



PERSONNEL AND
READINESS

OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

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**MEMORANDUM FOR SENIOR PENTAGON LEADERSHIP
COMMANDERS OF THE COMBATANT COMMANDS
DEFENSE AGENCY AND DOD FIELD ACTIVITY DIRECTORS**

SUBJECT: 2024 Department of Defense Suicide Prevention Awareness Month Observance and Kick-off for the 2024-2025 Annual Campaign, "Joining Your Fight: Connect to Protect"

This September, the Department of Defense highlights the Secretary of Defense's commitment to Taking Care of Our People through this year's Suicide Prevention and Awareness Month campaign, "Joining Your Fight: Connect to Protect."

The year-long campaign serves as a call to action to raise awareness, connection, safety, and hope across the greater military community. If you find yourself wondering what you can do, I want you to remember that your actions can save lives. Simple acts such as creating safe spaces, being present, and listening to your friends, family, and colleagues without judgment can make a difference. Other actions include securing the storage of firearms and medications which can put critical time and distance between thoughts of suicide and the means to act, greatly reducing the risk of someone you know dying by suicide.

Suicide prevention is complex with no simple solutions. In September 2023, the Secretary of Defense announced a new suicide prevention strategy and campaign plan across five Lines of Effort (LOEs) with 83 enabling actions in progress through Fiscal Year 2030. These LOEs include fostering a supportive environment, improving the delivery of mental health care, addressing stigma and other barriers to care, revising suicide prevention training, and promoting a culture of lethal means safety. This year's campaign builds upon these LOEs, bringing us one step closer towards our shared goal of eliminating deaths by suicide across the total force.

We must stay vigilant in our efforts to increase awareness and end the scourge of suicide. If you are interested in learning more, throughout September the Defense Suicide Prevention Office will host a series of events to highlight the resources the Department offers, including an informational fair at the Pentagon in recognition of World Suicide Prevention Day, and a ceremony to honor exemplary Suicide Prevention Programs from across the Department. Resources available to Service members, DoD civilians, and family members can also be found through the following organizations:

Veterans and Military Crisis Line (military personnel, veterans, and their families, 24/7)

- Access to trained counselors who will listen, provide support, and connect you to proper support and resources.

CONUS

- Phone: Dial 988 and press 1
- Text: 838255
- Website: <https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/get-help-now/chat/>

OCONUS:

- In Europe, call: 844-702-5495 or DSN 988, in Southwest Asia, call 855-422-7719 or DSN 988, in the Pacific, call 844-702-5493 or DSN 988

988 Lifeline Chat and Text (all Americans, 24/7/365)

- Call or text: 988
- For TTY users: Use your preferred relay service or dial 711 then 988.
- Visit: <https://988lifeline.org/chat>

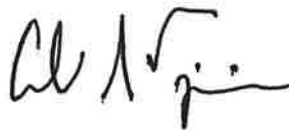
Military OneSource (military personnel and their families, 24/7)

- The Department's gateway to trusted information, resources, and confidential help to include financial counseling, non-medical counseling, spouse employment support, relocation, and deployment tools and more.
- Free and confidential non-crisis support to all Service members and their families.
- Call: 800-342-9647
- Chat: <https://livechat.militaryonesourceconnect.org/webchat/>
- Web: www.militaryonesource.mil/

Employee Assistance Program (EAP) (DoD civilian employees, 24/7)

- The DoD EAP provides resources, information, and confidential help.
- Call: 866-580-9046 (TTY 711)

The welfare of our community is a collective effort, and it takes all of us paying attention and staying connected to one another to know we are never alone. Suicide affects everyone, so let us pledge to ourselves and our friends, co-workers, and family members to seek help early and often when needed. We are stronger together, and together we can *Join the Fight* not only during National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month, but all year long. Please disseminate this memorandum to the widest audience within your Component to ensure awareness.



Ashish S. Vazirani
Performing the Duties of the Under Secretary of
Defense for Personnel and Readiness