

September 2019

AirScoop

104th FIGHTER WING WWW.104FW.ANG.AF.MIL

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Combat Survival Training



AirScoop

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NOMINATE AN AIRMAN

The Air Force is looking for Airmen with unique, unusual or outstanding stories to be featured in our 2020 Hometown Airman videos. Airmen must be from one of the 10 cities we're engaging next year (Austin, Seattle, Nashville, Philadelphia, Minneapolis, Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Atlanta and Oakland) and should be top performers who exemplify the Air Force's core values. Please email nominations to usaf.ma.104-fw.mbx.public-affairs@mail.mil

Have You Connected With Someone Today?

By Michelle Pennington, 104th Fighter Wing director of psychological health DSN 698-1536



So...I am writing this article while in temporary duty status at the Veterans Affairs/Department of Defense Suicide Prevention Conference in Tennessee. There are nearly 1,900 in attendance. Attendees are from active duty, guard, reserve, VA Health System, corporations like Amazon and Johnson & Johnson, Research Scientist, and non-profit organization leaders just to name a few. All are committed to learning what they can about the public health crisis of suicide and particularly, suicide among

our Military Service Members to include active, guard, reserve and veterans.

The suicide rate among the Military community has now surpassed that of the general population. The last statistics from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention and the American Association of Suicidology report that an average of 129 people die by suicide every day in the United States alone. Twenty of those are current or previous service members. This is a total of 47,123 suicides in 2017 in the United States, 682 of which were in Massachusetts. Perhaps even more astonishing, for every suicide death there are 25 attempts. This totals approximately 1.4 million suicide attempts in the United States for 2017.

All of us struggle at different points in our lives; that is a universal human condition. What research has discovered is that there are also universal protective factors. These are feeling a sense of purpose and connectedness to others and can mitigate risk of suicide. If you have not read the article sent out by Chief Master Sgt. Thomas Orifice a

couple weeks ago search your mailbox. The article is named, "How Heavy is Your Backpack", written by Col. Larry Nance, former 436th Operations Group Commander. It is an excellent example of how making connections can "lighten your backpack".

Compounding life stressors can lead to feelings of hopelessness and helplessness, putting people at risk for thoughts of suicide. There is never one event that leads a person to attempt suicide. Overwhelmed by these feelings, a person may see no other way to relieve their pain and sense of being a burden but through death. Despite the desire for the pain to stop, most do not wish to end their lives but just cannot see an alternative. Learning the risk factors and warning signs of suicide can help. Research polling has found again and again that in times of distress nearly 50% of people will turn to family and friends first to disclose suicidal thoughts.

Talking to a friend or family member about their suicidal thoughts or feelings can be scary. What if you are wrong? What if it makes them upset that you

asked? What if by asking you make them think of suicide as an option? If you are unsure, the best thing to do is ask. You cannot put the idea of suicide in someone's head by showing you care. Just the opposite. Giving the person in distress the opportunity to share their feelings can provide a sense of relief from their feelings of loneliness, hopelessness and may prevent a suicide attempt.

There are many resources to learn ways to start the conversation. The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention website (<https://www.afsp.org>), Seize the Awkward Campaign (www.seizetheawkward.org) or Make the Connection Campaign (www.maketheconnection.net) are good places to start. A few options could be, "I wanted to check in with you because you have not seemed yourself lately," or "I know you have a lot going on right now so wanted to check in with you." If they trust you enough to share their emotions, honor it. How hard it would be for you to share your own pain or sense of despair with someone?

Have You Connected With Someone Today?

By Michelle Pennington

When they do, just listen. Let them unload and be nonjudgmental. They are looking to share their pain not looking for solutions to their problems. Someone said to me once, “We are born with two ears and one mouth for a reason.” Allowing others to tell their story can provide a sense of connection and hope.

Build connections for yourself and those you care about by practicing gratitude; acknowledging those around you for the things they do everyday. Hold the door open for someone or thank them for holding the door for you. Ask someone how they are doing today and actually listen to the answer. It can go a long way in making a connection with someone. You never know what that connection may mean to that person in that moment. If you are a leader or a supervisor, ask your team how they are doing. Regular check-ins can help identify when someone may not be themselves. Ask them what is working in the work station and what could be done better to improve communication and access to resources for themselves or family when needed. Allowing your

people to provide input into how things are working can build a sense of purpose in what they do, improve performance and increase the likelihood of early help seeking to address situations that may be effecting readiness and well-being.

