

Lytaria Walker: [00:13](#) Good morning again. Welcome to the Army Resilience Directorate Outreach Webinar for November. At this time, all participants are in a listen-only mode. However, you may ask questions at any time by placing them in the Q&A box. There will be several opportunities for questions throughout the webinar, and we should have some time at the end as well. Remember to place your questions in the Q&A box, not the chat box. Today's webinar has been approved for one hour of live continuing education units. Participants must obtain CEU certification through their local commanders by downloading the webinar presentation slides as attendance verification. The slides will be posted in the chat box at the end of the webinar. Please note: the views of ARD Outreach Webinar presenters are their own and are not endorsed by the Department of the Army or the Department of Defense.

Lytaria Walker: [01:21](#) This month, our guest is Lieutenant Colonel Jacob Cool. Lieutenant Colonel Cool is a Detachment Chief for the Defense Threat Reduction Agency located in K-town, Germany. He leads a detachment responsible for conducting assigned training, exercises, and education to support the United States European command priorities. Cool commissioned into the United States Army in 2002 from North Georgia College and State University. He graduated from Senior Service College in 2022 and completed a United States Army War College Fellowship at the NATO Defense College in Rome, Italy. He also deployed to Iraq, South Korea, and Afghanistan to support the US military operations. Lieutenant Colonel Cool earned a Master of Science degree from the National Intelligence University and another from Troy University. He also received an Executive Certificate in Nonprofit Leadership from Harvard Kennedy School. His military badges and awards include the Combat Action Badge, Master Explosive Ordnance Disposal Badge, Parachutist Badge, Defense Meritorious Service Medal with two oak leaf clusters, and a host of other decorations. He is married to the former Katie Bliss and is the proud father of two boys, Jake T. and William. Lieutenant Colonel Cool, thank you for joining us this morning. Take it away, sir.

Lieutenant Colo...: [03:08](#) Thank you so much for that kind introduction. Well, good morning, good evening, good afternoon! I'm just looking into the chat box, and it's great to see so many folks dialing in from all over the world -- from Korea to just down the road from me in K-town. So, thank you so much for your time. It's an absolute honor to be here and to share part of my story and some of my reflections. I know this discussion begins with a tragedy, but there is a greater story to tell in the recovery, in the aftermath. It is high quality leadership, personal resilience habits

developed over time, and a comprehensive response approach in that recovery process that brought my wife and I out of some very dark places.

Lieutenant Colo...: [04:06](#) As I reflect over the last two and a half years, there are things that contributed to my recovery that I am not seeing in the main dialogue of suicide prevention and mental health. While calling an 800 number and seeking professional help is good, for my journey that was only one component of a larger process. I want to share some of those reflections in the hope that they will help someone out there through their own struggles. A little bit about my story. My late son, Jake -- there is a picture of him on the screen -- lived about 16 and a half years, and he lived by the motto,

Lieutenant Colo...: [04:58](#) "The Grind Don't Stop." As I look back, I really think that eloquently captures resilience and mental health for all of us, because it is something for everyone to do regardless of your age, your circumstance, or your situation, and because, essentially, you just don't know what tomorrow will bring or what life will throw at you. About my son, Jake. He lived 16 and a half years. He finished his 10th grade year. He was my better in all aspects of life -- he had straight As, never got a B, he tested into multiple gifted programs wherever we went. He had a bright future -- a Duke TIP and in the top percentage for standardized tests. More importantly, he had an unmatched work ethic and a really tender heart for helping others.

Lieutenant Colo...: [06:04](#) This is what inspires me to be here today. About two and a half years ago, I received a phone call at 2:00 AM, while I was deployed to Afghanistan, that my son unexpectedly died. He was healthy and everything else. Later we would learn that he had an undiagnosed heart condition that we of course did not know about. At the time, as I was trying to get back from Afghanistan, and knowing my wife Katie was at the hospital with close friends and in shock with all the events, an overwhelming amount of emotions started to flood over me -- past, present, and future. Past because of regrets, failings as a father, and missed opportunities I could have had and will never get again.

