

## SUICIDE PREVENTION

Our bond as Marines requires that we take care of one another and when we see someone going over the side of the boat, we reach out and pull them back in. Suicide is an incredibly unfortunate and debilitating reality in our Marine Corps. When a Marine or Sailor commits suicide, the impacts are far reaching and include family, friends, fellow Marines, and can have a devastating effect on the unit as a whole. Through leadership coupled with vigilance, education, and action, suicide can be prevented.

The Marine Corps has extensive and robust resources that can provide assistance and contribute to our prevention effort. Unit leaders, chaplains, suicide prevention officers, and mental/behavioral health professionals are just a few individuals who can lend a helping hand and provide necessary support. The first line of defense, however, is you. Understanding the indications and warnings and asking the tough question "Are you thinking about hurting yourself?" will ultimately drive supportive action that will get that Marine or Sailor the care they require. You can also demonstrate care for your fellow Marines or Sailors by personally escorting them to a professional who can provide them the attention they deserve.

We routinely refer to our units as teams and families and, frankly, we should because when you are in the business of always running to the sound of the guns instead of away, you must have a special bond with the Marine or Sailor on your left and right that resembles the same bond you have with your mother or father, brother or sister. Stay involved and remain aware of your fellow Marine or Sailor as we aggressively execute our mission.

I want each of you to have the courage to take this head on and utilize engaged leadership to proactively ensure the health of our Marines and Sailors as they deal with the stressors of Marine Corps life. This profession of arms is not easy, but remember that we are "The Few, The Proud, The Marines."

If you or someone you know is contemplating anything suicide related, to include thoughts or gestures, I implore you to immediately contact the chain of command, the Marine Air Support Squadron 2 Suicide Prevention Officer, or the Marine Air Control Group 18 Chaplain at 09068614634. We cannot afford to hesitate when these issues arise.

Semper Fidelis,



M. S. McFADDEN

Lieutenant Colonel

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