

Suicide prevention: YOU (yes, I mean you) have a role to play

Thomas Zimmerman, Carlisle Barracks Public Affairs

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Suicide (Noun) - the act of killing yourself because you do not want to continue living.

That's the Webster's definition of suicide, but you know what it really is? It's a son growing up without a father, it's a mother burying their daughter, it's a unit losing a valuable member of the team, it's a life stopped short before reaching its full potential.

It's something that each of us have a role in trying to prevent.

Each year the Army designates September as Suicide Prevention Awareness Month, but in truth, suicide prevention is a 24/7, 365-day a year job that each of us need to take seriously. According to Department of Defense, nearly 300 soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines took their own lives in 2015.

Soldiers, Civilians, Officers, NCOs, family members, friends, office mates, and contractors – everyone has the power to save and change a life.

What can you do?

You're probably asking, how can I help? The first step is recognizing the signs of suicide in others. Some of the most common signs are listed below.

- Talking about wanting to die or wanting to kill themselves
- Talking about feeling empty, hopeless, or having no reason to live
- Making a plan or looking for a way to kill themselves, such as searching online, stockpiling pills, or buying a gun
- Talking about great guilt or shame
- Talking about feeling trapped or feeling that there are no solutions

- Feeling unbearable pain (emotional pain or physical pain)
- Talking about being a burden to others
- Using alcohol or drugs more often
- Acting anxious or agitated
- Withdrawing from family and friends
- Changing eating and/or sleeping habits
- Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge
- Taking great risks that could lead to death, such as driving extremely fast
- Talking or thinking about death often
- Displaying extreme mood swings, suddenly changing from very sad to very calm or happy
- Giving away important possessions
- Saying goodbye to friends and family
- Putting affairs in order, making a will

But these aren't the only signs, pay attention to those around you and keep an eye out for changes in behavior, moods or interactions with others.

How to get help

If you suspect someone has suicidal thoughts, you need to help them get help. Keep in mind that many times suicidal thoughts are related to other life concerns including depression, loneliness, and financial or martial problems. On Carlisle Barracks there are many services and options.

- If the threat is immediate, call 911, seconds and minutes count.
- If you or the person is a servicemember, veteran or family member you can call the Military Crisis Line at (1-800-273-8255 and Press 1. You can also visit <https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/ActiveDuty.aspx> and chat live and confidentially with an expert.
- Pennsylvania also has man resources including hotlines that are available 24/7.
- Carlisle - (717) 249-6226
- Harrisburg- (717) 652-4400

- Adams, Franklin, Perry, Upper-Dauphin - 1-800-932-4616
- The National Suicide Prevention Hotline can be reached at 1-800-273-8255, an online chat is also available at <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/GetHelp/LifelineChat.aspx>
- Carlisle Barracks has two certified family life chaplains who can speak confidentially to servicemembers, family members and civilians. Call (717) 245-3318 to reach the chapel.
- Army Community Services is also home to a Military Family Life Consultant who can be reached at (717)205-9048. The Military and Family Life Consultant (MFL C) Program is designed to provide support and assistance to active duty Soldiers, National Guard & Reserves, military Family Members and civilian personnel. Military and Family Life Consultants can help people who are having trouble coping with concerns and issues of daily life.
- The Employee Assistance Program is available to employees. With just a phone call or a keystroke, you can access services on the Internet and via a professionally staffed call center. EAP services are convenient and confidential. Licensed counselors are available to help with difficult personal issues. 1-800-222-0364 and select Letterkenny Army Depot to identify your agency. You can also visit www.FOH4You.com for information and resources, self-help assessments, webinars, podcasts, and more.

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