

Suicide prevention insights spread thru units

By Public Affairs Office 02 February 2022



Throughout the Army, Army War College, and Carlisle Barracks, leaders are talking with soldiers and civilians in the workforce to candidly discuss their experiences and insights about suicide in our units and organizations.

The effort started at the top, when Gen. Joseph M. Martin, Vice Chief of Staff, led a chain teach initiative in late 2021 that is moving like a wave to reach the most junior leaders in teams and squads to engage all in the Army's Suicide Prevention Program.

"Suicide is a societal issues, and the U.S. Army is not immune. Our formations comprise Soldiers that reflect the nation they've sworn to defend," said Martin. "We, as leaders, owe it to each Soldier to educate their leaders at every echelon on how to recognize signs of mental health challenges, where to seek the appropriate resources, and the importance of ensuring individuals feel connected to others."

Leader intervention is an important complement to existing programs, such as Not in My Squad. Information and tools guide Soldiers to help each other. They help families recognize indicators and understand paths to help. They arm leaders with proven insights and strategies – based on proven public health insights.

Tools and information

The Military Crisis Line: Talk to someone. Always available, 24/7/365.

Trained counselors. Free, confidential resource for ALL service members – including members of the National Guard and Reserve, and Veterans even if they're not registered with VA or enrolled in VA health care.

- Call 1-800-273.8255 = 1-800-273.TALK and Press 1.
- Chat online
- Text 838255

Suicide Prevention Battle Drill Cards offer tips to guide unit leaders, Soldiers and Family members to recognize indicators and respond to suicide ideation.

Suicide Postvention Handbook is written for unit commanders with structured actions that support units in returning to a readiness posture after a suicide event.

Army Chaplaincy is developing unit-level Chaplaincy Care to help Soldiers use spirituality as a resource for enhancing Soldier and Family appreciation of life, relationships and personal resilience.

Behavioral Health Pulse (BH Pulse) provides leaders with visibility of a variety of BH problems, BH utilization, and risky behaviors. Leader knowledge leads to leader action.

Signs of Crisis. Some behaviors can be a sign that a person needs help. Learn to spot the warning signs of an emotional or mental health crisis. Call for help if you are experiencing any of these –

- Thinking about hurting or killing yourself
- Looking for ways to kill yourself
- Talking about death, dying, or suicide
- Self-destructive behavior, such as drug abuse, risky use of weapons, etc.

Help your Soldier or Veteran if you see these indicators –

- Appearing sad or depressed most of the time
- Hopelessness
- Anxiety, agitation, sleeplessness, or mood swings

- Feeling as if there is no reason to live
- Feeling excessive guilt, shame, or sense of failure
- Rage or anger
- Engaging in risky activities without thinking
- Increasing alcohol or drug misuse
- Losing interest in hobbies, work, or school
- Neglecting personal welfare and appearance
- Withdrawing from family and friends
- Showing violent behavior, like punching a hole in the wall or getting into fights
- Giving away prized possessions
- Getting affairs in order, tying up loose ends, or writing a will