



NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION WEEK, WORLD SUICIDE PREVENTION DAY AND ARMY SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH 2011

Our Army Family continues to feel the stresses and strains of almost a decade of continuous operations abroad and at home. Regrettably, we have seen this stress lead some of our Soldiers, Family members and Civilians to take their own lives. This has profound effects on Families, friends, communities and units. Every member of the Army Family plays a vital role in the success of our missions and the unity of our organizations, and we cannot afford to lose even one person to something as preventable as suicide.

Therefore, the Army is renewing our emphasis on prevention, health and resilience by once again expanding the observation of National Suicide Prevention Week and World Suicide Prevention Day to the entire month of September. We urge commanders to host events that highlight the availability of resources, underscore the compassionate support of the command leadership, and emphasize the importance of the relationships we build within the Army Family.

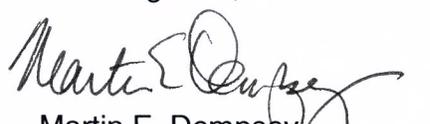
Over the last three years, we have intensified our efforts to recognize the warning signs and risk factors of suicide. We have instituted more training through the Comprehensive Soldier Fitness Program and have provided forums and interactive videos where suicide survivors and Families of those who lost a loved one shared their experiences and personal stories. This year, the Army will focus on illustrating stories of resilience, providing education and examples of protective factors, and conveying to our Army Family that treatment for both behavioral health and substance abuse is available and effective.

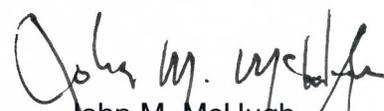
The reasons that people take their own life are very complex. We have found that effective suicide prevention and intervention activities require a continuum of services and must build on individual, family, unit and community strength.

Members of the Army Family, we urge you to work together to prevent suicide and to raise your awareness of available tools and resources. Adopt effective coping skills and turn to trusted friends and family in times of need. Help yourself by joining a support group or help someone else by volunteering. Confide in your clergy or a counselor. Maintain healthy lifestyles – get sufficient sleep, practice relaxation techniques, identify your stressors and manage them. Work with your unit's Master Resilience Trainers, who can help build these skills and help instill resilience across the Army Family.

We owe it to each other and to ourselves to fight this problem with the same unity of purpose with which we fight our wars. Together, we can make a difference.


Raymond F. Chandler, III
Sergeant Major of the Army


Martin E. Dempsey
General, United States Army
Chief of Staff


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37

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 800-273-TALK (8255)

OCONUS – DSN Prefix – 273-TALK (8255)