



Ohio Adjutant General's Department

Major General John C. Harris Jr., Adjutant General

September is National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month

A global health crisis. Political divisiveness. Civil unrest.

We all have likely experienced a range of emotions due to the multitude of events that have occurred in recent months.

For some people, these or other life events may have given rise to thoughts of suicide.

We have a staggering rate of suicide among National Guard members. At 30.6 suicide deaths per 100,000 Guard members, that is higher than any other military component and above the U.S general population for comparable age groups.

One suicide is one too many.

I'm here to tell you there is no shame in asking for help.

There are Soldiers within each of our units trained in ASIST, the Army's Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training. Likewise, our Airmen are trained to help their fellow wingmen through the Air Force Suicide Prevention Program (AFSPP). Chaplains are available at each battalion and wing to provide counsel and assistance.

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is available 24/7 at 1-800-273-TALK (8255).

OHIOcares has a non-crisis line at 1-800-761-0868 and a website, OHIOcares.ohio.gov, with information and resources helpful for unit commanders, service members, and Families.

If you know or suspect a fellow Soldier or Airman is struggling and there's even a hint of them expressing suicidal thoughts or ideations – you have to step up and reach out to them. Making that personal connection could make all the difference.

We have to get past the idea that asking for or giving help is a sign of weakness. We are a team, and we must work together to shed light on suicide. During these extraordinary times, it is more important than ever. The health, safety, and well-being of our members and our Families depend on it.

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