

# What the Army is doing to combat suicide

*Provided by the Army Resiliency Directorate, G-1*

## **September is Suicide Prevention Month**

### **What is it?**

Suicide Prevention is a 365-days-a-year effort and a top priority for Army senior leaders. The Army is taking a comprehensive and holistic approach to strengthening its people and mitigating risk by providing education, building protective factors, encouraging engagement, and emphasizing early intervention. The Army is highlighting its message of prevention through the summer months, culminating in September with Suicide Prevention Month. The Army is in support of the Department of Defense, whose 2016 theme is: #BeThere.

### **What has the Army done?**

The Army sees an increase in suicide events in the summer months. In 2015, the Army saw a 68 percent increase in the number of suicides from June to July. In 2016, the Army stressed suicide prevention by executing a communication campaign beginning in July. The goals of the campaign are to reinforce Army values, beliefs, and attitudes and to inform and educate members of the Army team about the risk factors and warning signs of suicide. This campaign includes Army senior leader messaging, videos and graphics.

### **What continued efforts are planned for the future?**

In the Army, every Soldier counts, which is why messaging about suicide prevention continues and remains embedded in Army culture. The Army will continue to emphasize that it is the responsibility of individual Soldiers to have visibility and take responsibility to sustain their own personal readiness and the personal readiness of their buddy.

In addition, the Army is finalizing a new intervention training module called "Engage," which empowers individuals to engage and do something when a situation is risky or has the potential to escalate. This module redesigns intervention training to meet suicide prevention and substance abuse prevention training requirements. Based on [Army values](#) training, the module emphasizes that all members of the Army team have a duty and obligation to intervene when alerted.

The Army will continue the ACE training (ask, care, escort) to ensure that individuals are equipped with the skills to intervene when someone is at the point of crisis.

## **Why is this important to the Army?**

Suicide Prevention Month reminds all members of the Army team that Soldiers and units must be capable of building and sustaining their personal readiness, which is critical to mission readiness and deployability. High-risk behavior is preventable. Although tragic events, like suicide, are complex, members of the Army team have a duty and obligation to engage to strengthen themselves and others and #BeThere to connect fellow Soldiers in crisis with support.

## **Resources:**

- [U.S. Army Ready and Resilient Campaign](#)
- [Army Suicide Prevention Program](#)
- [Army G-1: Suicide Prevention Training Resources](#)
- [Public Health Command](#)
- [Army Behavioral Health](#)
- [Defense Suicide Prevention Office](#)

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