If you or someone you know needs a connection to resources please reach out.



Resources to consider:

Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS)

<https://www.taps.org>

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP)

<https://afsp.org>

National Center for PTSD

www.ptsd.va.gov

CrisisLine

1-800-273-8255 (#1 for Military)

Military OneSource 1-800-342-9647

<https://www.militaryonesource.mil>

Base Resources: (413) 568-9151

AFRM 698-1183,

Chaplains 698-1057

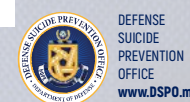
DPH 698-1536

SARC 413-454-1885,

2019 SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH

Make it Your Mission to

#BeThere



Commander's Column: Finding the Blind Spot

By Lt. Col. Gary Archambault, 104th Medical Group commander



By now, most of you have heard about the critical finding in the 104th Medical Group. While no one, especially myself, wants to hear those words during an inspection, it brought to light something I couldn't see — my blind spot.

For the better part of a decade, you have been hearing about the importance of the Commander's Inspection Program. If you honestly work through your checklists; classify what you are doing and what you are not doing; develop your corrective action plan(s), and document your

progress, everything will be fine. My first thought when doing this process was, "Rightttttt." That's hard to believe.

I'm happy to say that during the medical group's first full Capstone in June we worked hard at doing all those things. However, as diligent as we were, there was a blind spot, and that blind spot allowed important information not to flow up the chain. We simply didn't know what we didn't know.

This is not a blame game. As a group commander, the blame ultimately falls to me. But we as a team failed to accurately assess a few critical areas within the Aerospace Medicine Occupational Health Programs. Fortunately, the fixes for most of these areas are actually easy and by the time you read this, most, if not all, have already been accomplished. In fact, several were even fixed during the Capstone. That's the good news.

Now I have to ensure that I no longer have that blind spot. My blind spot was created when we looked at some of our occupational health programs without sufficient subject matter expertise within the 104th MDG Wing Inspection Team. When the Air Combat

Command and Air Force Inspection Agency Inspector General inspectors were looking at the medical group, they assessed these programs with only subject matter experts! Additionally, we lacked a quality assurance capability that would have identified several key deficiencies with the identification of hazards and exposures in certain shops. Basically, the work was being done, but it wasn't good enough. Ultimately, that created my blind spot.

Going forward the medical group will keep pushing the envelope on improving our processes. We are still working on providing the best, most efficient, medical support possible. And we do that for you, our 104th Fighter Wing customers.

That support includes:

- Accurate and timely identification of hazards and exposures in the workplace
- Appropriate physical exams that assess possible exposures in workers
- The right occupational health training for all identified hazards and exposures
- Aggressive oversight of the Aerospace Medicine Enterprise

If you have a question or concern about your occupational health safety, please

contact Master Sgt. Christine Lupacchino at extension 698-1420 and she'll connect you with the appropriate 104th MDG staff that can answer your question.

The wing will soon be closing out 2019 in MICT. And before you know it, we'll be starting the Fiscal Year 2020 assessment process. Just because we finished the Capstone in June, don't sit back and relax too much.

Keep on making progress on those open items and accurately assess and document the items that are closed. What's blind to you is fully visible to the IG! So document as necessary, keep everyone that's needed in the loop, and do what's right. After all, our next midpoint inspection is only two years away.

Chief's Corner: Is Your Roof Leaking?

By Chief Master Sgt. Tom Orifice, 104th Logistics Readiness Squadron Superintendent



I am going to lead off this article by asking you a very simple question. Is your neighbor's roof leaking? I ask this question even though I already know that the answer, for most of us is, "I don't know." We look at our neighbor's house and yard and see that their grass is cut, the garden is flowering, and the house itself seems very well maintained, but we aren't seeing the inside of the house unless we've knocked on the door and gone inside. Unless we've been invited in, we can't see that our neighbor

is working hard to make sure that his or her house appears to be wonderful but that there are serious troubles inside. The roof is leaking, the walls and floor are weakening, and without help, the house will eventually collapse. The troubling part of this is that you know that all your neighbor has to do is ask for help and most of us would line up, hammer in hand, to help stop the leaks and fix the water damage. So now comes the inevitable follow up question, is your roof leaking, and if it is, are you opening the door and letting others in?

