



**934TH AIRLIFT WING**

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# **Prevention Connection: Building a Healthy Community**

**June is National Safety Month, Men's Health Month, PTSD Awareness Month, and Great Outdoors Month**

The United States has a vast amount of parks and areas that are waiting for us to explore. From the Appalachians to Zion National Park and everything in between, there's something for everyone in this country. Aside from seeing the beauty of nature, being outdoors improves one's health, both mentally and physically.

Several studies show that being outdoors improves short-term memory, decreases stress, lowers blood pressure, boosts your immune system, and decreases anxiety and depression.

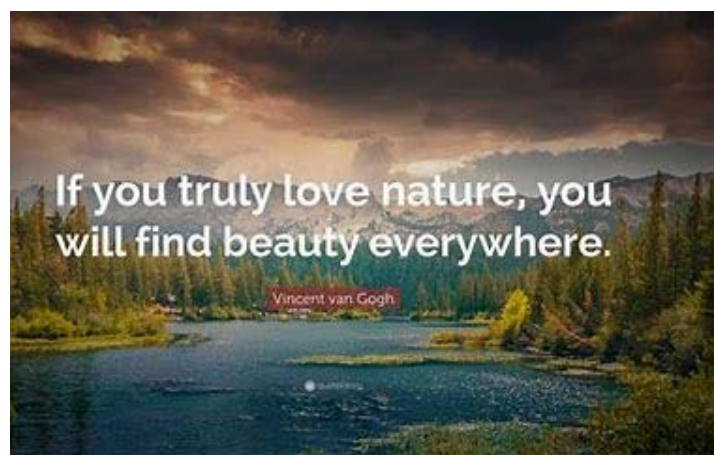
According to the Harvard Medical School, being outdoors will increase your Vitamin D levels, which is known to decrease depression, osteoporosis and other medical health conditions. Likewise, being outdoors improves your concentration, and can even provide quicker healing.

Source: [https://www.health.harvard.edu/newsletter\\_article/a-prescription-for-better-health-go-alfresco](https://www.health.harvard.edu/newsletter_article/a-prescription-for-better-health-go-alfresco)

## **Special points of interest:**

**Even though some parks are closed for camping, there are other options for getting outdoors in Minnesota. For more info:**

**[https://  
www.dnr.state.mn.us/  
state\\_parks/index.html](https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/state_parks/index.html)**



## Soul Safety by Ch. Jeff Cooper

June is National Safety Month and on Memorial Day weekend we began the 100 Days of Summer during which we raise our safety antennas, alert for summer hazards. We are more alert for bicyclists and motorcyclists and wear helmets if we are the riders. We take precautions on the water and grilling in our backyards. We apply sunscreen and bug spray when outdoors. All of these precautions enhance our physical safety.

Everyone recognizes the importance of physical safety, but how many of us consider soul safety? Our souls are prone to injury just as our bodies are prone to injury. Our soul, that deepest part of our being, where the real you resides, is not immune to harm. I recently discovered there is actually a medical condition called “broken heart syndrome”, confirming our souls can be injured.

There are countless hazards which may contribute to soul injury. For example, loss of a job, a financial reversal, a broken relationship, a lost dream, disillusionment with life, the loss of a loved one, all have the potential to damage the soul. Additionally, and significantly, soul injury may occur when a violation of our moral code occurs. Referred to as moral injury, this happens when our moral code is transgressed and we are helpless to prevent it.

Soul injury can take on many forms. Despondency, despair, bitterness, resentment, hopelessness, shame and guilt are just a few of them. These are injuries which have moved beyond the superficial and temporary to deep and enduring. Just as there are precautions we can take to mitigate physical injury, there are precautions we can take to mitigate soul injury.

I would offer the following as some safety measures. First, feed and nourish your soul regularly through spiritual disciplines. The spiritual pillar is not just a cliché; it is a recognition of the nature of our being and needs to be kept strong. Second, remember that we are human beings, not human doings. In other words, don't get so busy “doing” that you neglect “being”. Take time to think deeply, prioritize and evaluate goals and values. Determine which things in your life are non-negotiable and unshakable. Third, adjust your expectations of how life ought to be. Unrealistic expectations that don't include trials pose a hazard to the soul. I come from a farming background and learned early in life that hardship and loss come with the territory and that prepared me well to cope with them. When expectations are unrealistic, the difficult can be devastating. Finally, stay in community. Don't isolate. We are always stronger together. If you find your soul in need of strengthening, please do not hesitate to contact your chapel team.

