



RHUMB LINES

Straight Lines to Navigate By



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Operational Stress Control and Suicide Prevention

“An unwavering bond is developed among Sailors who deploy and share together the high stresses of a combat environment. Keeping in touch and talking with the Sailors who are experiencing the same effects of post deployment stress has never been more important. Realizing you're not alone is a positive step in the road to recovery.”
– MA1(EXW/SW) Glen Bednarz, recently returned Individual Augmentee

The Navy views suicide prevention in the larger context of Operational Stress Control (OSC) and encourages leadership engagement to promote the well-being of Sailors and their families.

Operational Stress Control

To mitigate the extraordinary demands and stress that naval operations can place on our Sailors and their families, [OSC](#) was established to transition the Navy to a more proactive culture in promoting psychological health.

- OSC raises awareness and provides education about the prevention and treatment of operational stress. The goal is to build more resilient Sailors and families by reducing the stigma associated with seeking psychological services and creating a continuum of psychological health care.
- OSC awareness training educates Sailors on the signs and symptoms of excessive stress and how to implement mitigation strategies to prevent long-term psychological damage. This training has been presented to more than 30,800 Sailors in the pre- and post-deployment phases to include members at Navy Mobilization Processing Sites and Returning Warrior Weekends.
- [The Stress Continuum Model](#) guides leaders in recognizing and responding to stress indicators in order to protect the well-being of our Sailors and their families.

Resources

To help maintain resilient Sailors, the Navy provides physical, financial, mental and social health management resources to encourage Sailors to seek assistance early and mitigate stressors. Leading factors associated with Navy suicides are relationship and career stressors to include legal and financial issues.

- [Fleet and Family Support Centers](#) offer pre- and post-deployment training, the [financial management program](#), the [family advocacy](#) program and other services to keep Sailors and their families on track.
- The chain of command, chaplains and mental health providers offer daily leadership and guidance.
- [Confidential consultations](#), arranged by Military OneSource, are available face-to-face, online or by telephone.

ACT -- Ask, Care, Treat

Suicide can be prevented. Leaders at all levels can provide support to Sailors.

- Ask – Don't be afraid to ask. Ask the person what is bothering them and persist to overcome any reluctance to talk about it. Don't judge.
- Care – Listen, offer hope, and don't judge. Let them know they are not alone. Offer hope.
- Treat – Take action, get assistance, and follow up. Take the individual to a person or agency specializing in crisis intervention and suicide prevention. Do not leave them alone until help is available.

Key Messages

- Relationship problems and career stressors including legal and financial problems continue to be leading factors associated with Navy suicides.
- Leaders should view [suicide prevention](#) in the larger context of operational stress control and good leadership.
- OSC focuses on proactive prevention, recognition and mitigation of stress injuries.

Facts & Figures

- Suicide is the third leading cause of death in the Navy.
- The risk of suicide for Sailors increases during the six month period following a deployment.
- The suicidal state of mind is most often temporary and reversible with timely assistance.
- Military OneSource offers help 24x7:1-800-342-9647