



Statement on Suicide Prevention

Our goal at MCWS 28 is not to lose a single Marine to the tragedy of suicide. Every individual at every level of this command must be involved, available, and approachable if we are to make that happen. As the Commanding Officer of MCWS 28, I take personal accountability for creating an environment in which every member of this command can seek assistance from their leadership with complete confidence that they will receive help and support without judgement or retribution.

Honorable accountability to each other requires that we place preventing the loss of one of our own above any other task or objective. Nothing is ever more important than responding to a Marine in crisis. Let me say that again. Nothing is ever more important than responding to a Marine in crisis.

Combatting the unbearable tragedy of suicide within our ranks requires a unique kind of **courage**, both from the Marine experiencing stress and from those supporting him or her.

- Have the courage to ask for help if you begin to struggle. No one is in a one-man fighting hole, and we have all experienced times where we need help.
- Have the courage to talk about a problem that is eating away at you. Chaplains are available with 100% confidentiality to help you find your way and decide on a course of action.
- Have the courage to provide swift action if you see, hear, or think anything implying someone has lost hope. Never worry that you are over-reacting.
- Have the courage to ask hard questions.
- Have the courage never to minimize or to promise to keep someone's struggles with suicidal thoughts a secret. Action is necessary. A mad friend is better than a dead friend.
- Have the courage to get help immediately. Use your chain of command. Find someone.

I am 100%, all-in committed to addressing the tragedy of Marines attempting suicide, and I expect the same **commitment** from each of you. Suicide is a permanent response to a temporary problem, and we must be vigilant every moment of every day to identify Marines who may be struggling and connect them to support. None of us is immune to stress or struggle and we are the best line of defense and protection for each other. It is who we are.

Be aware. Be connected. Pay attention to what is happening in the lives of those around you. Recognize common stressors such as relationship issues, financial struggles, being new to a unit, or pending legal or administrative action. Be a friend. Listen. Act. Live the motto that defines us – Semper Paratus.

Private, professional help is available from the Marine Family Life Counselor, Beverly, at 252-466-5888. Our Suicide Prevention Officer is CWO Varner at 252-466-5802 or aaron.varner@usmc.mil. Our Chaplain is LCDR Paul Greer at 252-466-2957 or paul.greer@usmc.mil. Ultimately, as your Commanding Officer, I am responsible for your well-being. You can reach me any time at 252-626-2213, or bret.hyla@usmc.mil. Let us help you through whatever valley you are facing. You matter to us.

Commanding Officer
Marine Wing Communications Squadron 28

17 July 2015