



# HOLISTIC WELLNESS CHALLENGE

## MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS TO THE MISSION



**CHALLENGE** your Service members and yourself to adopt at least one of the recommended resources to support mental health.

### FACTS & FIGURES: DID YOU KNOW?

- One in five U.S. adults experience mental illness each year, and only half of them receive treatment.<sup>1</sup>
- 75% of lifetime mental illness begins by age 24.<sup>1</sup>
- 49% of National Guard members who died by suicide had a health diagnosis such as depression, anxiety, or trauma.<sup>2</sup>

### MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT IS ENCOURAGED

**Seeking treatment** for mental health demonstrates the strength and sound judgement needed to maintain and **enhance mission readiness**. Treatment can help:



Psychological Health



Physical Health



Quality of Life



Harmful Behaviors

### HOW TO ASK FOR HELP

Asking for help may feel hard or uncomfortable, but it doesn't have to be. Proper planning can ease the uncertainty and improve the outcome. Check out these tips<sup>3</sup> to get started:

- **Think about what you want.** Do you need help finding a health care provider? Do you want someone to go with you to an appointment? Do you just want someone to listen? Tell the person up front and make it clear.
- **Identify who to talk to.** Look for someone who is non-judgmental and trustworthy. Consider a family member, battle buddy, wingman, Chaplain, or Director of Psychological Health. If the first person you connect with is not a good fit, don't give up. Keep reaching out until you find someone who supports you.
- **Pick the right place and time.** Determine if you are more comfortable speaking via phone, video, or in-person. Confirm your choice with the other person. Select a time that works best for both of you to minimize interruptions.
- **Start the conversation.** Take a deep breath and describe your thoughts and feelings. Be specific and ask questions. Start with:
  - Can I tell you about something that's been troubling me?
  - I think it's time for me to get help. Do you know any mental health therapists?
  - I'm having a hard time focusing. Could you help me make an appointment?
- **Congratulate yourself.** Asking for help is a big step. You should be proud of yourself. It's ok to feel emotional. Keep moving forward and follow-up on the things you discussed.

### MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

May is Mental Health Awareness Month. Check out the Resources to Recommend for organizations offering toolkits, podcasts, and special events. #MHAM2024

### CONTACT US

For more information on mental health or other wellness topics, email us at: [ng.ncr.nqb.mbx.integrated-prevention-branch@army.mil](mailto:ng.ncr.nqb.mbx.integrated-prevention-branch@army.mil)



## MENTAL HEALTH CARE IS A PROTECTIVE FACTOR

### What does it mean?

- Mental health encompasses psychological, emotional, and social well-being.

### Why does it matter?

- Mental health impacts thinking, mood, and behavior, as well as response to stress, interactions with others, and decision-making abilities.

### What can you do?

- Prioritize mental health.
- Ask for help before manageable problems become unmanageable and encourage others to do the same.
- Engage in open dialogue that creates trust and reduces the stigma associated with the treatment of mental health.
- Form connections that increase a sense of belonging to remind others that they are not alone.
- Set the record straight about mental health and security clearances.
- Promote the safe storage of personally owned firearms to put time and distance between a person in distress and a means for suicide.



Seeking support for mental health does not affect your ability to gain or maintain a security clearance. According to the Defense Counterintelligence and Security Agency, there are no automatically disqualifying conditions or symptoms.<sup>4</sup> Participating in a treatment plan establishes credibility and contributes positively to decisions about eligibility.



## RESOURCES TO RECOMMEND



NG's Psychological Health Program supports Service members and their families with any psychological health need. [www.militaryonesource.mil/resources/millife-guides/psychological-health-program](http://www.militaryonesource.mil/resources/millife-guides/psychological-health-program)



Department of Veterans Affairs' screening tool offers a confidential and anonymous way to get instant feedback on your mental health. [www.myhealth.va.gov/mhv-portal-web/check-your-mental-health](http://www.myhealth.va.gov/mhv-portal-web/check-your-mental-health)



National Institute of Mental Health has resources, a list of clinical trials that provide access to free treatment, and #MHAM2024 materials. [www.nimh.nih.gov](http://www.nimh.nih.gov)



Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration includes prevention, treatment, and recovery support, as well as #MHAM2024 materials. [www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov)



Cohen Veterans Network offers free telehealth and in-person mental health services that address depression, anxiety, relationship stress, and more. [www.cohenveteransnetwork.org](http://www.cohenveteransnetwork.org)



Give an Hour provides free, in-person, and virtual mental health counseling, peer support, and resources. [www.giveanhour.org](http://www.giveanhour.org)



inTransition offers free, confidential mental health services via phone, live chat, or email. [www.health.mil/Military-Health-Topics/Centers-of-Excellence/Psychological-Health-Center-of-Excellence/inTransition](http://www.health.mil/Military-Health-Topics/Centers-of-Excellence/Psychological-Health-Center-of-Excellence/inTransition)



## SPOTLIGHT: STAR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROVIDERS (SBHP)

- SBHP is a national program that trains civilian providers to better understand and treat National Guard members and their families.
- Military-aware providers are available in-person and online to address mental health issues.
- For more information, or to access the SBHP registry to find a trainer provider, go to [www.starproviders.org](http://www.starproviders.org).

### REFERENCES:

1. National Alliance on Mental Illness. [www.nami.org/mhstats](http://www.nami.org/mhstats)
2. Annual Report on Suicide in the Military. [www.dspspo.mil](http://www.dspspo.mil)
3. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. [www.samhsa.gov/find-support/how-to-cope/how-to-ask-for-help](http://www.samhsa.gov/find-support/how-to-cope/how-to-ask-for-help)
4. Defense Counterintelligence and Security Agency. [www.dcsa.mil/Portals/91/Documents/pv/DODCAF/resources/DCSA-FactSheet\\_Mental-Health\\_SecurityClearances-Oct21.pdf](http://www.dcsa.mil/Portals/91/Documents/pv/DODCAF/resources/DCSA-FactSheet_Mental-Health_SecurityClearances-Oct21.pdf)