New Speaker: [07:04](#) That time I thought I had with him vanished overnight. I had to make decisions and do things I never imagined I'd have to do. Do we bury him? Do we cremate him? Where do we pick out an urn? Evidently, Amazon truly does have everything from A to Z. Other things -- I had to get his death certificate, I had to battle with health insurance to pay for his one way trip to the hospital in an ambulance. All these emotions and triggers that I had to

deal with in the present for a future crushing disappointment, a future I thought I had with him that vanished. I would never see him graduate high school or college, or marry and have children of his own. In the aftermath of all that, I remember thinking how deathly quiet the house was, and what I wouldn't give to hear my two boys fight again. At that moment, my mind just went into a fog. That is really the best way to describe it. I knew I needed help. I didn't know where to go or what to do. That was something life and education never really prepared me for.

Lieutenant Colo...: [08:39](#)

In this aftermath, I would, to be frank, place my wife and myself in the high risk category for suicide. Many nights I wished for death -- I had lost the will to live. Hope was not there. So, in the next hour (it is not going to be all about a grieving father crying over his lost kid) I want to turn this discussion into a reflection on how we emerged from all of this and didn't become another statistic. I have been reading a lot of reports, especially back in the summer, and veteran suicide is just heartbreaking. It is really my hope to help effect some positive change and to add to the dialogue. If you can go to the next slide, please.

Lieutenant Colo...: [09:42](#)

Stepping back from my own situation and beginning with the problem statement, we can look at the National Defense Strategy. Got it. China is the strategic pacing challenge. As Russia invaded Ukraine, it impacts our national security environment. But underneath all that, I would argue that mental health battles our workforce up close and personal every day. This experience really opened my eyes and brought awareness that all of us are going through struggles, full stop. You can pull a lot of different statistics and reports and studies. The second bullet point is something I pulled out of a report. If you take those numbers at face value, where suicide was a bigger threat to our force than Isis and Al-Qaeda in Iraq and Afghanistan, it makes you stop and think that this is a real problem.

Lieutenant Colo...: [10:54](#)

Taking the emotion out of it, mental health underpins human performance and our organization's ability to achieve our objectives. You, your colleague, your teammate, your battle buddy beside you -- if you are down or your head is in another place, you are obviously not going to perform like you should. It is my argument that this problem is not going away. Therefore, I think new approaches need to be developed to drive that positive change. Between the Department of Defense, Congress, senior armor leadership, and all the way down, they are taking this problem very, very seriously, pushing resources down to the lowest level and across the formations as possible,

which is great. And it's great that I am here today, having this conversation as well.

Lieutenant Colo...: [12:06](#)

There are some positive steps to take going forward, recognizing that we are all different. We have different personality traits, so there is obviously not one cookie cutter approach. That is why I wanted to shape more of a framework to work from versus a step-by-step approach. Being in the Army for a little bit -- I guess I'm turning into one of those old guys -- I can look back to years ago, when we took different suicide awareness and focused on when someone reached a crisis event. Over time, we have shifted way left of that.

Lieutenant Colo...: [13:05](#)

I can't help but argue for suicide prevention. I think for all of us, it really starts today, not when you get to a mental breaking point. It's looking at those daily habits and how to apply them. And it's not just for certain demographics. Some studies will put out that it is the younger Soldiers, the younger families, the isolated first tour. But then we hear about an O-6 or a post command. You think they are at the top in resilience, then something happens. Even their closest colleagues wouldn't have seen those indicators to be concerned. Then one fateful day, they decide to take their life. So really, the stories go across the spectrum. You can go to the next slide, please.

Lieutenant Colo...: [14:23](#)

Since this is an Army group, I am using some vernacular. Being an EOD guy myself, the big term was "left of bang" or "right of bang," being in a steady state or in a crisis. Every day, I think it is critical for all of us to cultivate that resilient foundation. I equate that to the picture on the screen with the tree. It is through building those resilient habits, having that deep-rooted foundation in order to weather any storm, any problems life throws at you. Years back, the Army initiated the concept of resilience and the importance of it, but it never really hit me until the loss of Jake, when I had to cling to those habits.

