

# HOLISTIC WELLNESS CHALLENGE



## BOOST YOUR SPIRIT!

**CHALLENGE** your Service members and yourself to use at least one of the recommended resources to stay connected and spiritually fit this holiday season and all year long.



The holidays are a time to give thanks, get together with friends and family, and look forward to new beginnings. However, some of our Guard family may face challenges this time of year. Financial pressures, long holiday to-do lists, or feelings of loneliness and grief can increase stress. Focusing on your spiritual fitness during this season provides the foundation for your physical, emotional, and social well-being to cope with the challenges that the holidays can bring. Check out the tips below and previous Holistic Wellness Challenges ([www.nationalguard.mil/Resources/Holistic-Wellness-Challenge](http://www.nationalguard.mil/Resources/Holistic-Wellness-Challenge)) to keep mentally and spiritually fit. Stay safe, stay healthy, and stay connected.

Until next time,

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### FACTS & FIGURES: DID YOU KNOW?

- Spiritual fitness is about connection and purpose.
- It is personal and different for everyone, and not about following a certain ideology or belief.
- According to DoD, spiritual fitness provides:<sup>1</sup>
  - A sense of identity and belonging
  - Awareness of meaning and purpose
  - A greater commitment to Service core values
  - Improved ability to cope

### SPIRITUAL DISTRESS DECREASES READINESS

Spiritual well-being can impact mental, emotional, and physical health. Watch for these signs of spiritual distress<sup>2</sup> in yourself or others and act. Talk to someone you trust and ask for help.



Loss of direction



Hopelessness and helplessness



Sense of emptiness/feeling alone in the world



Withdrawal from family and friends



Fearfulness, disassociation



Self-destructive language



Bitter or jaded outlook on life



Anger at God/higher power

### STAY SPIRITUALLY STRONG

Use the following tips<sup>3</sup> to practice spiritual fitness and stay connected every day.

- **Be grateful.** Write down what you are grateful for to remember what matters most.
- **Serve others.** Do one thing every day to make someone's life better.
- **Overcome challenges.** Act on what you can change and accept what you cannot.
- **Let go.** Forgive yourself and others to make room for hope and healing.
- **Live your values.** Let your core beliefs guide your thoughts and actions.

**CONTACT US**  
For more information on spiritual fitness or other topics email:  
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## SPIRITUAL FITNESS FOSTERS RESILIENCE

### What does it mean?

- Spiritual fitness is about finding purpose in something larger than yourself, like faith or nature, which helps provide meaning in your life.

### Why does it matter?

- Spiritual fitness can give you the mental and emotional strength needed to carry on during times of stress or hardship.

### What can you do?

- Use the recommended resources to explore your own spirituality to better understand what motivates and guides you.
- If you are a member of a spiritual community, stay engaged for continued strength and support.
- Remember that spiritual fitness is like physical fitness; you need to practice it regularly to improve performance and maintain readiness.
- Know the signs of spiritual distress and reach out to someone you trust, your spiritual community, or Chaplain if you are feeling lost or disconnected.
- Recall a time you overcame a challenge, write it down, and post it somewhere that you will see it to draw strength from that experience.
- Find volunteer opportunities to connect with and give back to your community this holiday season and throughout the year.
- Tell someone how much you appreciate them to enhance their sense of belonging.
- Regularly check in with your battle buddy or wingman, so they know they are not alone.



## WE HEARD YOU! 2024 DEOCS UPDATE

Thank you to all who participated in the 2024 Defense Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS). You took the time to make your voices heard and we appreciate it. We are now in the process of reviewing and analyzing your feedback.

The results will drive prevention activities designed to protect you and your families' health and well-being. Keep an eye out for your state-level Comprehensive Integrated Primary Prevention plan for more details.



## RESOURCES TO RECOMMEND



Your Chaplain, Military and Family Life Counselor, Director of Psychological Health, or Behavioral Health Officer are available for support. Contact them today to find out how you can enhance your spiritual fitness and sense of connection.



Military OneSource helps Service members and their families strengthen their spiritual fitness with resources, support, and counseling via phone, online chat, or video. [www.militaryonesource.mil](http://www.militaryonesource.mil)



Human Performance Resources by CHAMP offers an evidence-based spiritual fitness resource hub with tools and tips to help you navigate challenges and optimize performance. [www.hprc-online.org/mental-fitness/spiritual-fitness](http://www.hprc-online.org/mental-fitness/spiritual-fitness)



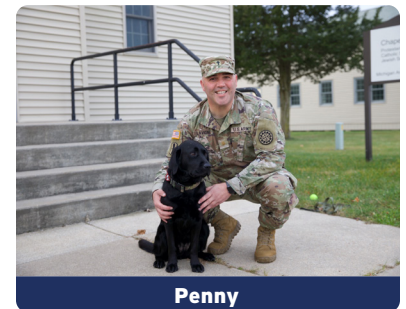
## SPOTLIGHT: THERAPY DOGS CREATE CONNECTION AND RELIEVE STRESS

185th Air Refueling Wing **Chaplain Steve Peters** works with his therapy dog **Adele**, a morale support dog and full-time member of the care team to connect and comfort members of the **Iowa Air National Guard**.



Adele

Trained therapy dog **Penny** works alongside **Chaplain Adam Lavigne** from the 177th Military Police Brigade Unit Ministry Team to foster the resilience and well-being of **Michigan Army National Guard** Service members.



Penny

### REFERENCES:

1. Human Performance Resources by CHAMP. <https://www.hprc-online.org/total-force-fitness/tff-strategies/what-total-force-fitness>.
2. Military One Source. <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/transition-retirement/national-guard-reserves/spiritual-wellness>.
3. Human Performance Resources by CHAMP. <https://www.hprc-online.org/mental-fitness/spiritual-fitness/strategies-build-your-spiritual-readiness>.