



# AT RISK SERVICE MEMBERS: A GUIDE FOR COMMAND

Presented by Military & Family Life Counselors

# OBJECTIVES

## Participants will learn:

- Ways to recognize possible risk factors
- How to assist those at risk
- The importance of building trust and how to accomplish this



# AGENDA

- Introduction
- The at-risk service member
- Possible risk factors
- Risk factors for domestic violence
- Risk-taking behaviors
- How to help
- The importance of trust
- Building trust
- Self-care



# INTRODUCTION

- Many service members adjust well to the difficult situations they face
- Some have more difficulty adjusting and may become at risk for engaging in potentially dangerous behaviors
- When command reaches out to service members who appear to be at risk, they increase the possibility that these service members may seek the help they need
- Not all service members will be responsive to the outreach you make, but for others, it can have a powerful impact

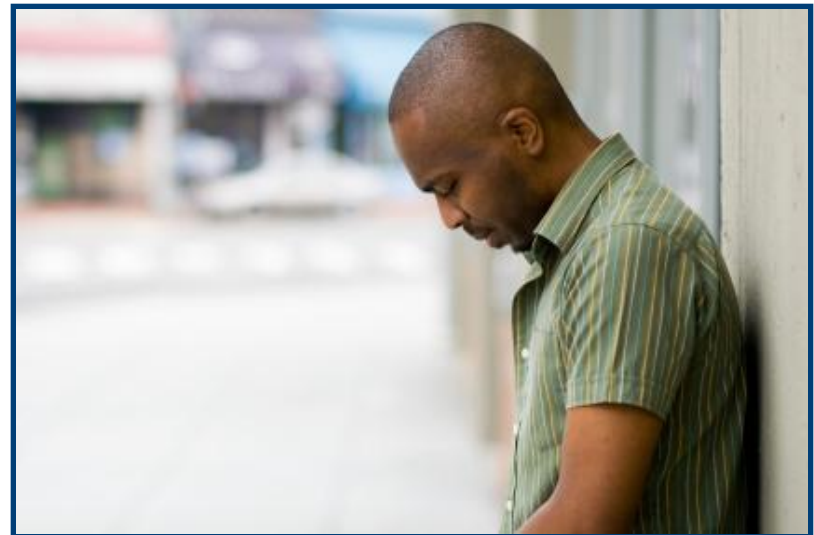


# THE AT RISK SERVICE MEMBER

The following slides address the different risk factors that can indicate the service member may be having difficulty

## Different types of risk areas can include:

- Harm to self or others
- Domestic violence



# RISK-TAKING BEHAVIORS

**Definition: Any voluntary behaviors that put an individual in danger of potentially serious injuries or death.**

## **Risk-taking behaviors include:**

- Riding a motorcycle at high speeds with or without a helmet
- Driving any vehicle at very high speeds
- Abusing alcohol or drugs
- Driving while intoxicated
- Various Extreme Sports



# RISK-TAKING BEHAVIORS

CONTINUED

## Invincibility and the “combat rush”

- A conditioned emotional response to trauma
- Feelings of power and excitement during combat
- Creates a feeling of invincibility – “I survived combat, therefore I can survive anything in civilian life.”



# RISK-TAKING BEHAVIORS

CONTINUED

## Post combat invincibility:

- Life outside of combat may seem boring
- A desire to recreate the combat rush ( this can intensify with multiple deployments and exposure to violence and death)
- The desire to recreate the combat rush can lead to risk-taking behaviors
- The sense of brotherhood disappears as units reorganize and adjust after a return from deployment; i.e. – assignment and unit changes





# POTENTIAL RISK FACTORS

## Life Events:

- End of a relationship with spouse or significant other
- Recent loss of a buddy, close friend or family member
- Any recent crisis or life trauma
- Financial problems
- Multiple deployments
- Post combat stress



# POTENTIAL RISK FACTORS

CONTINUED

## Behaviors:

- Tendency toward violent or impulsive behavior
- A change in personality or appearance
- Excessive sadness or moodiness
- Withdrawal from other people and social activities
- Engaging in risk-taking behaviors
- Previous attempts to inflict self-harm or harm to others
- Alcohol and drug abuse



# HOW TO HELP

- Get to know your service members and encourage them to get to know each other
- Offer support – let them know if you have noticed a change, and offer referrals to military resources
- Let them know that help is available through Military Community Services, Chaplains and behavioral health services, and encourage them to use these resources
- Challenge the stigma of seeking help – let them know seeking help is a sign of strength



# THE IMPORTANCE OF TRUST

## Trusting someone requires taking a risk:

- Trusting the other person means what they say
- Trusting they will follow through on what they say they will do
- Trusting they will maintain your confidence



# THE IMPORTANCE OF TRUST

CONTINUED

- People are more likely to reach out for help to someone they trust
- Building a level of trust provides a “state of readiness” should your service members need to seek your help



# BUILDING TRUST

- Exercise good listening skills
- Show respect
- Take a sincere interest in their lives
- Show empathy
- Be approachable
- Show support
- Don't be afraid to let them know you have faced difficulties as well



# SELF-CARE

- Make sure to take care of yourself as well
- Compassion fatigue can occur when you are paying attention to the needs of others and ignoring your own needs
- Put the oxygen mask on yourself first
  - Seek support from others when needed
  - Exercise
  - Eat well
  - Get plenty of rest
  - Take some down time and do something enjoyable from time to time



# SUMMARY

- Reaching out to service members who appear to be at risk can increase the likelihood that they seek help
- Learning to recognize risk factors can assist in identifying those at risk
- Building trust is an important part of increasing the possibility that your service members will seek your assistance if needed
- Practicing self-care increases your ability to assist others and sets an example







**QUESTIONS?**

# RESOURCES

- Military Community Services
- Chaplain and Local Clergy
- Military OneSource (800) 342-9647
- TRICARE [www.Tricare.mil](http://www.Tricare.mil)
- Behavioral Health Services



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**THANK YOU**

