



934TH AIRLIFT WING

**April 2023
Volume 5 Issue 4**

Prevention Connection: Building a Healthier Community

Inside: April is Teal; Stress Awareness; You Can Prevent Child Abuse

Hello All,

My name is Tim LaSelle. I want to take a moment to introduce myself as the wing's Violence Prevention Specialist. I'm both happy and excited to be in a position that allows me to share my passion for mental health and violence prevention with all of the great men and women of the 934th. In this position, my responsibility is to provide you with resilience tools, education, and general awareness regarding mental health concerns. This will primarily be accomplished through training sessions such as suicide prevention and resilience training, however, there is so much more that can be done for all of you.

I have already begun reaching out to several squadrons and have received some valuable input on ideas for classes, meetings, and activities that would improve our lives and mental health, some of which the prevention office and the resilience team have already begun working on bringing to fruition. As we push forward, there are going to be new and unique things that the prevention office is going to be able to support, therefore, I would encourage you to bring your ideas forward and reach out to our office or email me personally at timothy.laselle@us.af.mil. I look forward to doing some amazing things for some amazing people!

Special points of interest:

For more information on Violence Prevention and Resilience go to:

<https://www.resilience.af.mil/>

<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/index.html>

<https://www.who.int/teams/social-determinants-of-health/violence-prevention>

April is Teal by Chayo Smith

The formation is stagnant. However, true to drill and ceremony, the left boots step forward to march. In basic training we marched, in the heat, the cold, the rain, the wind; we marched. We relied on our squadron to make it through basic military training, advanced individual training, or technical school. We rely on our fellow members to accomplish the mission, to ensure everyone does their part in their area of expertise. We still march.

The March Against Sexual Assault is a unified effort. SAPR team members from the 934 AW USAFR, 133rd AW ANG, 148 FW ANG, MN ARNG began collecting boots in February to add to the formation. Each team member contributed to the museum display labels, the leadership messages, the arrangement of travel for the exhibits. Every detail was carefully curated from the charcoal shading on the boot illustration to the setup of the display.

Boots in the exhibit show obvious signs of wear, the slog of getting up in the morning to sign in, tucking the laces, blousing the pant legs. Heels are worn from field exercises, deployment, stepping miles on and off pavement. Representing all services, some are colored sand, coyote, black and green. Each pair has their own story.

Solid teal boots were painted by the 133rd Civil Engineering. Those teal boots tell the story of a sexual assault victim. Sexual assault forever changes the color of the victim's life. The person marching in the teal boots is someone's son or daughter, mother or father and friend.

Adjacent and other boots in the formation are splattered and touched by their Wingmen's assault. If one in four women are sexually assaulted, how does it affect their Battle Buddies? If one in six men is assaulted in our ranks, what effect does that have on the other five? How can we keep marching through the mission when we find it hard to trust the persons to the left and to the right or our leaders?

Through witnessing a fellow Wingman's distress, others may suffer compassion fatigue or experience vicarious trauma. While we know that sexual assault negatively impacts missions' capability. This display highlights the societal impacts beyond the uniform.

All the boots in formation face the same direction, they step off on the same foot. There are individuals who, knowingly or unknowingly, display actions that fall along the continuum of harm. However, small upstanding behaviors interrupt these harmful actions. Upstanding behaviors can change an individual's direction; from descending the continuum of harm to maintaining an environment of dignity and respect. Upstanding behaviors lift us all.

Solidarity in leadership and the messaging montage reinforces that we ALL march against sexual assault. We cannot move as a formation if we are out of step.

Stress Awareness by Eric Neal and Tim LaSelle

Did you know that April is Stress Awareness Month? The management of stress should generate more attention. Stress happens to be the number one risk factor to health in the workplace. In this month's article, I will team up with LaSelle to discuss strategies for dealing with stress.

