

# Team Carlisle: Suicide prevention is everyone's business

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As you may know, September is Suicide Awareness Month across the entire Army. While you may not think it's a problem here at Carlisle Barracks, take a moment and remember that depression, PTSD and other associated challenges aren't exclusive to race, age, rank, or whether your civilian or military – suicide affects and impact all of us.

It's not uncommon for service members and civilians to face emotional or psychological concerns such as feelings of anger, isolation, anxiety or guilt following a deployment or as a result of coping with the stress of military or civilian life.

These reactions, among others, can be common responses to extraordinary events. For some, these feelings may be signs of more serious concerns, including depression or posttraumatic stress disorder. Those coping with these concerns may feel like there is no escape from their symptoms, which may lead to thoughts of suicide.

One of the leading factors leading to suicide involves stress. In 2013, there were 41,149 deaths by *suicide* in the *United States* and since Jan. 1, 2014, our nation has lost more than 1,800 Soldiers as a result of suicide – and stress is commonly cited as a major factor. Military or civilian, NCO or officer, active duty or retirees – this issue affects us all.

That's why in coordination with Army Community Services we are hosting a class Sept. 21, from noon to 1 p.m. in the ACS classroom at 632 Wright Ave., that will help raise awareness of and provide effective tools in dealing with stress. Open to the entire community this is a great opportunity to learn the warning signs of someone who is overwhelmed with stress, and how to ensure they get the help they need.

In addition, this is so important to my command team that each Soldier and Civilian is required to attend one 90-minute session this month, sponsored by our outstanding ASAP staff, to help identify the signs and get help for those who may be considering suicide. For more information on when these classes are being held visit <http://www.carlisle.army.mil/banner/article.cfm?id=24029>

Outside of these great opportunities, here are some behavioral changes that you should be aware of as possible warning signs.

- Being unable to sleep or oversleeping
- Withdrawing from friends, family or society
- Increasing alcohol or drug use
- Acting recklessly or engaging in risky behavior
- Experiencing excessive rage, anger or desire for revenge
- Having feelings of anxiety, agitation or hopelessness
- Reliving past experiences
- Experiencing dramatic changes in mood
- Feeling hopeless

We must remember this; many of these tragic deaths are preventable. Providing support and connecting people with a trained professional can save lives. When someone is going through challenges and comes to you for help, it doesn't make them weak. It means they're strong, because asking for help when they need it takes courage and strength. Please remember - what our entire country needs to remember - is that these brave individuals shouldn't be avoided or stigmatized. They need to be embraced. Whether you're a service member, a veteran, a DoD civilian, or a friend or family member, you have the power to make a difference. It only takes one person to ask one question or make one call - and that single act can save a life.

For more information and resources visit

<http://www.health.mil/Military-Health-Topics/Conditions-and-Treatments/Mental-Health/Suicide-Prevention/Resource>