



**DEFENSE SUICIDE PREVENTION OFFICE**  
**DEFENSE HUMAN RESOURCES ACTIVITY**  
4800 MARK CENTER DRIVE, SUITE 05J25  
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22350-4000

**MEMORANDUM FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION GENERAL OFFICER STEERING COMMITTEE  
MEMBERS**

**SUBJECT:** Defense Suicide Prevention Office Guidelines for Collaboration with Non-Government Organizations

The Defense Suicide Prevention Office (DSPO) values fostering collaboration with internal and external stakeholders to support suicide prevention, intervention, and/or postvention policies and programs. This symbiotic approach not only affects the military community, but the broader civilian communities in which challenges and gaps are identified and solutions are shared. As such, DSPO recognizes non-government organizations as key stakeholders in advancing our holistic, data-driven suicide prevention approach to positively impact individual beliefs and behaviors, as well as instill systemic culture change.

In accordance with Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 6400.09 "DoD Policy on Integrated Primary Prevention of Self-Directed Harm and Prohibited Abuse or Harm," September 11, 2020, the attached guidelines and criteria are provided for DoD Components use when coordinating with non-government organizations in suicide prevention efforts in accordance with Section 591 of Public Law 114-92.

If you have questions or need assistance on this matter, please contact DSPO at (703) 614-8840. Thank you for all you do for our military community.

Karin A. Orvis, Ph.D.  
Director

Attachment:  
As stated

cc:  
Suicide Prevention and Risk Reduction Committee Members

## Attachment

### **Defense Suicide Prevention Office (DSPO) Guidelines for Collaboration with Non-Government Organizations**

The Defense Suicide Prevention Office (DSPO) values fostering collaboration with internal and external stakeholders to support suicide prevention, intervention, and/or postvention policies and programs. This symbiotic approach not only affects the military community, but the overall civilian communities in which challenges and gaps are identified and solutions are shared. As such, DSPO recognizes non-government organizations as a key stakeholder in advancing our holistic, data-driven suicide prevention approach to positively impact individual beliefs and behaviors, as well as instill systemic culture change.

In accordance with Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 6400.09, “DoD Policy on Integrated Primary Prevention of Self-Directed Harm and Prohibited Abuse or Harm,” DoD Components should use the below guidelines and criteria when coordinating with non-government organizations in suicide prevention efforts in accordance with Section 591 of Public Law 114-92.

#### **Criteria for Collaboration**

The Director, DSPO – and other DoD leaders with appropriate authorization – retain discretion to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding or Agreement (MOU or MOA) with non-government suicide prevention organizations (hereafter non-government organizations) consistent with DoDI 4000.19 “Support Agreements” and DoD 5500.07-R “Joint Ethics Regulation (JER).” Any MOUs or MOAs between DoD Components and non-government organizations are intended to be collaborative to achieve shared goals; DoD Components will not enter into agreements in order to implicitly endorse, and will not explicitly endorse, non-government organizations. References in this document to any specific product, process, service, or the use of any non-government organization name does not constitute endorsement, recommendation, or favoring by DoD.

DoD Components should use the following criteria when engaging and collaborating with non-government organizations:

- Use of non-government organization clearinghouses or repositories (e.g., Charity Navigator, Guidestar, Better Business Bureau, Wise Giving Alliance), at their discretion, to identify non-governmental organizations and their mission and business practices that may provide support to Service members and their families on suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention. Listing of clearinghouse or repository organizations is intended to be as comprehensive as practicable and does not imply endorsement.
- The non-government organization’s mission focuses on suicide prevention, intervention, and/or postvention, or at minimum, addresses one risk and/or protective factor for suicide as identified by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/suicide/riskprotectivefactors.html>)
- In addition to the above criteria, the non-government organization must be associated with at least one of the following categories:
  - Combined Federal Campaign

- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Registry of Evidence-Based Practices
  - Suicide Prevention Resource Center Best Practices Registry
  - President's Roadmap to Empower Veterans and End a National Tragedy of Suicide (PREVENTS)
  - The National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention
  - National Resource Directory
  - Accredited by the Joint Commission, American Association of Suicidology, or similar national or state recognized accreditation body
  - Recipient of Federal or state funds to operate an organization, research project(s), or provide other resources on suicide prevention, intervention, and/or postvention, or at minimum address one risk and/or protective factor for suicide as identified by the CDC within the past five years
- The nature of services provided by the non-government organization supports the needs of the DoD, Service members, and/or their families.

#### Coordination of Efforts

DoD Components may coordinate efforts with non-government organizations to prevent suicides among Service members and their families. Examples of such efforts include, but are not limited to:

- Use of official communication channels to inform Service members and their families of the availability of services and support provided by a non-governmental organization. This distribution of information will remain factual in nature and will not explicitly or implicitly endorse the non-government organization, and does not imply endorsement nor assumes legal liability for the accuracy or completeness of any information that is provided.
- Promote public education and awareness about suicide prevention, mental health, and well-being that can help reduce negative attitudes, misperceptions, and stigma related to mental health and suicide while also increasing community support.
- Promote help-seeking behaviors early on, enhance skills to address life stressors, and identify support designed to address the needs of Service members and their families.
- Collaborate on producing, disseminating, and raising awareness of outreach materials to educate the military community about the importance of seeking help, supporting others, and other ways to prevent suicide.
- Work to reduce the stigma associated with help-seeking by participating in and leading education, training, and outreach efforts in military communities.