National Suicide Prevention Week, World Suicide Prevention Day and Army Suicide Prevention Month 2013

Shoulder to Shoulder: Standing Ready and Resilient

The United States Army remains the strength of our Nation and has demonstrated remarkable skill and professionalism over the past 12 years of combat operations. Nevertheless, the stress of military service, the resulting strain placed on relationships and Families, and injuries and illnesses suffered by some have challenged our resiliency. Individual responses to these challenges are often manifested as risk behaviors which sometimes may include suicide.

As a part of the ongoing Ready and Resilient Campaign, we are committed to cultivating a healthy and supportive climate to mitigate the possibility that our Army team members will consider suicide as an option in response to stress or adversity. When we see indicators suggesting that our battle buddies are at risk, we must have the courage to intervene in a compassionate and responsible way. Leaders at all levels must underscore the importance of awareness, education and training as a way to increase the resiliency and strength of our Soldiers, Civilians and Families.

This September, in support of the Ready and Resilient Campaign outcomes, leaders across the Army should assess their units and engage in events and training designed to promote resiliency through education and awareness activities. These activities will include training in Comprehensive Soldier and Family Fitness; suicide prevention, assessments and intervention techniques; and activities that support stigma reduction. Active leadership involvement is critical to campaign success. We must leverage military and community resources to build individual resilience, strengthen Army professionals and sustain unit readiness while preserving lives.

Suicide impacts the entire Army community. We urge all Soldiers, Civilians and Families to work together to prevent suicide and to enhance individual and collective resilience and readiness through strong training programs. Our strength is at its greatest when we operate as a team.

Army Strong!

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