



Running Against the Stigma

Unfortunately, suicide continues to be a leading cause of death in Nebraska. There are more deaths by suicide every year than by motor vehicle accidents. The Nebraska National Guard is committed to building a suicide-safer community by reducing the stigma surrounding suicide. Suicide impacts service members, their families, civilian organizations that they are a part of, and our local communities. Throughout the year, training on suicide risk identification and intervention skills are offered through the National Guard with the hope that these skills will be used to provide assistance to the communities we live and work in.

Part of building a suicide-safer community, is improving our own protective factors and helping others build theirs. Physical exercise is a great way to improve both your physical and mental health! Soldiers and their families are encouraged to log miles walked/run throughout the month of September. All participants will receive a flashlight to symbolize their dedication to being a light for someone walking in the darkness. There will be additional prizes for those who log the most miles during the month. Please complete the miles log on the back-side and return to Mrs. Jocelyn Kuta, jocelyn.j.kuta.ctr@mail.mil, NLT 10 October 2021. There are additional suggested activities/reflections to help guide you as well. Help us break the stigma by starting a conversation and participating in this fun competition!

Suicide Myths

Myth – If I ask someone about suicide, it will put the idea in their head.

Fact – Asking about suicide does not put the idea in someone's head. Asking lets them know you care and you are willing to talk to them about a sensitive subject. There is a widespread stigma associated with suicide and many people are afraid to talk about it. Talking about it not only reduces the stigma, but allows individuals to seek help, rethink their opinions, and share their story with others.

Myth – If I seek mental health help, I will lose my security clearance.

Fact – Only .005% of security clearances were denied for psychological issues alone between 2012 and 2018. Seeking help for mental health concerns can help keep a person from getting into larger issues that could lead to security clearance revocation (i.e. financial, substance abuse, or legal).

Myth – All people who suicide are depressed or have another mental health disorder.

Fact - Many people with mental health conditions do not suicide or attempt suicide. Approximately 54% of individuals who died by suicide, did not have a diagnosable mental health disorder. Life stressors (relationship issues, legal issues, bullying, illness, trauma, etc) are contributors to suicidal thoughts. Overwhelming feelings of hopelessness, helplessness, and burden to others – which are not necessarily related to mental health – can lead to suicide.

Myth – Once an individual is suicidal, they will always be suicidal.

Fact – Suicide is an attempt to end pain and loss that a person is feeling. Once the person understands and works through those emotions, suicidal thoughts generally subside.

Myth – Most suicides happen suddenly without warning.

Fact – Warning signs (verbal and behavioral), precede most suicides. Knowing and understanding warning signs can open up conversation and save lives.

Myth – People who die by suicide are selfish and take the easy way out.

Fact – Typically, people who die by suicide do so to end their pain, not because they want to die. Suicidal ideations are not a choice that people are making. Many believe they are relieving a burden to those they care about.



Running Against the Stigma – Log and Activities



Name _____ Unit _____

| DAY | ACTIVITY / REFLECTION | MILES | TOTAL |
|-----|--|-------|-------|
| 1 | Call/text someone you haven't seen in awhile. | | |
| 2 | Find at least one thing that makes you happy and do it! | | |
| 3 | Do something that makes a difference in one person's life today? | | |
| 4 | Write down something funny that occurred today. Write down why it was funny to you in detail. | | |
| 5 | Create a personal statement that emphasizes a positive quality and speak it out loud to yourself. | | |
| 6 | Who is your greatest inspiration and why? | | |
| 7 | Reflect on something that was difficult in your life and at least one positive thing that occurred from the situation. | | |
| 8 | Reflect on what makes your life meaningful and what you can do to increase meaningfulness. | | |
| 9 | Check your reaction to criticism and reflect on what you can learn from the criticism. | | |
| 10 | Take time to write down and think about your values. Reflect on where these values come from and why they are important to you. | | |
| 11 | Write down 5 priorities in your life & why they are important to you. | | |
| 12 | Write down at least 3 good things that happened today. | | |
| 13 | Perform a random act of kindness. | | |
| 14 | Tell someone specifically what you most appreciate about them. | | |
| 15 | Practice deliberate breathing. (Inhale through nose 4 sec, hold 7 sec, exhale through mouth 8 sec) | | |
| 16 | Find your "why": <i>Why am I here? How can I help others? What am I supposed to learn?</i> | | |
| 17 | Compliment yourself on something today. | | |
| 18 | Write down an achievable goal and complete it. | | |
| 19 | Smile at people you meet today. | | |
| 20 | Go on a walk with someone special today (family, friend, pet, etc). | | |
| 21 | Compliment those around you today. | | |
| 22 | First day of fall! Take a moment to reflect on the beauty of nature and changing seasons. | | |
| 23 | Think about what being successful means to you? | | |
| 24 | Create a list of people you care about, text a note of love/encouragement on rotation to them. | | |
| 25 | Share a favorite inspirational quote. | | |
| 26 | Encourage someone around you today. | | |
| 27 | National NO EXCUSE DAY! Take time to recognize and stop personal excuses. | | |
| 28 | Think about how you talk to a friend and practice talking to yourself in the same way. | | |
| 29 | Think about an upsetting experience and reflect on positives. (i.e. kids missed bus – opportunity to spend extra time with them) | | |
| 30 | Ask someone you are close to, how they are doing TODAY. | | |



**Military/Veterans
Crisis Line**

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