Most of us have a natural tendency to try to work out problems on our own, and many of us resist asking for help for fear of being seen as weak, needy, or incompetent. Fear of weakness is not the only reason people are hesitant to ask for assistance. We may fear that we are giving up control or that we might become indebted to those who came to our aid. When we ignore or attempt to stall a small problem, we risk allowing an easily corrected situation to become a crisis. When we fail to address the small problems in our lives, they stack up, our leaks grow and begin

to weaken our resolve and erode our ability to overcome adversity and move on. In short, we overtask our resiliency or our ability to overcome hardship. Fortunately, there are ways to ensure that your roof remains leak free.

Ask yourself these questions:

- Are there situations in my life that I anticipate will require outside help?
- Who are the people in my life that I can count on for help?
- Am I ready to ask those that I trust for help?
- What type of help do I need? Do I need someone to listen me, someone to guide me, or to just sit quietly with me?

I urge all of you to take some time this weekend to think about yourself. Talk to yourself like you would talk to those you love the most. List out your stressors and examine what you are doing to eliminate or mitigate them. If you need help, ask for it. Dr. Brene' Brown defines vulnerability as, "the emotion that we experience during times of uncertainty, risk, and emotion exposure." Facing

our vulnerability and asking for help requires strength and courage, but you don't have to face your vulnerability alone. Every leader in this unit is ready to help you. Every leader on this base will walk miles and move mountains for you. All you need to do is ask. I will leave you with one final quote from Dr. Brown.

"I want to be in the arena. I want to be brave with my life. And when we make the choice to dare greatly, we sign up to get our asses kicked. We can choose courage or we can choose comfort, but we can't have both. Not at the same time."

— Dr. Brene' Brown

Be brave with your life. Choose courage over comfort. It is your life and it is the only one you will ever have. You owe it to yourself to live your best life.

Headlines & Highlights

104th Public Affairs Office



National Relaxation Day



Bring a Friend to Drill Day



Family School Supplies



Officer Development



APF Kenya continues with field demonstrations



Retirement Ceremony



Cyber Training in Israel

Highlights, Welcomes, Farewells and Promotions

104th Public Affairs Office

Combat Survival Training



Welcomes

Airman Basic Nicholas Muir, CF
Airman 1st Class Nhat Phan, CES

Airman 1st Class Michael Mitelman, MXS
Staff Sgt. Maurice Roberson, FW

Farewells

Senior Airman Brian Nay, AMXS
Tech. Sgt. Daniel Decorimier, MXG
Master Sgt. Richard Nastrom, AMXS
Master Sgt. Raymond Panlilio, MOF
Master Sgt. Dawn Soldan, MSG
Senior Master Sgt. Wayne Tower, AMXS

Staff Sgt. Weston Fazzino, SFS
Tech. Sgt. Robert Kocis, AMXS
Master Sgt. Jeffrey Allard, MDG
Master Sgt. Todd McCarthy, MSG
Chief Master Sgt. James Burke, MSG

Promotions

Airman Dominic Isidro, CES
Senior Airman Julianne Sharon, OSF
Senior Airman Amy Bertocchi, FSS
Staff Sgt. Katrina Rose, FSS
Tech. Sgt. Kelley McLean, MDG
Tech. Sgt. Ryann Parker, MXG
1st Lt. Emily Hazen
Lt. Col. Kenneth Devoie

Airman 1st Class Ryan Olander, MSG
Senior Airman Griffin Moore, OSF
Staff Sgt. Zane Collier, LRS
Tech. Sgt. Michael Ford, LRS
Tech. Sgt. Janice Cintron, FSS
Master Sgt. Heather Libiszewski Gallien
1st Lt. Cole Skinner
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