When I was younger, I had a very hard time believing that physical activity decreased stress because I was always working out, yet I was still stressed out. I learned during a time when I was running a personal training business, serving with the West Virginia Air National Guard, and attending graduate school that I had a very hard time finding the time to work out. The results of this lack of time led my workout time being reduced by more than 80%. At this time in life, I learned that physical activity really does decrease stress levels as the previous stress I dealt with was no comparison to this time. Despite, the circumstances of not being physically active as I would like, being mentally exhausted, and most of my friends leaving for undergraduate school, it was my spiritual resilience that kept me going. I knew this mentally exhaustive period wasn't going to be permanent and there would be a light at the end of the tunnel. If you are going through a rough time like I did, I would recommend trying to fit in physical activity from exercise or daily living activity to release the neurotransmitter endorphins that work as natural painkillers and promote pleasure. I would also recommend using the mental resilience tips Master Resilience Trainer, MSgt Tim LaSelle provides as a supplement to physical activity to alleviate stress.

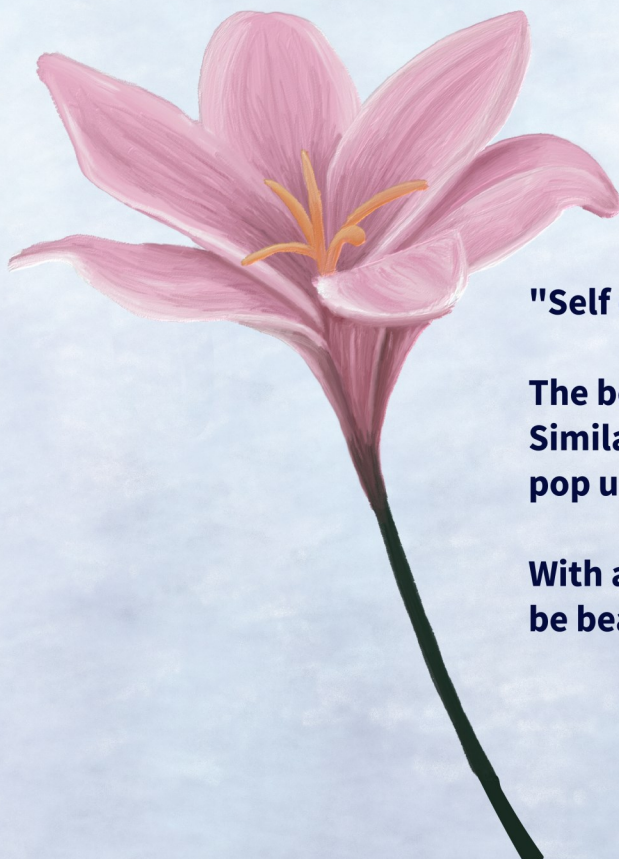
When thinking of psychological stress, oftentimes we look internally at how we perceive and internalize situations in our work, personal, and social lives. While this is a healthy practice when implementing resilience techniques such as mindfulness practices and reframing difficult situations, it can cause us to overlook the external factors that may be extremely influential on one's ability to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Factors such as long workdays, travel, financial or relationship issues, and multiple deadlines can greatly impact the ability to implement positive choices that would have otherwise increased our overall state of happiness. It is at this point that normal stress can become distress, which is when an individual can no longer compensate for the stress in their lives. Distress has a significant impact on both the mind and body. Psychologically, distress can cause individuals to feel anxious and depressed. Physiologically, distress can attribute to unhealthy behaviors such as poor eating and sleeping habits and can be detrimental to exercise habits.

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Stress Awareness by Eric Neal and Tim LaSelle

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What can we do to prevent distress? The answer is quite easy, we build a more resilient lifestyle by focusing on healthy behavioral habits, developing social support networks, and learning research-proven ways to cope with stress. The idea is to focus on oneself and ensure they are adequately managing the stress in their life before it builds up to a point where it is out of control and feels like it is an insurmountable obstacle. So, take the time to go to the gym, read a book, or call a friend on the way home from work. Then, if you feel that you want to develop a proven mental health resilience technique you could attend one of the numerous resilience courses the Air Force provides. Although many of those who serve tend to feel they are willing to give it everything it takes, the reality is that the mission can't get done if you're not healthy both physically and mentally.



