



Commanding General's Policy on Suicide Prevention



Although the number of suicides in the Marine Corp declined last year, even one suicide is too many. As Marines, we are trained to be strong, stoic, and indestructible, and often when faced with challenging events in our personal lives, we hesitate to ask for assistance. As your Commanding General, I want to create an environment where suicide is not an option. We must empower Marines to seek help when they need it and encourage fellow Marines to recognize the signs of suicide and to take immediate action by contacting a medical professional, the chaplain, a Commander, or a senior enlisted Marine.

Fellow Marines and family members are the first line of defense. Often they will recognize a change in a Marine's behavior or thought process, making them the most important shield against suicide. Suicide is a permanent solution to a temporary problem, and if Marines can get help for the temporary problem, it prevents them from even considering suicide. Marines are precious assets. We can replace trucks and equipment, but we can't replace an individual Marine. Our ethos trains us to never leave a Marine behind, and this training is just as true for suicide prevention as it is on the battlefield.

There are two important suicide prevention methods in place to help us in our task. First, the "Never Leave a Marine Behind" training which provides Marines with valuable knowledge that helps them recognize the signs and symptoms of a suicidal person. One hundred percent of the Marines within the FHG must be trained in this program, and it is essential that Marines use this training as a tool in their work and personal lives. The second method of prevention is the Force Preservation Council which identifies Marines and Sailors who may be at risk and provides them with the proper resources and treatment when necessary. Certain situations like divorce, death in the family, or job loss may lead a Marine to feel hopeless, but these two programs can identify and provide Marines with support during trying times. In addition to these two methods, the Marine Corps provides several other resources such as the Veterans' Affairs Medical Centers, Psychological Health Outreach Program, DStress line, and Military OneSource.

Marines need to know that if they seek help, they will receive help. Additionally, their request for assistance will be kept confidential because without that guarantee many will continue to suffer in silence. Marines need to know that if they are suffering they have the support of their Marine family. Together we can beat this.



H. G. PRATT

Brigadier General, U.S. Marine Corps
Commanding General, Force Headquarters Group