



MALS-12 Policy on Suicide Prevention



Every Marine and Sailor in MALS-12 is valuable to the Marine Corps and to their family and friends. I hold no other responsibility more sacred than ensuring every Marine successfully completes their tour of duty in Iwakuni, Japan and returns safely to their loved ones and friends. Each and every one of us has the responsibility to care for each other and observe the mental well-being of our fellow Marines and Sailors. We are never too busy to stop what we are doing and talk to each other to gauge how we are managing our day-to-day lives; personally and professionally.

Every Marine and Sailor will receive and continue to receive annual training on Suicide Prevention. I charge all members of MALS-12 to learn, understand, and utilize the RACE method to prevent suicides within this command:

Recognize the signs of distress

Ask about the signs of distress

Care about each other and show it

Escort the person to safety

The RACE method is a valuable tool. We need to take our stance against suicide and prevention even further. In many suicide cases there are no signs or signals to trigger the "Recognition" phase of the RACE method. Leaders and peers must work to get to know each other at a level where our Marines and Sailors truly understand and believe that we are all here for one another – especially in their darkest moments. Ask your fellow Marauders how they are doing - stick around and listen, carefully, for the answer. Most of the time, the standard responses will be returned. Be especially aware of the Marine or Sailor that is slow to respond, has a different tone than normal, or shows any indicator that something may not be right. Get to know each other on a deeper level, based on trust, where it is okay to let someone else know they are having a difficult time. Help them find the resource or BE the resource that keeps them pushing forward. Remember at the end of the day this is a People Business – **take care of each other.**

Starting with me, the chain of command must ensure our Marines and Sailors are aware of the available resources: Chaplain, medical, counselors, and (especially) our own Marines and Sailors are available to address any problems encountered with complete confidentiality and discretion with no negative impact to one's career. Asking for help is not a weakness, but a form of courage on its own right as it is very difficult admitting we can do everything ourselves – remember this is a **Team** effort not individual effort. We must work to ensure those under our charge take this to heart.

The operational tempo in III MEF is challenging. We must place the importance of looking out for one another at the top of our priority list. Only through consistent communication and a strong Suicide Prevention Program will we eliminate the possibility of one of our own inflicting harm upon themselves.

Semper Fidelis,

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