

Prevention Connection

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April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month, Child Abuse Prevention Month, Month of the Military Child, Celebrate Diversity Month, and Stress Awareness Month

Merriam-Webster's definition of diversity is "the condition of having or being composed of differing elements". When we add inclusion, we take that one step further, by incorporating different elements into our workforce. It's the behavior of including those who are different than us in our groups.

According to [opm.gov](https://www.opm.gov), there are many benefits to diversity and inclusion. First, the communities we serve are diverse, and they are becoming more diverse each year. For example, there are 54 million people with disabilities. The number of people with disabilities joining the workforce is expected to increase by 10%. Second, the more diverse teams and groups are, the more innovation and creativity exists. Employees with a variety of backgrounds "improves organizational performance and innovation". Lastly, organizations spend a lot of money on salaries, benefits, training, development, and recruitment. Agencies need to focus on acquiring the best and brightest talent available, which means broadly reaching out to all communities. Organizations should also look at their internal conditions that fosters diversity and inclusion. Environments where all employees feel included and valued will yield a higher return on investment than those who don't. Those that don't will spend a lot of time, energy, and money on addressing turnover, grievances and complaints.

Source: <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/diversity-and-inclusion/faqs>



"We are a nation of communities... a brilliant diversity spread like stars, like a thousand points of light in a broad and peaceful sky."

~ President George H. W. Bush

Faith—The Antidote to Stress

by Chaplain Cooper

How appropriate, given the coronavirus outbreak, that April is Stress Awareness Month. I encourage you to explore the abundance of materials available to reduce stress, even if you are not experiencing stress at this point. As the old adage goes, “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.”

In this article, I would like to offer some spiritual helps for reducing or managing stress. First, have faith. Some have dismissed faith as “believing what you know isn’t true”. Real faith is quite the opposite. Faith is the conviction that what or who I believe in, has been proven to be reliable and worthy of my confidence. Faith is a universal human experience and is increasingly being recognized as an indispensable life ingredient, especially vital in managing stress and facing hardship. (See FaithWorks). Faith plays a key role in helping us find meaning in life (and in this pandemic) which increases both our physical and mental health.

Second, strengthen that faith through religious practices. We all practice some sort of religion, whether we realize it or not. Religion is that set of rituals, habits and practices that reflect our belief system. Community worship, meditation or reading of sacred texts are some examples. The key is making our religious practices intentional and focused so our faith is strengthened. Also important is practicing our religion on a regular basis, and preferably with others. Consistency and community are key factors in maintaining meaningful religious practices. In my case, with our church being closed, we are practicing community by using Facebook and Zoom to worship together.

Finally, as Nike tells us, “Just Do It”. A team doesn’t win by knowing the playbook, but by running the plays. In the same way, we need to do what our faith and religious practices instruct. For example, I use the Bible as my religious text. It instructs me to not worry, but pray; to focus my thoughts on those things that are true, honest, good, right and lovely. I am instructed to trust and hope. I need to **DO** these things. I encourage you in these trying times to have faith, and practice it. Its benefits are proven and I am confident it will see you through this time of stress.

Remember, your chapel staff and base helping agencies are always available.

“Whatever happens to you, you can either see it as a curse and suffer it, or you can see it as a blessing and make use of it.”

~ Sadhguru



Be Good to Yourself

By Mike Sanford, VPI

As we navigate this new normal, we need to be reminded that this is anything but normal. This is not normal and it is not going to be with us forever. COVID-19 has had a big impact on all of us. The virus has both short and long-term implications. One of those short-term implications is the amount of stress that's been placed upon families. We all face business and school closures, family confinement, and physical and psychological health risks. One particular vulnerable group are children.

With the increase in children spending time in the home, there is a greater chance for them to either be abused or witness abuse. And with the added stressors, parents and other adults might have a difficult time understanding and managing that stress.

End-violence.org offers several tips for parents and adult:

- Speak to a crisis counselor—don't be afraid to reach out to someone to get advice on how to manage your unique situation. One resource is the Crisis Text Line. Simply text HOME to 741741 to connect to a counselor.
- Create a flexible but consistent daily routine for you and your children. Now is the time to make new routines to help fit your families needs.
- Take care of yourself by exercising (exercise as a family) even if it's just for 20 minutes, practicing good sleep hygiene, take a pause by taking a deep breath, maybe meditate even if it's for 30-60 seconds, or take a walk with the family. Do whatever works for you.
- Reach out to a friend, colleague, or someone who will give you a listening ear. With the technology we have, there are several ways to reach out to others. So don't become and island.

Remember, it's normal to feel sad, anxious, confused, anger, or scared during a crisis. But try to avoid using alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs to deal with your emotions. Also limit the amount of news you are watching or listening to. It can be overwhelming.

Source: <https://end-violence.org/protecting-children-during-covid-19-outbreak>



“When you arise in the morning, think of what a precious privilege it is to be alive—to breathe, to think, to enjoy, to love.”

~ Marcus Aurelius



Did you know:

1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men have experienced sexual assault violence in their lifetime. In our 934th community this statistic is represented by 85 female members and 177 male members. That's approximately 262 wing personnel, or just about 1 in 5. Even though we may not see it, chances are sexual violence has affected someone you know. Source: The NO MORE project.