"Self care takes effort. It doesn't just happen.

**The body and mind need to be maintained.
Similar to a garden, without effort, weeds will
pop up and overtake everything.**

**With a bit of consistent pruning, the results can
be beautiful."**

- James Clear, Author

You Can Prevent Child Abuse by Mike Sanford

As with other types of interpersonal violence, child abuse is preventable. Child abuse and neglect are serious public health problems and are considered Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). ACEs can have a long-term impact on health, opportunity, and well-being. They can be in any form of abuse and neglect against a child under the age of 18 by a parent, caregiver, or another person in a custodial role (such as a religious leader, a coach, a teacher) that results in harm, potential for harm, or threat of harm to a child.

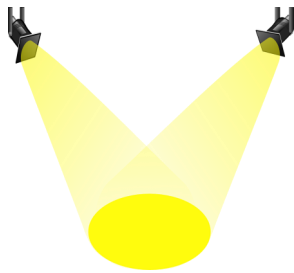
There are four common types of abuse and neglect: physical, sexual, emotional, and neglect. All can be equally damaging. When looking at the numbers, 1 in 7 children experienced child and neglect in the last year. The estimated lifetime cost of child abuse is \$428 billion. Younger children (under 14) are more likely to experience fatal abuse and neglect.

One way to ensure that all children grow up feeling safe and loved is to make an effort to learn about and promote protective factors. Similar to protective factors for sexual assault and suicide, protective factors are conditions or attributes that help people deal more effectively with stressful events and mitigate or eliminate risk. It is important for us to create a safe, positive environment that fosters healthy relationships, while meeting basic needs, such as food, shelter, education, and health services.

If you want to see change in the world and in your community, prevent child abuse and neglect. It will prevent ACEs, which in turn have a long-lasting affect for future generations. To recognize the signs of child abuse and neglect and how to prevent it, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Child Abuse and Prevention webpage at <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/childabuseandneglect/index.html>.

Sources: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Division of Violence Prevention (2022). Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/childabuseandneglect/riskprotectivefactors.html>

National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Division of Violence Prevention (2021). Retrieved from https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/can/CAN-factsheet_508.pdf



Resource Spotlight

DoD Safe Helpline 877-995-5247

<https://www.safehelpline.org/>

DoD Safe Helpline is the sole secure, confidential, and anonymous crisis support service specifically designed for members of the Department of Defense community affected by sexual assault. All Safe Helpline services are: anonymous, confidential, and tailored to support members of the DoD community and their loved ones affected by sexual assault. Call, chat, and/or discuss using this resource. You can also report retaliation confidentially. Download the app on your personal device.

Prevention Partners/Response:

Violence Prevention: 713-1159

Sexual Assault Response Coordinator:
713-1315

Director of Psychological Health:
713-1224

Military & Family Readiness: 713-1516

Personal Financial Counselor:
612-297-2826

Chaplain Corps: 713-1226

Equal Opportunity: 713-1221

Exercise Physiologist: 713-1472

Security Forces (BDOC): 713-1101

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!

I am

The I am—Daily Affirmations© app is a tool to build our confidence and sense of worth. Buddha wisely said: you become what you believe. How many negative thoughts have endlessly entered and stayed in your mind? Those are simply thoughts. We can rewire our brains to build self-esteem, while changing those negative thought patterns. One way to do that is by the use of positive affirmations.

This app is a great tool to remind you that your thoughts are simply your thoughts. Nothing else. You can set yourself affirmation reminders within the app. You can also set your own topics, such as think positive, control stress and anxiety, and strengthen relationships. In-app purchases are also available.

*The DOD and Air Force does not endorse any organization or product listed.