ACT LIFELINK NEWSLETTER

Page 1
Feature: *Mental Health Month*
News You Can Use

Page 2
LifeLink Spotlight
Resilience Corner

Page 3
Feature: *Take Stress Seriously*
Upcoming Events
News You Can Use

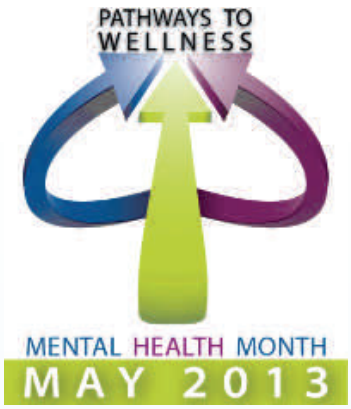
Mental Health Month Focuses on Pathways to Wellness

Mental health isn't achieved solely through counseling or therapy. It's not a topic that fits into a neat category or only concerns a particular group of people. Mental health is "a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential," with the ability to navigate life's stress, work productively and contribute to one's community (World Health Organization).

This year's Presidential Proclamation for National Mental Health Month emphasizes that getting help "starts with a conversation" so that people who need help navigating stress can feel reassured that they have the support of friends, family, peers and professionals. Our mental health is impacted by everything from our environment and our physical wellbeing, down to the foods we eat and our activity levels. "Pathways to Wellness," the theme of this year's National Mental Health Month, zeroes in on the very same topics that our Operational Stress Control and Suicide Prevention Programs promote to navigate stress and build resilience.

Sometimes our own wellness takes a backseat to our other responsibilities. Between balancing our careers; children's busy schedules; relationships and daily routines; eating well, exercising or taking "me time" can seem like luxuries. But these small steps can return huge dividends when stressors start to pile up. The skills you build to maintain your physical, emotional, and spiritual wellness will help you keep an even keel throughout challenging times, strengthening your mental health.

Finding new ways to talk about stress is one of our programs' goals. Discussing mental health in the context of everyday wellness brings conversations outside of the exam room and into our daily social discussions. Together, we can all take steps to promote our health from the inside-out. Fully embracing the concept of wellness not only improves health in the mind, body and spirit, but also maximizes one's potential to lead a full and productive life.



Click the image to visit Mental Health America's website.

Wellness is more than just the absence of disease.

More News You Can Use

Yoga: When Upside Down is Right Side Up
Navy Medicine Live

Mental Health Services and Support for National Guard and Reserves MHS Blog

Make Sleep a Top Priority, Experts Say DCoE Blog

LifeCounts
Ask Care Treat

LIFELINK NEWSLETTER

LifeLink Spotlight

Jana Beck, command Ombudsman
Navy Information Operations Command Pensacola

We just celebrated Military Spouse Appreciation Day, so it's only right that we give the LifeLink Spotlight to one for May! This month we're recognizing Jana Beck, new command Ombudsman for NIOC Pensacola. Ensuring that all Sailors and families have her information readily available at the click of a mouse, Ms. Beck blogged a heartfelt welcome letter for the command's blog introducing herself as a resource to help Sailors and their families "navigate the challenges of the Navy lifestyle." In her blog post she also notes that she has been a military spouse for a decade and assures that she's "experienced the highs and lows that are part of the Navy family."

As service members, our families are our backbones. The Navy Family Ombudsman Program was created in 1970 by then CNO, Admiral Elmo Zumwalt to "improve mission readiness through improved family readiness," adapted from a 19th century Scandinavian custom. Your Ombudsman is available during working hours and is on call 24/7 for emergencies. All Ombudsmen must adhere to the guidelines of confidentiality per the Privacy Act and Navy Ombudsman Manual. To ensure that your family is receiving communications like Ms. Beck's, click here to locate your Ombudsman. Bravo Zulu Ms. Beck!

Who will be next in the spotlight? Nominate your proactive SPC, caring shipmate or leader, or your entire command for their efforts to build a sense of community and prevent suicide. Email your nomination to caroline.miles.ctr@navy.mil

Resilience Corner

Determination Over Disability: 2013 Warrior Games

The 2013 Warrior Games are underway at the U.S. Olympic Training Center and at the Air Force Academy in Colorado, with seven days of nail-biting competition between some of the country's finest service members and vets. What separates the will to win in these games from other competitions? The dedication to overcome life-altering challenges that these wounded, ill or injured service members faced.

