



Commanding Officer, Headquarters Battalion Policy for Suicide Prevention

“Marines always help each other. Never choose a permanent solution to a temporary problem.”

-- Gen Berger, 338th CMC



Warfighters take care of each other in combat and peacetime. Suicide and suicide-related behaviors are no exception and have a negative impact on Marines; Sailors; family; friends; unit readiness; cohesion and morale. Members of the Headquarters Battalion Team, regardless of rank must stay engaged and support their comrades during the tough times we all face.

A high operational tempo and being stationed overseas may present challenges that may seem overwhelming to some. It is our responsibility as leaders to be vigilant in identifying indicators and to take prompt, decisive action – ideally before it becomes a crisis. To that end, Headquarters Battalion has myriad resources available if you, a team mate, or family member needs assistance. Have the courage to ask for help!

Per MCO 1720.2, the following acronym is useful in the process of identifying potential issues and taking action:

R- Recognize the signs of suicide-related behavior. Be alert to changes in behavior; these can result from financial issues, relationships, legal problems, feeling trapped, etc.

A – Ask. Be direct and ask, “Are you thinking about hurting yourself?”

C- Care with words and actions. Sometimes simply listening is enough, but ensure he/she understands you’re there for them and ready to help. Contact your Chaplain, chain of command, or the US Naval Hospital directly if you have any doubt.

E- Escort to help. Do not let the individual out of your sight; stay until help arrives or escort him/her to get help.

Headquarters Battalion is forward deployed, engaged, and ready to assist our fellow Marines and Sailors in times of need. Understanding the warning signs of destructive behavior and knowing where to get help is everyone’s responsibility. I expect every member of this command to be 100% committed to preventing the loss of one single Marine, Sailor, Civilian Marine, or family member to the tragedy of suicide.

Semper Fidelis,

Matthew R. Nation
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