Did you know:

The DoD takes sexual assault very seriously and has made great strides towards helping survivors as well as changing the culture. Supports for survivors have included: starting the SAPR program in 2005, adding SVCs (Special Victim Attorney) in 2012 which is an attorney specifically for victims of crime, and other supports including expedited transfers, the DoD SafeHelpline or the CATCH program (a database for those with restricted reports to identify their perpetrator anonymously). Culture has been addressed by making sexual assault a regular topic of conversation via annual trainings, working with commanders to stop sexual harassment in their ranks, and working our military legal system to hold offenders accountable. Source: www.sapr.mil

Did you know:

By working together we can prevent sexual assaults from happening before they start. Although this seems like a monumental task, by working together we create a monumental force: *"There is strength in numbers, yes, but even more so in collective good will. For those endeavors are supported by mighty forces unseen."* - Richelle E. Goodrich. Here are some things we can all do:

- Improve communication around sex, model healthy consent
- Be respectful of boundaries
- Model healthy relationships and self-respect
- Challenge jokes that are demeaning—by holding others accountable we are pressured to be better, there is growth through adversity
- Teach kids about healthy boundaries
- Challenge unfair stereotypes
- If you see something that doesn't seem right, say something
- Help out a wingman





APRIL IS SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH

12 WAYS TO HELP A VICTIM OF ABUSE

- NO JUDGMENTS
- ENCOURAGE CONVERSATION, BUT DO NOT PUSH
- RESPOND WITH PATIENCE, SUPPORT, ENCOURAGEMENT
- KEEP THINGS PRIVATE
- BE THERE REGARDLESS OF EXCUSES, REJECTION, DEFENSIVENESS OR DENIAL
- REASSURE THEM THIS IS NOT THEIR FAULT
- DO NOT ASSUME THE ABUSE IS NOT THAT SERIOUS
- LET THEM MAKE THEIR OWN DECISION
- PROVIDE PRACTICAL SUPPORT
- HELP THEM REBUILD THEMSELVES
- DO NOT MEDIATE
- LOOK AFTER YOURSELF

FIND OUT MORE:
SWANWATERS.COM/SUPPORT-ABUSE-VICTIMS

Knowing what to say to someone who has experienced sexual violence can be tough. Even though we are trying to support survivors, we often resort to familiar habits that make handling emotionally intense situations easier for us, the listener. These habits, although well-intentioned, can be hurtful for a survivor.

This includes trying to “fix” a situation (i.e. “you should just do this and you will be fine”), minimizing (i.e. “it could’ve been worse”) or even blaming (i.e. “why did you talk to that person anyway?”). Again, these habits make it easier for the listener yet not for the survivor.

However, keeping the 12 ways to help a victim of abuse in mind can make it easier for not only you but also the survivor you are supporting. For any questions on this topic feel free to reach out to the SAPR office:

934th SAPR Hotline: 612-386-8128

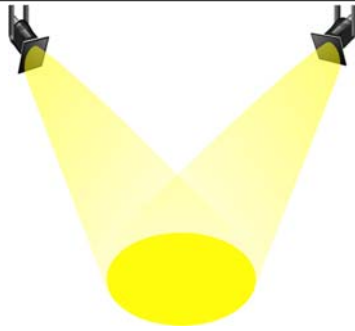
DoD Safe Helpline: 877-995-5247

Office Phone: 612-713-1315

Email: elizabeth.swanson@us.af.mil

Additional Information/Resources

Resource Spotlight



Sexual Assault Prevention & Response (SAPR) (713-1315) (Hotline: 612-386-8128). Offers coordination of care for adult victims of sexual assault & protection with appropriate medical treatment/care. Victim Advocates are also available to offer support and resources, call for information or to report a sexual assault. If you have been a victim of sexual assault regardless of when it happened, you are encouraged to file a report, either restricted or unrestricted.

Prevention Partners/Response:

Violence Prevention: 713-1159
 Sexual Assault Response Coordinator:
 713-1315
 Director of Psychological Health:
 713-1224
 Airman & Family Readiness: 713-1516
 Personal Financial Counselor:
 612-297-2826
 Chaplain Corp: 713-1226
 Equal Opportunity: 713-1221
 Exercise Physiologist: 713-1472
 SFS (BDOC): 713-1101/1102
 Military One Source: 1-800-342-9647
 DoD Safe Helpline: 1-877-995-5247
 Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255
 National Domestic Violence Hotline:
 1-800-799-7233
 National Human Trafficking
 Resource Center: 1-888-373-7888

APP* Spotlight and Self Care Strategy—Add this to your Tool Box!



The DoD Safe Helpline© provides crisis support for members of the DOD community affected by sexual assault. Safe Helpline provides live, one-on-one specialized support and information, and is confidential, anonymous and secure. Services are available worldwide, 24/7 – providing victims with the help they need anytime, anywhere. No matter where you are across the globe, you can find resources for you. Simply enter your current location to find resources in your area.

The app also provides the reporting of retaliation allegations. If you believe you have experienced or witnessed retaliation following a report of sexual assault, reporting can be provided via the Safe Helpline at <https://www.safehelpline.org> or by calling the DOD Safe Helpline. Check your app store to download.

***The DOD and Air Force offers support for those affected by sexual assault. Please contact your local SARC or Volunteer Victim Advocate for more information.**