



LIFELINK

NEWSLETTER

<p>Page 1 New Peer Support Program Offered by Military OneSource</p>	<p>Page 2 LifeLink Spotlight, Resilience Corner, New Operational Stress Control Instruction</p>	<p>Page 3 Recharging Resilience with Sleep, News and Resources, 2015 Suicide Prevention Month</p>
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New Peer Support Program Offered by Military OneSource

While talking about stress may seem intimidating, having the support of someone who has “been there” can take the stress out of finding the resources you need. That’s one of the benefits of peer support, which leverages similar experiences and collaboration between individuals to create a forum for exploring positive coping strategies. Peer support can promote wellness, healthy stress navigation, stronger social connections, and improve overall quality of life—all built upon a foundation of Trust (one of the Principles of Resilience). The unique qualities of peer support, from the level of authenticity felt when speaking with someone who can relate, to the relaxed recovery-oriented approach to providing advice and resources, make this a key avenue for seeking help for life’s challenges outside of more traditional treatment settings.

Military OneSource now offers confidential peer-to-peer support for active duty service members, guardsmen, reservists (regardless of duty status), and their families. The service, accessible 24/7 by dialing the Military OneSource support line at 800-342-9647, offers callers an outlet to talk through stressors and get connected with the right resources, with the help of those who understand the stress of military life first-hand.

Service members and families who seek the support of Military OneSource’s peer support consultants can expect to speak with a caring, qualified peer with personal experience navigating their own stress as a military retiree, active duty or reserve service member, or military spouse. Consultants are not medical or clinical care providers—helping to keep conversations relaxed and relatable—but do have a minimum of a master’s degree and have been trained in best practices in peer support by the **Defense Centers of Excellence**. They’re available to listen without judgment, provide advice if desired, and connect callers with specific resources to help them make the most out of their military life.

Whether calling due to financial, family, or career-related stress, engaging peer support is a positive step toward proactively navigating challenges, promoting personal and mission readiness. Peer support services don’t just make connections or

referrals to resources. They can help service members and families feel more comfortable speaking about life’s hurdles and overcome the internal and environmental barriers that can often get in the way of seeking help. Peer support also offers reciprocal benefits, providing consultants with the opportunity to grow from their own personal challenges by helping callers withstand, recover and adapt from their own—building resilience together.

Using this or any of Military OneSource’s confidential support services will not negatively affect a service member’s career and information will not be shared. While not intended as a crisis line, consultants will connect callers with immediate resources if an emergency is imminent, ensuring that everyone gets the support they need when they need it most.

For more information on this new service, visit **Military OneSource** or check out **this article** from Department of Defense news. To speak with a peer consultant at Military OneSource, call 1-800-342-9647.

***BONUS:** Have you checked out **Make the Connection**? This campaign led by the Department of Veterans Affairs offers personal stories from veterans and service members to promote wellness and resources. Check it out at www.maketheconnection.net.*



Hear from other Veterans who know what it's like. **MAKE THE CONNECTION**
www.MakeTheConnection.net



Lifelink Spotlight

This month's Lifelink Spotlight recognizes and celebrates Team Navy and each of the wounded, ill and injured service members and veterans who participated in the sixth annual Department of Defense Warrior Games last month.

Demonstrating the true meaning of determination and resilience, the 39 active and retired Sailors and Coast Guardsmen who competed on behalf of Team Navy brought back 43 medals, including 12 gold medals, at the games held at Marine Corps Base Quantico. The annual competition provides an unparalleled opportunity for wounded, ill and injured veterans—from those impacted by invisible wounds such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) to those impacted by life-altering physical injuries—to thrive off of cohesion and contribution, much like their days on active duty.

For retired **Master-at-Arms 1st Class Adrian "A.J." Mohammed**, who suffered a traumatic brain injury and other injuries that left him legally blind and completely deaf in one ear, the games turned a cycling hobby into a full fledged committed passion for tandem cycling. Teaming up with a "pilot," tandem cycling for the Warrior Games was more than just a test of Mohammed's physical and mental endurance. The progressive trust and teamwork needed to successfully navigate the tandem bike shed new perspective on his ability to work through life's challenges with confidence and acceptance.

Chief Logistics Specialist Averill Malone, another member of Team Navy, credits his wife and a battle buddy for his long journey to recovery after coping with invisible wounds in silence for several years. With their help, Malone sought treatment and now champions seeking help among other wounded warriors. Adaptive sports have provided him support through a network of peers working through an array of challenges that have united them toward a common goal. "I was looking at my shadow today," Malone told **All Hands Magazine**. "...And I was like 'Wow, that's the shadow of an athlete. That's the shadow of a warrior.'"

Cohesion, contribution and community are protective factors during challenges on and off the playing field. The capacity to withstand, recover, adapt and grow in the face of stressors is what defines resilience—a characteristic embodied by all Warrior Games athletes.

Check out more from the 2015 Warrior Games [here](#).



Resilience Corner

What to Eat When Stress is Eating You

Contrary to popular belief, not all stress eating is bad for you. In fact, eating the right foods when your emotions are running high can actually help calm you down. The next time you reach for a comfort food when you're stressed, try these healthy swaps:



Go for a handful of almonds instead of cookies. Almonds contain a winning stress-relief combination: vitamin B12, vitamin E, magnesium and zinc. For those who take to the peanut butter jar with a tablespoon – go for a spoonful of almond butter instead!

Swap chips and dip for avocado slices. If you're craving something rich and satisfying, go for the "good fat." The monounsaturated fats and potassium found in avocado can lower blood pressure. If plain slices aren't enticing, enjoy guacamole instead!