Lieutenant Colo...: [15:27](#)

Again, I would argue that building this every day is so critical for us to withstand those kinds of events. If you go on the Google machine and search for "resilience," there are going to be massive PhD dissertation theses, many theories, all more qualified than I am to speak on it. I just want to focus on those habits concerning the physical, emotional, social, and spiritual. One very popular study is Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, where your basic foundation is made up of those biological and physiological needs. You need air, water, food, sleep, and shelter as basic needs, and then build up that pyramid to self-esteem and self-actualization.

- Lieutenant Colo...: [16:35](#) Before the loss of Jake, I just loved to hit the gym. It's just one of my things. But after that event, gym time really turned into a form of therapy. I can remember many mornings bawling my eyes out on the pull-up bar outside of MacDill Air Force Base. That was very needed and was just as effective as being on a couch talking to a doc about problems. It's so important, especially when you are in a vulnerable mental state, not to disregard sleep or food or working out. Reflecting on my experiences, it is so critical to address those basic needs. Moving down to the area of the emotional, I've never been a touchy-feely kind of guy, going to therapy and all that.
- Lieutenant Colo...: [17:45](#) But looking back, it is so critical to know yourself. There are a lot of different personality tests and psychology tests, such as Myers Briggs or DiSC. By taking the different tests, you can find out how you think, how you process information, how you look at the world, how you approach problems, and how you approach relationships. It is good to understand your own triggers and what sets you off, whether it's rush hour traffic or something else, so that you can get in a better mental state and process emotions in a more healthy way. Recharge techniques are something I haven't learned until recently. The way I am built is that I like to wake up early, hit the gym, kick some ass for America
- Lieutenant Colo...: [18:52](#) But when I go on travel and I'm working all day, and the group wants to go out and have dinner at night, they are gone until 10, 11 o'clock or later. It drains me emotionally. Over a period of a couple of days, it takes it all out of me. So I switched it up and just told them, "Hey, I love you guys, but I've got to go to bed." It has really helped my own mental state through different things. The next area is social. I took a phrase from professor Arthur Brooks, "real friends vs. deal friends." Naturally, we all have those relationships that are more transactional -- I'm going to do something for you, you're going to do something for me -- whether it is at work or in your personal life.
- Lieutenant Colo...: [19:50](#) Try to find some "real" friends that can be there for you, that can be a sounding board. You can have a deep relationship that doesn't depend on your work, on money, or on some sort of ambitious objective. This is important to have, even if it's just one or two really close friends. Having that in place is critical. And finally, there is the spiritual, which depends on your own values. I think it's really important to connect with a community that shares your values as well, because through tragedy, that is another thing that will help underpin the healing process.

- Lieutenant Colo...: [20:47](#) If you can go to the next slide, please. This slide describes where I hope to effect positive change. It may be out there in bits and pieces, but this is what captured our healing and recovery after the tragedy. As my wife and I reflected, we found a good counselor. It was good, but it was only one component of the process. First, having those close Family and friends is important. Since this is more of a military audience, an analogy would be taking these four components and, similar to the design of a Kevlar vest or a 550 cord, all of them nested together is what strengthens the whole. The recovery process is much greater than the sum of its own parts. Each component provides a different benefit. As you look at the pie chart in the top right of the slide, you see a more holistic recovery. Some days I needed more than on other days. Some days I needed to talk to close friends. Other days I needed more professional counseling. It ebbs and flows depending on what you're going through.
- Lieutenant Colo...: [22:31](#) Understand that when the crisis hits you are going to be in an extremely vulnerable mental and emotional state. It is strongly recommended that you avoid high risk behaviors and making decisions with long term consequences during that state. My mind was in a fog and I was thinking a lot slower and not thinking clearly. Recognize some of those limitations during that timeframe. If a tragedy strikes, it is important to have that strong foundation of resilient habits, to make sure that your body is in good physical condition, and to have those emotional techniques in order to process the overwhelming rollercoaster of emotions.
- Lieutenant Colo...: [23:38](#) Having those genuine relationships, those real friends that can be there for you, allows you to have heartfelt and even highly emotionally charged conversations. Having spiritual values provides a higher perspective of your own circumstance to give you hope and help pull you through that situation. Obviously, your close Family and friends are people you share a common history with. You have a strong bond and they can provide empathy and comfort to you. They know you, you know them, you trust them -- but a lot of times they cannot fully understand your situation, and they cannot provide professional counsel or proven strategies to equip you. I've learned through this process that relationships will also ebb and flow, and that dynamic will often change.
- Lieutenant Colo...: [24:48](#) Some relationships will get a lot closer. Other relationships will drift apart. That is a natural thing. Unfortunately, regarding professional counseling, when news hit the unit chaplain, he reached out and said, "Hey, I'm here if you want to talk." That

