Commission to Study Mental & Behavioral Health

Towson University

November 9, 2021
Maryland Army National Guard
Behavioral Health & Wellness
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Agenda

• Mission & Vision
• Support to Soldiers
• Recognizing the Problem
• Holistic Approach
• Resources
• Help-Seeking Factors
• Reducing the Stigma
• Resilience Stand Down
• **Mission**: The Maryland Army National Guard plans, develops, and executes holistic health efforts to increase readiness, mitigate high-risk behaviors, and provide aid for Service members and families in need.

• **Vision**: Lead the way in holistic health education, prevention, and early treatment with trained, ready, and proficient holistic health professionals that deliver world-class health services to all MDARNG Service members and their families.
Support to Soldiers

- Resilience
- Risk Reduction
- Suicide Prevention
- Commanders Ready and Resilient Council (CR2C):
Recognizing the Problem

- Service members experience a wide-range of mental and behavioral health issues, such as:
  - Depression
  - Suicidal Ideation
  - Anxiety
  - PTSD
  - Alcohol abuse
  - Substance abuse
  - Relationship conflict

- Some of these problems exist prior to service and others develop over the course of service.
Holistic Approach

To reach readiness our leaders understand that we must support, maintain, provide, prevent, and help secure a service member's basic needs. The MDARNG understands the lack of basic needs can effect a service member's mental and behavioral health.

- Financial security
- Family Support
- Destigmatizing Mental and Behavioral Health treatment
- Accessibility to Healthcare

- Proper integration into normal activities
- Engaging and feeling apart of their community
- Food
- Housing
- **Traditional M-Day Soldiers**: These Soldiers perform duty one weekend a month and two weeks out of the year.
  - Assigned: # 4634

- **Active Guard Reserve (AGR) Soldiers**: These Soldiers are in an active-duty status and available every day.
  - Assigned: # 466

**Suicides**
- Incidents: 0
- Attempts: 3
- Ideations: 15

**Substance Abuse**
- Enrolled: 64

**Behavioral Health**
- Intervention: 1,434 Calls
  - 614 text messages
  - 151 in person
  - (2,199 total)

**Financial**
- Financial Counseling: 1,159
  - SMs via Future Formations, SRP, RSOI, Individual Appts. & Yellow Ribbon Events
Resources

- Resilience, Risk Reduction, and Suicide Prevention training
- Unit Risk Inventory (URI)
- Chaplain support
- Community Resources
- Established Gatekeepers in our formation for Soldier and Family Support
- Medical, mental, and behavioral health personnel
- Unit leadership
Unit Resources

• Embedded Behavioral Health
• Psychological Health Coordinators (PHC)
• Master Resilience Trainers (MRT)
• Suicide Intervention Officers (SIO)
• Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) personnel
• Soldier Family Support Specialist
• State Trauma Crisis NCO
Help-Seeking Factors

Factors that promote help-seeking and mental health care utilization:

- Policies that support self-referrals, reduction of stigma, and training programs
- Informal and formal command-directed evaluations
- Integrated and embedded mental health care
- Supportive, trusting environment, with options for confidential help, and escalation to more intensive services if needed
Reducing the Stigma

• Address Service members’ concerns that seeking help will have an adverse impact on their careers

  • Provide accurate information regarding impact on career, clearance, deployability, etc.
  
  • Highlight stories from Service members about how help seeking did not end their military career

  • Explore adapting the SAPR restricted and unrestricted reporting paradigm for suicide prevention
Psychological Debriefings and Skills Training

- Historical Event Reconstruction Debriefing
- After–Action Debriefing process
- Critical Incident Debriefing
- Educational and Skills briefing
Resilience Stand-Down

• Resiliency Stand Down training uses a 360° approach to promote mental, emotional and spiritual wellness and resilience in SMs.

• Using a holistic paradigm, the health and wellness needs of Service Members will be prioritized by educating and raising awareness.

• Commanders will conduct an assessment of resiliency needs based on the current Unit Risk Inventory (URI) and Command Climate Survey results and complete a Resource Action Plan.
Questions