Meat lover? Try a salmon burger instead of beef. Salmon is packed with Omega-3 fatty acids, which not only fight heart disease, but can keep cortisol and adrenaline levels in check. Translation? You'll be able to calm down and relax after a stressful event, instead of remaining tense and "wound up."

Need something sweet? Put down the M&Ms! Go for a bowl of blueberries and cantaloupe, which are just as colorful and easy on the eye, but are also packed full of stress-busting antioxidants and vitamin C.

Warm up with oatmeal. Carbohydrates trigger the release of serotonin, a mood-boosting hormone, but smart carb choices are key. A good old-fashioned bowl of oatmeal can help get you out of your funk and keep cravings at bay. Instead of buying the flavored oatmeal loaded with sugar, buy plain oatmeal, add some fresh blueberries, and sweeten to your taste.

For more tips to keep you mentally and physically fit, visit **Navy Nutrition** online.

New Operational Stress Control Program Instruction

The Office of the Chief of Naval Operations (OPNAV) has issued the first instruction for the Navy's Operational Stress Control (OSC) Program. OPNAV 6520.1 details policy, responsibilities and procedures to help standardize the OSC Program across the fleet. Established in 2008, the OSC Program has evolved into a highly-regarded force-multiplier, helping Navy leaders build resilience in their Sailors through awareness and understanding of stress, and evidence-based strategies to mitigate its detrimental effects. The instruction identifies specific responsibilities for execution of key OSC Program elements, including policy and oversight, strategic communication, training and education, and assessment and analysis. For more information, visit the **OSC Program website**.

News and Resources

Keep What You've Earned Play to Live Pledge [Max.gov](#)

Peer Support Resources for Members of the National Guard, Reserve and Individual Augmentees [Real Warriors](#)

Motivation. Inspiration. Elevation: Chaplain Reflections from the 2015 Warrior Games [Navy Chaplain Corps Live](#)

Yoga: Ancient Practice Helps Today's Patients [Navy.mil](#)

Trapped by Your Thoughts? [HPRC](#)

Sport Psychologists Help Athletes Stay on Track at Warrior Games and in Life [Health.mil](#)

Free Support Program for Warriors in Transition [Real Warriors](#)

Winnefeld: Hiring Veterans a 'Win-Win' for Businesses [Defense.gov](#)

Moving and Settling into a New Home with Children [Military OneSource](#)

Upcoming Events

SPC Training Webinars

July 15

August 12

[Register Here](#)

2015 Navy Suicide Prevention Month
September

Recharge Your Resilience with a Good Night's Sleep

As Sailors, sleep can seem like a luxury or low priority relative to mission demands, and surviving off of little to no sleep is often worn like a badge of honor.

However, the amount of sleep the body needs doesn't vary by individual. Sleeping only four to five hours a night can lead to loss of performance in the short and long term for anyone. In fact, sleep is so vital that even slight deprivation beyond the recommended seven to nine hours per night can negatively affect memory, mood and judgment, according to the American Psychological Association (APA).



A recent APA survey found that 21 percent of adults feel more stressed when they do not get adequate sleep and 37 percent experience fatigue or tiredness because of stress¹, underscoring the cyclical relationship between the two. When you're sleepy, you may feel irritable, lack motivation, or lose patience faster than usual. These consequences impact everything from family life to mental health, potentially contributing to depression and increasing suicide risk.

To develop better sleeping habits, consider the following:

A quick nap can promote a restful night's sleep. If you need to catch some ZZ's, especially if you're on a demanding or rotating work schedule, try a quick nap between 0300 and 0500 or 1300 and 1500, as these are optimal periods that can help you recharge². Maximum alertness is reduced between midnight and 0800, so if you're performing tasks during this period, naps are critical to reducing your sleep deficit and keeping you alert. Just don't nap on the job!

Create an optimal environment that blocks light and limits noise. Using sleep masks and earplugs can help, especially if you may not get a full eight-hours of sleep or are sleeping during the day. Keep your room or area cool to reduce the likelihood of waking due to overheating.

Can't sleep? Get up! Lying in bed awake can promote anxiety, making it harder to fall asleep. If you're still awake after 20 minutes, get up and do a relaxing activity (try reading) until you feel sleepy again.

If you're experiencing trouble sleeping, contact your local health provider to develop solutions together. For more resources, head to [Naval Safety Center](#) and [Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center's Health Promotion and Wellness Department](#).

¹American Psychological Association. (2013). *Stress in America: 2013. Stress and Sleep*.

²National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute. (April 2006). *In Brief: Your Guide to Healthy Sleep*.

³Human Performance Resource Center. (n.d.). *How Much Sleep Does a Warfighter Need?*

Looking Ahead: 2015 Suicide Prevention Month

Suicide prevention in the Navy is not just an annual observance, but is used as the launch-pad for continuous engagement at the deckplate throughout the upcoming fiscal year. To that end, this September we will use Suicide Prevention Month to introduce a new message under the *Every Sailor, Every Day* campaign, "1 Small ACT." This message encourages simple actions that shipmates, leaders and families can take to promote cohesion, intervene and save a life, based on Navy's Ask Care Treat (ACT) model. As part of the *Every Sailor, Every Day* campaign, "1 Small ACT" ties into the broader collaborative communications efforts between the armed forces, [Department of Defense Suicide Prevention Office](#) (DSPO) and the [Department of Veterans Affairs](#) (VA). In the coming weeks, suicide prevention coordinators can expect to receive a toolkit containing printable and digital graphics, plan of the day notes, social media messages, and more to help tailor local efforts and kick off this next phase of the *Every Sailor, Every Day* campaign at their command. Additional products will be released throughout the month of September and the upcoming fiscal year to educate Sailors, leaders and families on the impact that "1 Small ACT" can have on a person's life. More details to follow!