



Commanding Officer  
Marine Wing Support Squadron 373  
Suicide Prevention Program



Over the past two calendar years, the Marine Corps has lost over 50 warfighters to suicide each year. Almost three platoons of fellow “devil dogs” were removed from our ranks. **The bonds and personal ties we build working side by side with our teammates through shared hardships, long nights, deployments, and field exercises will be some of the strongest in your life.** Our training, exercise, and employment plan is full of holidays and times in the calendar that our Marines and Sailors will be thinking of being “home for the holidays”. There will no doubt be challenging times for some of our teammates. It is important that our Marines, Sailors, and leaders really get to know one another. It will be a frontline supervisor, Non-Commissioned Officer, or close friend that will sense certain indicators. There is no better way to prevent a suicide than by a leader who is well versed in the acronym **AID LIFE (ask, intervene, don’t keep a secret, locate help, involve command, find someone, and expedite)**. You are not alone, we all are here to help, let someone help. **Getting help is not an option, it is a duty.** There is a moral obligation to seek assistance.

Stressors and other issues that cause distress can be a number of things, the most common are; **the individuals age, relationship/martial situation, work related, performance, acceptance, disciplinary concerns, financial issues, combat experiences, and depression or other illness.** All members within the team can increase our combat readiness through intervention and early identification. How do we become more predictive and develop our ability to identify changes in our fellow Marines and Sailors? **There is no better approach then building relationships with one another through peer-to-peer connections.**

Marines and Sailors you are not alone. There are plenty of others in our Squadron ready to help, assist, and counsel. **Our resources are vast, a fellow Marine or Sailor, trusted confidant, Operational Stress Control and Readiness (OSCAR) team member, medical officer, Military Family Life Consultant (MFLC), Chaplain, community counselors, chain-of-command, health promotion program leaders, substance abuse counselors, and our Suicide Prevention Program Officer.** Our Marines and Sailors should consider all resources.

We must incorporate all five core leader functions which include strengthen, mitigate, identify, treat, and reintegrate. The Squadron will **use all available resources to coordinate, evaluate, and sustain an integrated program that promotes awareness education, early identification, and referrals** for at-risk personnel, treatment, and services. All personnel will receive annual training and education which will include small group discussions that are candid and open. **Our program relies heavily on peer-to-peer involvement, training, education, and early reporting.**

Remember you are part of our team. Stress is unavoidable, but when it exceeds what we can handle you need to let someone know so that we can help. **One Marine or Sailor lost to suicide is one too many.** We all contribute to the success of the mission, which is why you chose to be a Marine or Sailor to serve your country, prepare for deployments, and answer the call to duty.

This Squadron requires every single Marine and Sailor to complete its assigned mission!

Steven B. Dodson