strengthening resilience and Navy Operational Stress Control for more stress navigation tips.

*February is Heart Health Month. Navy Suicide Prevention Branch thanks Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center's Health Promotion and Wellness campaign for providing the above information, which can be found in their fact sheet "Heart Health: Risk Factors and Lifestyle Choices" in the February HPW Toolbox.*

## New Suicide Prevention GMT Available on NKO!

The wait is finally over! The new General Military Training (GMT) for Suicide Prevention is now available on Navy Knowledge Online (NKO). This interactive training uses realistic vignettes to generate dialogue about stress navigation, bystander intervention and crisis response, better preparing audiences to "connect the dots" and facilitate the intervention process during a crisis. It is a "Category One" lesson intended to be delivered face-to-face and should be tailored to address the specific needs and resources of the command. To locate the training, visit the GMT page on Navy Knowledge Online and select the "Suicide Prevention" course. For more information on required General Military Trainings, see NAVADMIN 202/14.

## News and Resources

Engaging Pacific Fleet Sailors  
[Navy Live](#)

Wounded Warrior Project  
Applauds Passage of Clay Hunt  
Suicide Prevention for American  
Veterans Act  
[Wounded Warrior Project](#)

Use Your Mind to Strengthen Both  
Brain and Body [HPRC](#)

What Makes You Optimistic About  
the New Year  
[Navy Medicine Live](#)

Routine Medical Visits Can  
Include Behavioral Health  
Checkups [DCoE](#)

Heart Health: Risk Factors and  
Lifestyle Choices  
[Navy Medicine Live](#)

DoD Official Describes Transition  
Program Progress  
[Navy.mil](#)

Face of Defense: Clinicians Help  
Deployed Troops Fight Stress  
[Navy.mil](#)

Tracker to Identify your Food  
Triggers [NMCPHC](#)

## Upcoming Events

### SPC Training Webinars

Feb. 18

Mar. 11

Mar. 31

[Register Here](#)

### FY15 Chaplain Professional Development Training Course: Pastoral Care in Suicide Prevention

Feb. 10-12, Marine Corps Base,  
Camp Pendleton, CA

Feb. 24-26, Marine Corps Air  
Station, Miramar, CA

### NMCPHC Heart Health Webinar

Feb. 18

[Register Here](#)

## Resolving for Financial Success in 2015

The coming months may feel bittersweet, leaving you feeling empowered by your financial progress and possibly discouraged by the arrival of holiday bills. You're not alone, and with focus you can get your money management goals back on track. The formula for success is to save money, build consistency and reduce debt. Though these may sound like lofty aspirations now, the key ingredient is resolve, which is exactly what the New Year can bring.

Here are a few tips to help you live by this formula and achieve resolve in your own finances:

**Gather Your Numbers:** This is post-holiday stop number one! Gather the most up to date account information about your assets and debt obligations. One way to do this is with a simple Excel spreadsheet that includes your creditors, total balances, minimum monthly payments and interest rates. This will help identify your net worth and create a viable budget. Be sure to review your annual credit report from each of the major bureaus (TransUnion, Equifax and Experian) now, too. Go to [annualcreditreport.com](#) for details.

**Develop a Strategy:** With the above information in-hand, set your goals and spending plans for next 12 months (and beyond). Consult with a professional or your household financial partner to construct a realistic portrayal of how you'll allocate income, savings, investments and debt payments. Perhaps you'll focus on

highest interest debts, or paying off debts from smallest to largest. Conversely, if your goal is to build your savings arsenal, prioritize your emergency savings—three to six months of expenses or at least \$1,500 to start—above other budgetary goals as this is the number one stressor in personal financial planning. Resources such as [www.powerpay.org](#) or the [Navy Electronic Financial Planning Worksheet](#) can help you determine a feasible strategy.

**Stay the Course:** Monitoring your progress is essential to long-term success. As challenges and opportunities arise, adjust your initial plans. Extra cash sources like tax returns present a unique opportunity to compromise between paying off debts, saving and spending. Conversely, when the unexpected happens, such as car repairs, revisit your financial plan quickly so that any lost momentum can be regained. Be firm yet flexible and don't give up!

Now reshape your outlook and breathe a sigh of relief that you've created a living budget and let it strengthen your resolve for financial focus! If you need assistance from a professional, contact your nearest Fleet and Family Service Center, Command Financial Specialist or Military OneSource representative for free advice.

*Stacy Livingstone-Hoyte, AFC®, is an experienced Financial Counselor who has worked extensively with U.S. Armed Forces members and families. She is a long-time volunteer blogger for [Navynavstress.com](#).*

## New Infographic: Psychological Health Treatment and SF86

Navy Suicide Prevention has developed a new infographic to help "spread the truth" about reporting psychological health treatment on Standard Form 86 (SF86) for security clearances. The infographic provides facts that counter common misconceptions about the impact of psychological health treatment on service members' ability to maintain their security clearances, in an effort to reduce barriers to seeking care. The graphic also provides guidance for reporting treatment when answering Question 21 on SF86. Click [here](#) to view or print the infographic. Together we can show each other that it's okay to speak up when you're down.

**SPREAD the TRUTH**  
Psychological Health Treatment and SF86 Question 21

Standard Form 86 (SF86) "Questionnaire for National Security Positions" is used to evaluate individuals under consideration for Confidential, Secret, and Top Secret security clearances. One of the many reasons service members choose not to seek help is fear that doing so will jeopardize their clearance eligibility and career. Here are the facts about answering Question 21.

- It's okay to speak up when you're down:**
  - Truth** Less than one percent of security clearance denials and revocations involve psychological health concerns.
  - Truth** Seeking help to promote personal wellness and recovery may favorably impact a person's security clearance eligibility.
  - Truth** Not all psychological health treatment is required to be reported when answering Question 21.
  - Truth** Any psychological health care you report when answering Question 21 is protected by privacy rights.
- What does NOT need to be reported when answering Question 21:**
  - Counseling related to adjustments from military combat services
  - Marital or family concerns
  - Grief counseling
  - Counseling related to being a victim of sexual assault
- Did You Know?**
  - Any psychological health care a service member reports when answering SF86 Question 21 is protected by privacy rights. A personnel security investigator can only ask a psychological health care provider if the service member is navigating a concern that could impair his or her judgment or reliability to safeguard classified information.
  - If the answer is "no," no additional questions are authorized.
- Seeking help is a sign of strength, and help is always available.**
  - Call the Military Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255 or visit [www.crisisline.mil](#)
  - Service members have the right to report any suspected privacy violations regarding unauthorized questioning performed by psychological health care to the Defense Department Inspector General at 800-423-9955.

For more information, visit the Defense Suicide Prevention Office at [www.suicideprevention.org](#)