



HOLISTIC WELLNESS CHALLENGE



SPEAK UP, SAVE A LIFE

CHALLENGE your Service members and yourself to use at least one of the recommended resources to prevent self-directed harm.

FACTS & FIGURES: DID YOU KNOW?

- **45%** of National Guard members who died by suicide **gave some warning** about their intent to harm themselves.¹
- Most people with suicidal thoughts **do not want to die**, they want to stop their pain.²
- **Talking about suicide does not encourage suicide**; it gives the at-risk person an outlet to express their thoughts and feelings and get the support they need.²

KNOW THE SIGNS

Suicide can be prevented. It starts with recognizing when someone is at-risk and taking the warning signs seriously. Know these signs and act if you notice them among fellow Service members.³

- Lack of interest in activities they once enjoyed
- Withdrawal from friends and family
- Sudden changes in mood
- Reckless behavior
- Anxiety or agitation
- Rage or desire for revenge
- Unusual spending
- Giving away possessions
- Planning arrangements for pets
- Increased drug or alcohol use



CONTACT US

For more information on suicide prevention or other topics email:
nq.ncr.ngb.mbx.integrated-prevention-branch@army.mil

CNGB & SEA Corner

Always Ready, Always There

The strength of the National Guard lies in our connection to our mission and each other. Supporting a fellow Guardsman in distress requires empathy and the courage to ask: "Are you ok?" These words can be lifesaving. Know the signs of struggle. Reach out early. Listen. Pass along resources and let them know that seeking help is a sign of strength.

Let's commit to a culture where trust runs deep, and no one walks alone.

Stronger Together. Stronger Tomorrow.

Steven S. Nordhaus John T. Raines III

Steven S. Nordhaus	John T. Raines, III
General, USAF	SEA, USA
Chief, NGB	NGB

START A CONVERSATION

If a battle buddy or wingman shows signs of distress, don't brush it off.

Ask questions and **actively listen** to their responses. Try one of these conversation starts⁴:

- *I've been worried about you. Can we talk?*
- *I am here to listen. How are you feeling?*
- *I care. How can I help you find help?*

ASSESS THE RISK

You do not need to be a trained healthcare professional to assess a person's risk for suicide. If you are concerned that someone may harm themselves, use the **Columbia Protocol** (<https://cssrs.columbia.edu/>). It is a simple, two to six question **screening tool** that quickly determines the severity and immediacy of that risk. It also identifies the level of support needed and next steps for the person screened. **Everyone has a role to play in preventing suicide.** Do your part!



CRUCIAL CONVERSATIONS

What does it mean?

- Talking to someone and expressing concern about their well-being builds trust and provides a sense of belonging and hope.

Why does it matter?

- The strength derived from that support can help us cope with adversity.

What can you do?

- Create a culture of trust that encourages open and honest conversations.
- Take note of any unusual behavior in your fellow Service members.
- If they seem withdrawn or angry, ask them what is bothering them.
- Use tools, like the Columbia Protocol in the "Resources to Recommend" section below, to identify the level of risk.
- Promote lethal means safety, making access to guns more difficult in a crisis.
- If the person is in danger, call 911, and **stay with them** until help arrives.



Make Your

VOICE HEARD

Participate in the 2025 DEOCS

Prevention efforts thrive in supportive environments. It's up to every Guardsmen to create a healthy command climate that protects against harmful behaviors. Make your voice heard by participating in the Defense Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS).



RESOURCES TO RECOMMEND



The Columbia Protocol is a risk assessment tool that consists of yes/no questions to identify if someone is at-risk of suicide and to inform the level of support needed. It does not require specialized training to administer, and it **can be used anytime and anywhere** - in the office or the field; in-person or over the phone. <https://cssrs.columbia.edu/>

ANDROID USERS



IPHONE USERS



The National Institute of Health has **5 Action Steps to Help Someone Having Thoughts of Suicide**. It identifies the warning signs and the steps to take to get someone the help they need. <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/5-action-steps-to-help-someone-having-thoughts-of-suicide>



Project Safeguard is a **lethal means safety training** and counseling curriculum that uses peer-to-peer intervention to reduce the negative stigma associated with delivering lethal means training, and provides Service members with tools to protect themselves, fellow Service members, and their families. For more information, email: nq.ncr.nqb.mbx.integrated-prevention-branch@army.mil



The **Veterans Crisis Line** offers 24/7 confidential crisis support for Service members. Dial 988, then Press 1 | Text 838255 | Chat Online <https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/>



SPOTLIGHT: NORTH DAKOTA ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

- During the Suicide Prevention Recognition Ceremony at the Pentagon on September 4, 2025, DoD honored the North Dakota Army National Guard (ARNG) for its innovative efforts to increase suicide prevention awareness among Guardsmen.
- Throughout a year-long campaign, the North Dakota ARNG partnered with the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Health and Human Services to host 35 educational events in eight cities.
- The team utilized a podcast and newsletter to promote the educational events, enhance connectedness among Guardsmen, and share resources with more than 1,500 followers on social media.



REFERENCES:

- Defense Suicide Prevention Office. https://www.dsppo.mil/Portals/113/2024/documents/annual_report/ARSM_CY23_final_508c.pdf
- Defense Suicide Prevention Office. [https://www.dsppo.mil/Portals/113/Documents/DSPO_LSP_SafeMsgGuid%20\(Final\).pdf?ver=opq1ACha5G4DEMHsWeZ1lw%3d%3d](https://www.dsppo.mil/Portals/113/Documents/DSPO_LSP_SafeMsgGuid%20(Final).pdf?ver=opq1ACha5G4DEMHsWeZ1lw%3d%3d)
- Military OneSource. <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/health-wellness/prevention-care/when-a-service-member-may-be-at-risk-for-suicide/>
- Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration. <https://www.samhsa.gov/mental-health/what-is-mental-health/how-to-talk/friends-and-family>