Navy Feature Photo, All Hands Magazine/Released

Hundreds of service members and veterans have competed at the annual Warrior games since their start in 2010. Overseen by the US Olympic Committee Paralympic Military Program in conjunction with the Dept. of Defense, these games put the "ability" in disability, with gold at stake for sitting volleyball, wheelchair basketball, and swimming, among other events. The "Ultimate Champion" can compete in a Pentathlon-style event against other top warriors, to take home the coveted title. While winning a medal may seem like the quintessential goal, sharing the euphoria and triumph over otherwise limiting injuries with fellow wounded, ill and injured athletes is priceless.

Ret. Navy Chaplain Lt. Rickey Bennett, featured above, is competing for Team Navy in track and field, shooting, swimming, cycling, archery, wheelchair basketball and sitting volleyball. Regarding the camaraderie brought about by Warrior Games camps, Bennett tells All Hands Magazine "when I'm with [my teammates] I get better and stronger and take another step at living life again, and loving and laughing." Bennett lives with an "invisible injury"—Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

"For the Sailor that is hiding, hurting, and afraid of everything, I would say to that Sailor...if you wait until you *feel* like doing something, you'll never do it. Sometimes you have to make yourself take that step...It will open you up and give you hope and a reason to live again." For more of his story, click here.

Life Counts
Ask Care Treat

LIFELINK NEWSLETTER

Upcoming Events

SPC Basic Training Webinar

28 May
12 June

National Safety Month

June

Share your upcoming events with us!

Contact Navy Suicide Prevention
Email | Suicide Prevention Website
Follow Operational Stress Control Online

We want to follow you too! Have a social media page? Send us a message!

In Case You Missed It: "When to Take Stress Seriously"

Jeff Bacon provided us with a few smiles for 2012 Suicide Prevention Awareness Month. While stress injuries are no laughing matter, lighthearted humor can help break the ice when it comes to getting people to feel comfortable talking about such a heavy issue that's often kept in the dark. We don't suggest dressing up as a clown...but you may want to reread this blog post from last September to remind yourself what to do when your shipmate may be in trouble. Part of the focus of this and every annual Mental Health Month is to try to break down barriers and open the lines of communication when it comes to stress and suicide. For additional resources, visit suicide.navy.mil.

From NavyNavStress.com:

Laughter is good medicine for stress relief...but knowing which resources are appropriate when your shipmate is in distress may save a life. Trying to maintain a positive outlook and taking a moment to smile and laugh is a good practice to get from the yellow zone back to the green. However, when stressors start to pile up and have a more serious impact on our lives, professional treatment and resources may be necessary.

Jeff Bacon for 2012 Navy SP Awareness Month

If your shipmate expresses thoughts of hopelessness, purposelessness, or despair, take it seriously. These statements may be subtle warning signs of potentially harmful behavior. Even if you think he or she is joking or speaking casually, statements expressing thoughts of suicide are serious. Familiarize yourself with the resources and ACT. *Ask* if the Sailor is thinking about suicide. Show that you *Care*. Don't wait to get him or her to *Treat*ment to receive the proper assistance (take them to the Chaplain, to medical or the ER. If immediate danger is present, call 911). And always support your shipmate by following up and checking to see how things are going–maybe a good laugh will help him or her return to a positive hopeful outlook on life.

More News You Can Use

Marines Obtain New Resource for Coping with Stress DVIDS

Warrior Transition Program Reintegrates Returning Sailors DoD Live

The ABCs of Accessing Mental Health Care for Military Families Military Mental Health

NMCPHC Launches Psychological and Emotional Well-Being Campaign Navy.mil

NCCOSC Mindlines Spring 2013 NCCOSC

'Families OverComing Under Stress' Supports the Military Family DCoE Blog

Family Resilience Protective Factors Military OneSource

Muscle in on Your Personal Finances HPRC Blog

Stennis Sailors Recognized by Rotary Club of East Bremerton Stennis 74 Blog

Need a good laugh today? Check out this cartoon by Jeff Bacon, Creator of *Broadside: Scared of Lows*

Life Counts
Ask Care Treat