



# Defense Suicide Prevention Office Video Transcript

## Spotlight on Suicide Prevention: Guam Army National Guard

MAJ Lakiyah Frederick:

Thank you for joining us for Spotlight on Suicide Prevention, a new series of videos by the Department of Defense to highlight the suicide prevention achievements of our local programs. My name is Major Lakiyah Frederick, and I am the joint suicide prevention program manager for the National Guard Bureau. Today, we're joined by our friends from the Guam Army National Guard. They are an example of what suicide prevention looks like at the local levels of our military communities. Their efforts to raise awareness and prevent suicide is inspiring and innovative. Let's learn about our guests and their work to keep our Service members safe from suicide.

The Guam Army National Guard Substance Abuse, Suicide Prevention with Resiliency Support Team distributed flyers containing prevention tools and community resources to 528 personnel and reached over 14,000 social media followers. During the winter holidays, they held their fourth annual "Combat the Holiday Blues" campaign, which fostered connections by having personnel write what they were thankful for on a Gratitude Wall. In September, the team held the first annual "Suicide Intervention Officer Summit" for 40 participants as the official launch of the National Guard Bureau Piloted Counseling on Access to Lethal Means and Collect Program. Thank you all for joining us today. Can you please take a moment to introduce yourselves and your titles?

COL Sheila Compton-Rivo:

Hafa adai. I'm Colonel Sheila Compton-Rivo. I'm the Chief of the Joint Staff for the Guam National Guard.

MAJ Kristin Ramos:

Hafa adai and good morning from Guam. I am Major Kristin Ramos, and on my full-time assignment, I serve as the HR supervisor assigned to the J1 section.

MAJ Lakiyah Frederick:

Let's learn more about your efforts and shine a light on your accomplishments. Please share details about your program, what your team accomplished, and what works best to encourage participation and engagement?

COL Sheila Compton-Rivo:

Okay. Well, the Guam Army National Guard Substance Abuse and Suicide Prevention and Resilience Support, our SASPRS program, our mission is to provide Service members and their families quality support in promoting healthy lifestyle by creating a safe and drug-free community through substance abuse and suicide prevention education and outreach. In doing so, the suicide prevention has become a year-round effort for us. SASPRS hosts various outreach campaigns throughout the year, starting with the Red Ribbon Month in October, followed by Combat the Holiday Blues campaign during the holiday season which starts in November and ends in January. We have our Alcohol Awareness Month in April,



we hold a Mental Health Awareness Month in May, we do the Overdose Awareness Day on August 31st, and then the Suicide Prevention Month in September. All of those campaigns focus heavily on both suicide prevention and substance abuse prevention. Our Service members and their families, the civilians, and our contractors are all encouraged to participate in all the various outreach activities to promote healthy living.

To highlight the longest running campaign, November to January, during the year, the SASPRS team hosts an annual "Coffee with the Command." It's the event that kicks off the holidays promoting the "Combat the Holiday Blues." This event allows for all full-time staff personnel to interact with the leaders in a very comfortable, easygoing environment over breakfast and a cup of coffee. During the "Combat the Holiday Blues," a holiday spirit week takes place where personnel were encouraged to come to work dressed in their favorite holiday colors or holiday characters. And then as a culminating event for the campaign, there was a Nationwide suicide prevention guest speaker, Mr. Kevin Hines. If you don't know, he's the person that attempted suicide by jumping off the Golden Gate Bridge. He was invited to share his story with the Guam National Guard community. His story was very inspirational.

So, as a collaborative effort with the Family Programs Office, a resource fair was held during Mental Health Awareness Month in May for all of our Service members and families. There were vendors that included beauty help, physical fitness, healthy eating, employment opportunities, and wellness clinics. So, we've done a lot in the year of 2022 to 2023. And then during the Suicide Prevention Month, the SASPRS team worked with the chaplain's office, and we hosted a Suicide Prevention Month prayer breakfast, which attendees were invited to write messages of strength on posters throughout the room. We've been very busy, but we're very proud of all the accomplishments we've made.