was great, but at the time, in my mental state, I responded with "Hey, thanks, I don't know you, I'm good, I don't want to talk." I wasn't ready for it. I got back home and let things process, and decided that it is hyper-critical to find a professional counselor. Before this journey, I wouldn't see it. And it's not just finding a counselor. I would argue that it's finding the right counselor. It is a relationship and it has to be the right fit.

Lieutenant Colo...: [25:50](#)

It would be also beneficial if you could find a counselor whose expertise is in the area you need. So, if it's addiction you are struggling with, or a divorce, or a relationship, or a loss, I would recommend finding a counselor with experience in that. I didn't want a counselor that just had a certificate, I wanted a counselor that could actually walk in my shoes and could understand the personal element. The third point is about support groups. Again, I'm, not an overly social guy. I'm not naturally one for sitting in a circle and saying my name and speaking to a bunch of strangers. But this experience has taught me that those support groups provide a mentorship and shared experiences that your friends cannot give you.

Lieutenant Colo...: [27:01](#)

And even a counselor cannot give you. Being vulnerable and sharing intimate details of your workday or your failings or vulnerabilities with strangers can be extremely uncomfortable, but finding that group that has walked in your shoes is extremely important. They can provide you a lot of strategies and make you feel like you are not alone in your feelings. I love our close Family and friends, but none of them has experienced this kind of loss, so they couldn't understand. They wanted to be there for us, but they couldn't be there for us. We were linked up with two support groups. One was GriefShare, a 13-week, once per week, curriculum.

Lieutenant Colo...: [28:04](#)

Our group leaders lost their son 20 years ago. The rest of the group had lost a husband or a spouse or a grandfather -- we were all on different grief journeys. But it was so helpful to lean on that older couple. They walked us through a lot of different things, gave us a lot of strategies, and provided a lot of good frameworks to lean on. The second group we were connected with is a charity led by parents who have lost children. It provides an opportunity for parents who have lost a child to go to a weekend retreat and share their stories as well as helpful nuggets of information, things that work for them, and so on. One of the most compelling ideas shared was that each day you get out of bed and push forward, you are honoring your loved one, so don't give up, don't lose hope!

- Lieutenant Colo...: [29:20](#) So again, it was so important for us to do that. The fourth item for me was so important and rounds out the recovery and the healing process. This was part of the GriefShare program -- now that you have gone through this process, go find someone else that has a loss and be there for them and help them. The more I pulled that back, the more I realized that our brains are designed so that when you help someone you get a shot of dopamine that feels good in your brain.
- Lieutenant Colo...: [30:15](#) If you look at love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization on the Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, you can achieve those by helping someone. Professor Arthur Brooks cites studies in which giving money to a charity or helping out a charity can produce a "volunteer glow." I found a couple of different opportunities to volunteer. Sadly, this was my first time getting out of myself and my professional ambitions, finding something that had no relation to the Army or to helping me get promoted. I just helped my community. I found that this was a good distraction for me and for our Family, because it took the focus off of our own problems, even if it was for a moment.
- Lieutenant Colo...: [31:23](#) It helped us focus on someone else and on meeting their needs. I can't highlight enough how important all four of these components were for our recovery. It wasn't just finding a good counselor or just finding a good support group, it was a blended approach -- all of it -- that really helped our recovery. And again, it's not over, I haven't graduated and won't graduate. I still lean heavily on these components every day. It is a holistic approach to the healing process. If you can go to the next slide, please. I want to shift gears and mention that also at this time I was really blessed with some high caliber leadership that supported me professionally and personally.
- Lieutenant Colo...: [32:32](#) What did they do right? What helped me on my worst days? Before this event, not having experience with anything like this, I always thought that you just get your teammate or your colleague to a counselor and you're good. Let them do their thing. That is not the right approach for a couple of reasons. The first point is fostering a climate that eliminates the stigma of seeking help. You see that across the Army. There has been a huge paradigm shift and I don't think that stigma is there anymore. If it is, it is tucked away in the margins.
- Lieutenant Colo...: [33:27](#) So, reinforcing that there is not a stigma attached to seeking help. Learning about and guiding members to resources is also important. A lot of times I would go to different leaders, "Hey, can you help me out?" They weren't quite sure how, but they helped me find the first person, who would help me find the