**“Hope is seeing light in spite of being surrounded by darkness.”**

**~ Anonymous**



## PTSD Awareness

According to the VA's National Center for PTSD (2020), Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder is a mental condition that some develop after experiencing a life-threatening or traumatic event. "It's normal to have

upsetting memories, feel on edge, or have trouble sleeping after this type of event. If symptoms last more than a few months, it may be PTSD" (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2020). These are normal reactions to an abnormal event, which is why resilience is so important.

Those who learned resilience skills are more likely to experience Post-Traumatic Growth (PTG) vs. PTSD. PTG is essentially learning and growing from a traumatic experience. When looking at what has transpired recently in our communities, we can take this opportunity and learn from it. We can ask ourselves what can we do to grow after seeing and witnessing the traumatic events on live TV. Can we grow into someone who lifts others? Or do we shut it down inside ourselves and ignore it? If you chose to ignore it, then it cannot be addressed. It then boils inside until bad things happen.

Now more than ever, we need resilience. We need to take the resilience skills we've learned and cultivate the negative experiences into something that will help our communities and ourselves. Remember to also practice positive self-care, stay physically active, stay connected, avoid self-medicating, and learn more about PTG and what you can do to be a healthier person. Not only for you, but for your community.

Source: <https://www.ptsd.va.gov/index.asp>



POSTTRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

National Center for  
**PTSD**

**"There is no greater agony than  
bearing an untold story inside you."**

**~ Maya Angelou**

If you or someone you know needs more information about PTSD, contact the VA's PTSD Center at 866-948-7880 or via email at [PTSDconsult@va.gov](mailto:PTSDconsult@va.gov)

## Men's Health—It Does a Body Good by Mike Sanford, VPI

Are you aware that men die at higher rates than women from 9 of the top 10 causes of death? Are you also aware that on average men die almost five years earlier than women? When I look back at my life and reflect, I can understand why. My childhood consisted of climbing trees, pretending to be Evil Knievel, and partaking in countless of dangerous activities that would make most people gasp. It's similar to the saying "hold my beer". You know that something isn't going to end well.

But there are things men can and should do to help increase their overall life expectancy. First, stop being concerned and worried about seeing a doctor. I used to avoid my doctor at all costs. Consider them as your health advocate or coach. That's what I did. Because of that, I stopped several potential fatal diseases, including various forms of cancer and a potential serious blood condition.

The next thing is to limit alcohol consumption. Yes, it feels good to have a drink now and then, but avoid binge drinking. Alcohol is a depressant, which is one of the reasons you feel sluggish the next day, often referred to as a hangover. When you drink excessive amounts of alcohol, you are dehydrated. That is why it is best to drink water along with your preferred adult beverage. Also, buzzed driving is drunk driving. This includes being buzzed while boating and bike riding.

As always, eat a healthy diet, maintain a healthy weight, and chose activities that keep you active. These things we already know. But it's good to be reminded that how we treat our bodies today impacts our bodies in the future. Take care of your body, it's the only one you have.

Source: [menshealthnetwork.org/library/menshealthfacts.pdf](https://menshealthnetwork.org/library/menshealthfacts.pdf)



**“If you want something you have never had, you must be willing to do something you have never done.”**

**~ Thomas Jefferson**





## Resource Spotlight

### **Crisis Text Line ([www.crisistextline.org](http://www.crisistextline.org))**

Text HOME to 741741 from anywhere in the U.S., anytime, about any type of crisis. Crisis Text Line serves anyone, in any type of crisis, providing access to free, 24/7 support and information via the medium people already use and trust: text. Every texter is connected with a Crisis Counselor, a real-life human being trained to bring texters from a hot moment to a cool calm one through active listening and collaborative problem-solving. This is a non-military organization.

### **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

Security Forces (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 PTSD Coach© app can help you learn about and manage symptoms that often occur after trauma. Features include:

Reliable information on PTSD and treatments that work, such as relaxation skills and positive self-talk to anger management. Tools for screening and tracking your symptoms. Convenient, easy-to-use tools to help you handle stress symptoms. Direct links to support and help. This app can be used for those in treatment and those who are not.

This app was created by the VA's Center for PTSD and DoD's national Center for Telehealth & Technology. There is no cost to download.

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