

HOLISTIC WELLNESS CHALLENGE



LIFE AFTER LOSS

CHALLENGE your Service members to adopt at least one of the recommended resources for support after a loss.

FACTS & FIGURES: DID YOU KNOW?

The National Guard partners with the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS), which is a national organization for all those grieving the **death of any military or veteran loved one**.

TAPS connects with an average of **24 new loss survivors every day**, adding to the more than 100,000 people already receiving support.

Regardless of the relationship to the deceased or the circumstance of the death, survivors may experience a variety of emotions throughout the grief journey. **Self-care and connecting with others** can help mitigate the negative impacts of grief and provide comfort to survivors.

SUICIDE LOSS SUPPORT

In addition to grief and bereavement, suicide loss may be accompanied by a range of different emotions to include shame or stigma. There is **hope for suicide loss survivors**.

Postvention support is any activity following a suicide that promotes **recovery and healing** among those impacted by the loss. The TAPS approach to suicide postvention can help with immediate stabilization, support with processing grief, and opportunities for healing and growth.

CONTACT US

For more information on support after a loss or other topics, email us at: ng.ncr.ngb.mbx.resiliency-branch@army.mil

NAVIGATING GRIEF

Self-care and postvention support often take a back seat to everything else when grieving a loss. However, the ability to cope is enhanced by our physical and mental well-being. Follow these tips¹ to help navigate grief:

- **Claim your time.** Take regular breaks and engage in activities that help you decompress, like a hot bath or walk in the woods.
- **Set boundaries.** It is ok to say no to things that don't bring you joy.
- **Monitor your physical needs.** Make sure you are staying hydrated, eating regular meals, getting enough sleep, and moving your body daily.
- **Get creative.** Find an outlet to express your feelings. Try journaling, crafting, dancing, or playing an instrument.
- **Let others help.** If someone offers to run an errand or drop off dinner, let them. Know that you can return the favor someday.
- **Connect with others.** Talk to someone you trust or join a support group.
- **Fully address your grief.** Don't gloss over your feelings. Take the time to completely process your emotions. The TAPS Helpline is available 24/7/365:

TAPS NATIONAL MILITARY SURVIVOR

★★★★★
HELPLINE

800-959-TAPS (8277)



ROAD TO RECOVERY

What does it mean?

- The road to recovery is different for every survivor; however, self-care and postvention support can enhance the healing and growth process.

Why does it matter?

- Left unchecked, grief can negatively impact the physical (insomnia, lack of appetite) and mental (anxiety, depression) well-being of survivors.

What can you do?

- Reach out to survivors, remind them that they are not alone, encourage them to engage in self-care, and recommend resources to help them heal.
- Practice safe messaging by avoiding discussion of specific details of the death and emphasizing the importance help-seeking behaviors.
- Remember that holidays, birthdays, and anniversaries can be especially difficult for survivors; consult Military OneSource and TAPS for help navigating these milestones.

THE TIME IS NOW

The deadline to complete the Defense Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS) is **DEC 30**. All National Guard members are strongly encouraged to participate and make their voices heard.

Just as self-care and postvention support contribute to healing, the DEOCS (which assesses command climate) contributes to a healthier work environment.

Findings from the DEOCS will inform future prevention efforts and activities.



RESOURCES TO RECOMMEND



Contact your Director of Psychological Health, Behavioral Health Officer, Chaplain, Military and Family Life Counselor, Suicide Prevention Coordinator, Casualty Assistance Officer, or chain of command for support and a referral to resources in the community.



Postvention Toolkit for Military Suicide Loss provides DoD personnel with tips, checklists, and resources to better support survivors and promote healing. <https://www.dspo.mil/Portals/113/Documents/PostventionToolkit.pdf>



After a Suicide podcast addresses the different emotions associated with suicide loss. <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/resources/podcasts/military-onesource/after-a-suicide>



Military OneSource offers free, confidential, non-crisis counseling via phone, online chat, or video to help Service members and their families improve self-care and heal after a loss. <http://www.militaryonesource.mil>



Taking Care of Yourself After a Loss offers tips to reduce grief over time and self-care strategy options. https://www.ptsd.va.gov/understand/related/related_problems_grief.asp



Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS) provides 24/7/365 compassionate care and comprehensive resources for anyone grieving the death of a military loved one. 1-800-959-8277 or <http://www.taps.org>



Travis Manion Foundation empowers veterans and families of fallen heroes to develop character in future generations. <https://www.travismanion.org>



SPOTLIGHT: POSTVENTION SUPPORT FOR LEADERS

- Massachusetts National Guard (MANG) teamed up with TAPS to provide support for current and former MANG members who experienced a suicide loss under their leadership.
- During the event, participants learned from leading experts and gained the support and healing needed for personal and professional growth.
- For more information, email: ng.ncr.ngb.mbx.resiliency-branch@army.mil.

REFERENCES:

1. TAPS: Prioritizing Self-Care While Grieving <https://www.taps.org/articles/28-1/self-care-while-grieving>