second person, which helped guide me to the right resources. They also followed up to see how everything was pressing forward and what progress was being made. Granted, it is a very sensitive situation and topic, and I understand that it is sometimes hard to approach. I used to think that if someone was having problems, the best approach was to let them take care of that and not worry about work or anything else.

Lieutenant Colo...: [34:33](#)

But my boss took a different approach, a great approach. He asked me to do one project that had strategic significance for the organization I was with. He said, "Don't worry about the other meetings. Don't worry about the daily reports or anything else. Just work on this project of significant impact and we will take care of everything else." That gave me professional meaning and made me feel like I was still part of the team. I was still making a difference, while also being more deliberate with my schedule so I that could grieve, be there for my Family, and get the professional help that I needed. Having that one project during that time period was so helpful for me.

Lieutenant Colo...: [35:40](#)

Leaders can also reinforce and keep the conversation going about continually strengthening your resilience habits and not waiting until an event. We can't plan for tragedy. We don't know what life is going to throw at us. Having those strong roots on that tree, as we saw on the slide back, helped us weather that storm. They can continue to promote therapy. Therapy is more than just going to a counselor on a regular basis or when you feel you need it. It is connecting activities, whether professionally or personally, to a higher purpose. You are connected to a higher cause and you are making valuable contributions.

Lieutenant Colo...: [36:40](#)

When you look at Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, that connection hits at the top level. Every morning I begin with a therapy session in the gym. I can't tell you how much benefit I get out of that. Physical needs aside, I receive such a mental benefit from it. Developing friendships, having a hobby -- those are important. It is important to have a friend that you can call and that can be there for you. Also from a leadership perspective is that everyone faces challenges and yet most of us suffer in silence because we don't want to exhibit vulnerability.

Lieutenant Colo...: [37:40](#)

We don't want to exhibit that something bad going on and it is important for leaders to understand that. Senior leaders who are in charge of resources for members need to understand how effective they are -- establishing those measures of performance and effectiveness on how much juice are we getting out of this squeeze in supporting and having those

accountability mechanisms in place. It is obviously much easier said than done and has some complex nuances. Leaders should not be afraid to move conversations from the superficial to the more genuine: "Hey, how's your day going?" "Oh, it's great, sir. We're winning." Be open to having more genuine conversations. If you can go to the next slide, please.

Lieutenant Colo...: [38:55](#) Key Takeaways. The first takeaway is to have the awareness, the courage, and the perseverance to seek help. The Army, the Department of Defense, our leadership can throw all these resources at you. They can have all these mechanisms in place, policies, procedures. But at the end of the day, you alone have to own how you cultivate your resiliency habits, and how you respond in a crisis event. You have to put the hard work in. If you ignore it, say, "Oh, I'm good, I don't need help," it only gets worse and it only gets harder.

Lieutenant Colo...: [39:55](#) Perseverance is key. I wish I could tell you to call a certain 800 number and you'll be good, but unfortunately it takes more. Speaking from my own experience, we went through two different counselors before we found the right one. And volunteer opportunities took me a long time to find. Believe it or not, offering free volunteer help is harder than it sounds. Finding support groups can also be hard. So, understand that it may not be an easy process, but it is still so critical. It is okay to let others help you. I was a big Emerson "self-reliance" fan before all this.

Lieutenant Colo...: [41:01](#) But it's okay to let others help you. In a way, I think I had it much easier in recovery than most do because we had a very noticeable event. All of our Family, friends, and work colleagues knew that we lost Jake. They wanted to be there for us, pouring out love. They treated me with kid gloves. But for most individuals who struggle, their challenges are known only to them. It is important to seek that help. I experienced the loss of a colleague a while back. We were not close, we were not friends per se, but we were close enough that if he had reached out to me, I would have helped him, full stop.

