



DEFENSE SUICIDE PREVENTION OFFICE

QUARTERLY CONNECTION

Suicide Prevention News and Resources

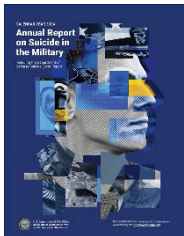
Navigating PCS: Prioritizing Secure Lethal Means and Suicide Prevention

Permanent Change of Station (PCS) season is a time of change. PCS moves can be stressful, and sometimes overwhelming, for service members and their families. [Military OneSource has you covered with tips and tools for a lower stress PCS.](#)

Additionally, incorporating Lethal Means Safety into your moving plans, such as securely storing firearms and medications, helps create a safer environment while navigating heightened stress.

PCS season also provides an opportunity to explore resources that can help in suicide prevention. Building support networks in your new community is crucial, as is checking in with yourself and loved ones. [Learn more about firearm safety during a PCS.](#)

Release of Annual Report on Suicide in the Military



The Department released its Calendar Year (CY) [2024 Annual Report on Suicide in the Military \(ARSM\)](#) in March. The ARSM is the official source of suicide rates and counts for service members and their family members, and describes efforts underway to combat suicide across the Department. Across the Total Force, we lost 471 service members to suicide in CY 2024, which is less than in CY 2023. The report found that suicide rates in the Total Force decreased approximately 11% in 2024 compared to 2023, with decreases in both the Active and Reserve Components. The National Guard saw an increase of approximately 13% as compared to 2023.

Over time, for the Active Component, suicide rates have gradually increased from 2011 to 2024. For the Reserve Component, including the National Guard, suicide rates have remained stable over the same period.

The DoW and DSPO remain unwavering in their dedication to suicide prevention and support for the military community. Efforts include expanding access to mental health services such as telehealth and implementing the Brandon Act to promote early intervention through self-referrals.



SPRING 2026



Director's Corner

Dr. Alicia Matteson
DSPO Acting Director

As we pause to remember the brave men and women who gave their lives in service this Memorial Day, we must also renew our commitment to those with us.

Connection is central to resilience. Whether you reach out to a fellow warfighter, participate in a Memorial Day event, or share stories of remembrance, these moments remind us of the power of community. Each of us has a role to play in building that sense of belonging. Every act of kindness, every conversation, every reminder of support makes a difference.

I encourage you to honor the legacy of the fallen by strengthening our collective commitment to care. Providing support, promoting help-seeking, and fostering collaboration will carry their legacy forward. Together, we can save lives and build a stronger, more resilient and ready military community.

Please visit our website, [DSPO.mil](https://www.dspo.mil), to learn ways to build connections and protect our community from suicide.

Are you or someone you know experiencing suicidal thoughts?

Reach out to a free, confidential counselor at the Veterans/Military Crisis Line: Dial 988 then press 1, text 838255, or chat online by visiting <https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/get-help-now/chat/>.



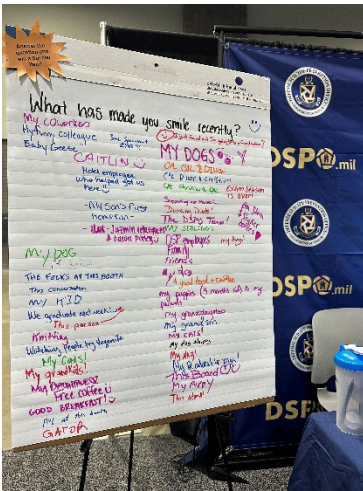


DEFENSE SUICIDE PREVENTION OFFICE QUARTERLY CONNECTION

Celebrating the Month of the Military Child: Supporting Military Families

This April, we recognized the resilience and adaptability of military children during the Month of the Military Child, shining a spotlight on their unique experiences, including frequent moves and parental deployments. Providing support to military families plays a vital role in strengthening the overall military community.

Through initiatives like the [Department of War Family Resources](#), families can access programs and tools designed to address their specific needs. [Sesame Street for Military Families](#) offers creative resources to help children manage challenges and build resilience in fun and interactive ways. Additionally, [SAMHSA's Engaging Service Members, Veterans, and Families Toolkit for Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics](#) delivers strategies for behavioral health providers to support the mental health and overall well-being of military families.



DSPO at Modern Day Marine

DSPO is honored to have participated in Modern Day Marine from April 28-30, 2026, at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center in Washington, D.C. Over the course of three days, DSPO engaged with Marines, family members, innovators, and mission partners to foster a culture of connectedness and suicide prevention.

Healthy Connections: A Vital Link in Suicide Prevention and Postvention

Healthy connections go beyond physical well-being. They include mental, emotional, and social support that directly impacts suicide prevention and postvention efforts. Within our military communities, these connections foster understanding, resilience, and access to critical resources that can save lives.

In prevention, healthy connections help individuals feel supported and valued, reducing feelings of isolation that can lead to crisis. When people feel understood, they are more likely to seek help. Encouraging dialogue about mental health and ensuring access to supportive resources fosters a culture of care and connection, key components in reducing suicide risk.

Healthy connections are helpful not only for suicide prevention, but also for postvention. The support offered after a suicide is essential to rebuilding healthy connections for survivors of loss. Those impacted by suicide often face complex grief, unanswered questions, and emotional pain. Family members, friends, peers, and leaders can all play a vital role in providing support by reaching out, offering comfort, and listening without judgment.

[Learn more about strengthening social connections](#) from Real Warriors Campaign.

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