



FORCE RESILIENCY

OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

MEMORANDUM FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR MANPOWER AND  
RESERVE AFFAIRS  
DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY FOR  
MILITARY PERSONNEL/QUALITY OF LIFE  
DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE NAVY FOR MILITARY  
PERSONNEL POLICY  
DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE FOR  
RESERVE AFFAIRS AND AIRMEN READINESS  
DIRECTOR OF MANPOWER AND PERSONNEL FOR THE NATIONAL  
GUARD BUREAU

SUBJECT: Use of the Postvention Toolkit for a Military Suicide Loss

The Department embraces a public health approach to suicide prevention that acknowledges a complex interplay of individual-, relationship-, and community-level risk factors. As part of the public health approach, and in line with Goal 10 of the Defense Strategy for Suicide Prevention (See Enclosure 1), which encourages implementation of community-wide postvention strategies, we are intent on lessening harms and preventing future risks after a death by suicide or suicide attempt. Postvention can help prevent negative effects of suicide exposure. Support and bereavement services delivered after a suicide to lessen its impact are referred to as postvention.

The Defense Suicide Prevention Office (DSPO), in partnership with the Office of People Analytics, has developed a toolkit to guide Department postvention services for unit members and next of kin who survive military suicide loss. This memorandum provides guidance to emphasize the use of the *Postvention Toolkit for a Military Suicide Loss* as a comprehensive, evidence-informed resource guide for military postvention providers, including unit commanders, chaplains, casualty assistance officers, Suicide Prevention Program Managers, military first responders, military investigators, and non-clinical behavioral health providers.

I ask leaders and commanders throughout the Department to ensure that all Service members and their families who have lost a loved one to suicide receive postvention services as described in this toolkit. Additionally, DSPO has developed suggested evaluation measures (See Enclosure 2) to accompany the toolkit.

To access the *Postvention Toolkit for a Military Suicide Loss*, please visit <https://www.dspo.mil/About-Suicide/Toolkit>. For questions about this toolkit or the evaluation measures, please contact Dr. Adam Walsh at (703) 614-8840.

for  
Dr. Elizabeth P. Van Winkle  
Executive Director, Force Resiliency

Enclosures

1. Department of Defense Strategy for Suicide Prevention Goals
2. Suggested Postvention Toolkit Evaluation Measures