Lieutenant Colo...: [42:05](#) So regardless of whatever you are going through, understand that you are not alone. People out there, people that you work with, want to help you. Nesting all four components in the recovery process is critical. While you get benefit from seeking professional counseling and having close friends, having those support groups and helping others will round out that process. Finally, understand that it is a process and not a finish line. You never get to a point where, because you have done A, B, and C,

you are done. It is a process. Embrace that. If you can go the next slide, please, and then I have some final thoughts.

- Lieutenant Colo...: [43:08](#) I wanted to put this up there. A close friend gave me the book, *A Man's Search For Meaning*, by Viktor Frankl, and this is a quote by him, I'll let you read it. He was a Holocaust survivor. He was in four different concentration camps. If anyone had a reason to not want to live, it was this guy. One really compelling thought that I pulled from the book was how he compared and contrasted those individuals in the camps that lost hope and the will to live. Their bodies gave up and they passed away, versus those that clung to something -- hope or whatever -- and this got them through that horrific experience.
- Lieutenant Colo...: [44:02](#) The difference was that the second group anchored their hopes and their will to live either in a very close loved one -- they wanted to see their husband or wife or children again -- or in a critical work they had to do. That was Victor's situation, because he was a psychologist and had some professional work that he clung to, work that was really important to him. These last bits are some different threads that I pulled out of my own counseling experience, and that I took from my GriefShare program. You will see one of the books, *A Grace Disguised*, on the next slide, it is compelling. It is not just for someone that has lost a loved one, but for all of us, who are going through a struggle.
- Lieutenant Colo...: [44:56](#) At the end of the day, you can't go back to the good old days. You certainly don't want to stay stuck in this situation. Therefore, you must move forward. Must move forward. Whatever situation you are in, it could end up being just a bad chapter in a really good book. So, learn to live in that hope because life is worth living. And turn that pain into motivation to help others. Don't let whatever situation or circumstance you are in become your identity and define who you are. I see so many people that are clinging to a problem, and I can feel the despair, the hurt, the anger, the fear. I don't want to live like that. I know I'm running up against time, so I will close with the final slide. If you can go to the next slide, please.
- Lieutenant Colo...: [46:01](#) I wanted to put up some helpful references for the group. My contact information, email addresses, are on the top right. I know when we go to the Q&A period that this format may not be the best for very vulnerable questions or conversations. I certainly appreciate that and respect that. After this, I invite any of you to reach out to me direct and I will be more than happy to share more, listen to you, and everything else. I fully welcome that. In the upper right quadrant, I wanted to highlight

a lot of the resources and programs the Army is doing, such as the Military and Family Life Counselor. The Unit Chaplains is another close touch point for you.

Lieutenant Colo...: [46:54](#)

I know that, depending on the unit, they do Strong Bonds retreats for married couples and families and also have different programs. For addiction, there is the Army Substance Abuse Program. A very new initiative that the Army is trying to do is the Ready and Resilient Performance Centers across some of the bigger Army bases. They are either giving classes or giving help and are focusing on a lot of those resilience habits highlighted earlier. Make sure you know your local Army Community Service. Your Military OneSource is a good one-stop to find help. If you are on Fort Bragg, it will be different than if you are stationed at a smaller base. In the other quadrants, there are some resources that I found to be very helpful for me and I wanted to share them. I will go ahead and end there. Hopefully I stuck to time as well as possible. I'll turn it back over for any questions. Over.

Lytaria Walker: [48:09](#)

Thank you so much, Lieutenant Colonel Cool. We will now take a few questions from the audience. If you would like to ask a question, please type your question in the Q&A box and we will read them aloud. There will be a short delay before the first question is announced. Please type your question in the Q&A box. First question: If you could design the Army suicide prevention or resilience program, what would you add or remove to better connect with Soldiers?

Lieutenant Colo...: [48:48](#)

I think that if I had the right answer for that, I would be putting some stars on my chest. But I do wish there were one silver bullet answer for that. The Army is moving in the right direction. From when I first started talking with the Army Resiliency Directorate about suicide prevention, you can tell that the culture, the paradigm, the mindset is shifting left of crisis or event. I think suicide prevention should begin with that -- beginning left for everybody because sooner or later we are all going to have problems and we need to have a foundation of resiliency and the ability to process whatever we are going through. Expanding upon that, I think it is more than just your organization, your unit level, your first, second line supervisor.