MAJ Lakiyah Frederick:

What inspired you to build your program this way, and why do you feel it has had a positive impact in preventing suicide?

MAJ Kristin Ramos:

So, if you are not familiar with the island of Guam, we pride ourselves with our close-knit culture. So, our inspiration comes from a very close-knit community, and we have a very strong SASPRS team made up of three very beautiful ladies. So, everyone in the Guam National Guard is considered family to include our extended family. And actually, some are related, and we've grown up together or have a long family history with each other, so we really emphasize our principle of "one suicide is one too many" and that's the driving force behind our intent to educate as many Service members and their family members as possible. So, that's our inspiration.

In addition to our outreach campaigns, SASPRS focuses on providing effective education, training, and resources for our GUARNG community. Having a well-rounded program is very critical in preventing suicide overall. Actually, all soldiers are required to always have the SASPRS QR code tagged with them. So it's actually made like a dog tag, and this is actually an inspectable item. So every time our soldiers report for drill, they appear in formations. The commanders or the first sergeants require the soldiers to present that information. We've implemented a policy that makes that tag inspectable at all times. When scanned, the QR code provides a complete list of resources organic to the organization, as well as local and community resources. The Ask, Care, Escort, otherwise known as ACE, and Engage models are also part of the QR code. Unit suicide prevention officers, otherwise known as SIOs, also have a specific



QR code which includes resources, helpful tips when conducting a suicide intervention, and a crisis safety plan.

MAJ Lakiyah Frederick:

Do you think your program has implications outside your installation, either across other Services or for suicide prevention efforts in the civilian community?

COL Sheila Compton-Rivo:

I think we have really good intervention outside of our community, our installations. SASPRS is very engaged with our community. Like Major Ramos stated earlier, we have a SASPRS team made up of three very unique, very creative, and talented women and I want to give them a shout-out because they do the work. They're where the rubber meets the road. And that's Ms. Deanna Campbell, Mrs. Rachel Perez, and Mrs. Tawni Estacio. They were the force behind all of this and how we were recognized for this award. So the risk reduction coordinator is a member of the Governor's Prevention, Education, and Community Empowerment. It's called the PEACE Council. Both the prevention coordinator and the risk reduction coordinator are part of the island's Suicide Prevention Task Force. They also are involved in the Governor's Challenge and the Red Ribbon Committee, which is island-wide throughout all the schools.

So the SASPRS has been recognized with the Goodwill Ambassador Award from the Guam Behavioral Health and Wellness Center, along with a Community Champions Spotlight from West Cal Pacific Islands. So, networking and collaboration with community resources plays a very important role in executing effective prevention, outreach, and healthy lifestyle efforts for our soldiers and our family members. Again, I'd really like to give kudos to those ladies. They've done a lot of good work, and they've been the backbone for the SASPRS program for the last two years. We've been very fortunate to come back again and win this for the second year in a row because of all the efforts and all of their creative ideas that they've put forth for this program.

MAJ Lakiyah Frederick:

Thank you for sharing with us all the ways you're working to make our military safe from suicide. I am confident I can say this on behalf of the audience: we've learned so much about ways we can lead the fight to help eliminate suicide across the military. Our guests were honored at the 2024 Department of Defense Suicide Prevention Recognition Ceremony in September for their campaigns to prevent suicide, which took place at the Pentagon Hall of Heroes. To those watching, we hope you enjoyed listening to what you've heard. Please help us spread the word by sharing the link to this video with others. If you found it on social media, share it on your timeline for your friends to discover. To access more videos and the resources in the Defense Suicide Prevention Office Video Library, visit us online at [www.DSPO.mil](http://www.DSPO.mil). If you are a Service member in crisis, remember you are never alone. Dial 988 and press 1 for the Veterans and Military Crisis Line. You can also access the crisis line by texting 838255 or chat online at [veteranscrisisline.net](http://veteranscrisisline.net).