



Department of Defense Holds Suicide Prevention Recognition Ceremony

Recognition ceremony focused on installations' innovative efforts to increase awareness about suicide prevention.

Arlington, Va. – On September 7, 2022, the Department of Defense honored a group of heroes dedicated to saving lives and improving public health by increasing awareness about suicide prevention. At the ceremony, the Department paid tribute to the 2020-2021 Department of Defense Suicide Prevention Recognition recipients.

Since 2016, the ceremony has recognized installations for their efforts. The ceremony honors the recipients' year-round accomplishments, including their efforts during Suicide Prevention Month each September and their dedication to this life-saving work. The installations recognized this year included United States Army Garrison White Sands Missile Range, Oregon Army National Guard, Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort, Marine Corps Support Facility New Orleans, Cryptologic Warfare Group 6, and Davis-Monthan Air Force Base.



Hosted by the Director of the Defense Human Resources Activity, Mr. William Booth, opening remarks were provided by the Deputy Secretary of Defense, Dr. Kathleen H. Hicks, with distinguished guests providing remarks including the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness The Honorable Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr., Deputy Director for Force Resiliency Dr. Tim Hoyt, and Acting Director of the Defense Suicide Prevention Office (DSPO) Dr. Liz Clark.

The keynote speakers spoke both of individual personal responsibility to prevent suicide, as well as about suicide prevention through a public health lens and discussed evidence-based solutions, such as lethal means safety and fostering a culture of help-seeking.



Said Hicks, "...suicide prevention has to be personal for all of us. It's a challenge we all have to take personal responsibility for. Because even as we know suicide is a complex problem, with no single cause and no single solution – there are lots of things that all of us can do..."



"We must work to prevent suicide. It is not easy. Suicide is complex and multifaceted," said Cisneros. "But when approached from a public health perspective, it may be preventable. That is



why the public health approach matters and why we approach suicide as a public health problem. Doing so allows us to save lives.”

In addition to the featured keynote speakers, one representative from each recognized installation gave remarks detailing their efforts thus far and their plans for the future. Following these remarks, Hoyt said “To those on installations that we have honored today, your contributions towards suicide prevention within your installations, the Department and the military community as a whole are inspiring...Your impact is immeasurable. You are saving lives.”



DSPO Acting Director Dr. Liz Clark thanked the installations and their representatives and reiterated the Department’s commitment to innovative solutions that promote connectedness within communities. “These recipients engaged in various activities and events to support suicide prevention efforts in their communities. They inspire us in part because they look at a tough problem, and rather than calling it unfixable, unsolvable, or impossible, they see possibility. Rather than turning away from it, they move toward it. They recognize that suicide is a preventable public health problem, and each of us can better the lives of those around us, including our military community,” said Clark.

Full recording of the event can be viewed on [Defense Visual Information Distribution Service](#).

Service members and veterans who are in crisis or having thoughts of suicide, and those who know a Service member or veteran in crisis, can call the Veterans/Military Crisis Line for confidential support available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. Call 988 and Press 1, text 988 or chat online at VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat.



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