Lieutenant Colo...: [50:01](#)

I think it is bigger than that. A way it could look is like informal/formal mentorship programs that are outside the formal chain of command. There are some very frank, vulnerable conversations that you would not want to have with your boss but could have with someone else that understands your situation but who doesn't directly impact your professional

career. Part of that is having a bigger mentorship pool and as Soldiers come into the service, building that foundation. That was something that my wife and I reflected on -- having this event happen to us now, we were able to recover, versus having this when I first came in the Army and had not built those resiliency habits. So Tiffany, I hope that helped to answer your question, over.

Lytaria Walker: [51:20](#)

Next question: Is there a program that can help with resources of any kind for personnel working at embassies? The HQs don't provide much at all until the problem is taking place (suicide). Some embassies don't have any of this type of support for DOD personnel, nor is medical on the outside advanced enough to provide the support.

Lieutenant Colo...: [51:45](#)

Yes, being at an embassy, you probably feel like you are on an island. The year I was in Rome, it was great, but we had no base, no headquarters or anything else. If you are comfortable going the more virtual route -- and the thing about COVID is that now your geography doesn't matter as much -- you can try virtually accessing those resources. When we were in Rome, just a quick story, we were feeling like we were on that island. We actually tried to find different mechanisms where we could volunteer and be part of a community, but virtually. Granted, it wasn't like being in person, but that was one way we were able to help others and feel part of a larger community.

Lieutenant Colo...: [52:58](#)

For the military folks working at embassies, they are tied to the geographic combatant commands, one of the directorates. So, I would reach back through your chain of command that is connected to whatever geographical combatant command you are connected to in order to try and access those resources. In addition, you can go back to the Military OneSource to find available opportunities. All the best to you on that, I certainly feel for you, over.

Lytaria Walker: [53:46](#)

Next question: Sir, how can leaders continue to encourage and influence their Soldiers, civilians, and Family members to reach out to others for that help when many times they are told to just carry on?

Lieutenant Colo...: [54:02](#)

That's a tough one. What set the best tone for leadership was when reports of suicide rates in Alaska, back in the summer, started to roll out and the problem came to light. What I thought was so impressive was the commanding general up in Alaska. He was very public about himself seeking professional counseling and was very forthright about how everyone needs to seek professional counseling and work through issues.

Leaders need to recognize it. The conversations I have with my own team include the fact that I still seek periodic professional help myself, and that helps eliminate the stigma. But also, the individual has to take ownership. If I had let my leadership dictate, I would not have found a lot of the different avenues that I did. So, owning it.

Lytaria Walker: [55:50](#)

Thank you, sir. If you have further questions, please drop them in the question and answer box at this time. Last question: Do Soldiers lose jump pay promotions when they seek help?

Lieutenant Colo...: [56:28](#)

I am not an HR guy, so please don't quote me. I do not think so, but I would recommend you work that through your HR channels to make sure. I have not heard that at all, especially not the promotions piece. Plus, I would argue that by seeking help when you need it, you are developing your own coping mechanisms and processes. That just makes you a better person, which will then make you a better Soldier. Just throwing that out there.

Lytaria Walker: [57:13](#)

Great. Thank you. If there are no more questions, we will conclude this morning's webinar. I want to extend a gracious thank you to Lieutenant Colonel Cool for joining us today. Thank you, the participants, for joining today's webinar as well. Once the webinar ends, you will be prompted to complete a survey. We appreciate your feedback, as this helps us to improve upon future webinars. The presentation slides are in the chat box, so you may download them from the chat box at this time. If you would like to receive invitations for ARD Webinars and receive the latest news and information from the Army Resilience Directorate, please go to ARD's website at armyresilience.army.mil and sign up for notifications there. Please also follow us on ARD's newly launched LinkedIn and Instagram platforms. Thank you again for joining us today. Thank you, Lieutenant Colonel Cool, and have a wonderful rest of your day. Thank you.