



**934TH AIRLIFT WING**

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

### **Inside: Adapting After Trauma and Stress from Magellan Healthcare; 5 Ways To Help a Friend Who's Experiencing Domestic Violence; Memetic Warfare**

According to the World Health Organization, “the COVID-19 pandemic has had a major impact on people’s mental health.” Groups such as “health and other frontline workers, students, people living alone, and those with pre-existing mental health conditions, have been particularly affected”. In addition, several of our social services and other services have been significantly disrupted.

World Health Day is October 10th. This event is to “raise awareness of mental health issues around the world and to mobilize efforts in support of mental health”. Fear, worry, and stress are major health concerns caused by the pandemic. Know there are resources available for you. It is okay to talk with someone and it doesn’t mean you are broken. These are all normal feelings to an abnormal circumstance.

It is okay and important to take the time and have a mental health break. Take a break from the news, keep those social connections that are important, and honor yourself.

#### **Special points of interest:**

**For more information on World Mental Health Day and other mental health services go to:**

<https://www.who.int/campaigns/world-mental-health-day>

<https://www.samhsa.gov/>

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/find-help>

## Adapting After Trauma and Stress from Magellan Healthcare

We all face trauma, adversity and other stressors throughout our lives. When people think of trauma, they often think of things like abuse, terrorism or catastrophic events. Trauma can also be caused by events that are less obvious, but still overwhelm our ability to deal with them, such as frequent arguing at home or losing a job. Our mental health can be affected by trauma of any kind.

Following are ways we can build our resiliency and feel better.

**Process your thoughts:** During and after trauma, it is common to switch into survival mode and have no energy to wrap your head around what has happened. It may feel safest to bury painful feelings and avoid confronting them, but recognizing what has happened

and how it has affected you is one of the healthiest things you can do.

**Connect with people:** A support system is an important part of well-being. Emotional support helps us feel less alone or overwhelmed by what has happened in our lives. Talking to someone who has had a similar experience, or someone who cares for you, can be an affirmation—and help you cope better with the challenges you face.

**Do not compare your experiences with those of others:** We often question our own thoughts or experiences, and you can convince yourself that what you have experienced was not a big deal because “others have it worse.” Everyone experiences a trauma differently, and no trauma is “worse” than the other. If it hurts you, then it hurts you—and your feelings and experiences are valid.

**Take care of your body:** Stress and trauma affect your physical health as well as your mind. Listening to your body and giving it what it needs will help you heal. This includes a nutritious diet, sufficient sleep and regular exercise. Moving your body every day, even if it is just a few minutes of stretching, is particularly helpful in healing trauma.

## Adapting After Trauma and Stress from Magellan Healthcare (continued from previous page)

**Know it will take time:** There is no predetermined timetable for “healing.” Remove the pressure to get back on your feet quickly and focus on taking one step at a time. Remember: recovery is not linear, and it is normal to have bad days and setbacks. It doesn’t mean you fail—it’s just part of the process.

**Treat yourself with compassion:** Dealing with trauma and stress is not an easy task, and it is common to be frustrated with yourself and what can sometimes be a slow recovery process. Try to catch when you are holding yourself to unreasonable standards—instead of angrily asking, “Why am I doing this?” Remember how impressive it is that you are continuing despite what you have experienced.

**Don’t be ashamed to ask for help:** It is easy to compare how you feel, and how you assume that others who have had similar experiences feel, and you may get down on yourself because everyone else seems to be doing well. What others experience and how they deal with it does not matter on your journey—if you feel that you need or want help, it is important to get it as soon as possible.

Source: Magellan Health, Inc.: Mental Health America [www.mhanational.org/](http://www.mhanational.org/)

**“Half of life is lost in charming others. The other half is lost in going through anxieties caused by others. Leave this play, you have played enough.”**

**~ Rumi**



## **5 Ways To Help a Friend Who's Experiencing Domestic Violence (from Military OneSource)**

- 1. Ask to connect: "How do you prefer we connect?"** - Having a safe way to communicate is important. Let your friend or loved one tell you what is safest for them and honor that. Do not pressure the person to leave. Instead, support them without judgment. Offer to help them plan for their safety or seek outside support when they are ready.
- 2. Stay in touch: "Let's play a game online."** - Finding creative reasons to call, text, video chat or use social media check-ins may provide a lifeline for those who feel unsafe at home. For example, some games have chat functions that may allow for communication in nontraditional spaces. Starting up a game that has chat may allow you to check in with your friend without making the abuser suspicious. There are privacy and safety tips for online gaming from the National Network to End Domestic Violence.
- 3. Support and believe: "I care about you and I'm here for you, no matter what."** - Remind your friend that they are not alone and that you are there for them. If they choose to talk about the abuse, listen and show empathy. Let them know the abuse is not their fault and that you believe them. Ask what you can do to help.
- 4. Chat about options: "Let's create a safety plan."** - Options are empowering. Talk to your friend about their options for seeking help or reporting domestic abuse in the military. Let them know that victim advocates are available 24/7 to help them think through dangerous situations and create a plan to get through them safely.

## 5 Ways To Help a Friend Who's Experiencing Domestic Violence (continued from previous page)

5. Share the hotline: "Here is the information for that restaurant I told you about." - It may be safer for your friend if you research options for outside support, such as the National Domestic Violence Hotline, on their behalf (and on your device, provided you feel safe to do so). Use your agreed-upon code and a safe communication method when providing this information so it remains private between the two of you.

*For more information visit:*

<https://www.militaryonesource.mil/leaders-service-providers/child-abuse-and-domestic-abuse/2021-domestic-violence-awareness-month-toolkit/>

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**Military OneSource Safe Exit: Military OneSource installed a Safe Exit button on content that is meant to help someone in an abusive relationship. This button allows the user to exit the article and instantly view Weather.com in its place. Why Is a Safe Exit Needed?**

**The Family Advocacy Program and Military OneSource want to keep users safe. Abusive partners often monitor victims' internet activities. Any indication (real or perceived) that victims may be seeking to leave the relationship can lead to an abusive event, or an escalation of violence. While there is no way to make online browsing completely safe, the Safe Exit button allows the user to immediately view an unrelated website if their abusive partner comes into the room. This Safe Exit button is in line with industry best practices for user safety.**

**National Domestic Violence Hotline:**

**1-800-799-7233**



OCTOBER is  
**Domestic Violence**  
AWARENESS  
MONTH

The following information is taken from *Memetic Warfare* by Mr. Robert Doyle, 934 AW Anti-Terrorism Program Manager.

Memetic Warfare is “Often a single image overlaid with text & primarily humorous or satirical commentaries on life that breed connection through their relatability.” Unfortunately, Memetic Warfare is one of the most popular methods of spreading disinformation online. Studies show 40% of Americans get their information from social media or online sources. There is a tendency to get news from apps, sites and social media such as Twitter, Facebook, Reddit, Apple News and Google. These are not news outlets. Some examples of memetic warfare used to influence or weaken the U.S.:

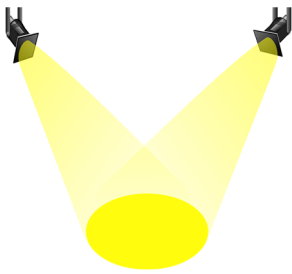
- Increased tensions in the American society
- Increase divides between U.S. & allies
- Question value of COVID-19 vaccines
- Falsely link vaccines to other illnesses
- Disrupted public health measures
- Target pipeline protests, fossil fuels, and climate change
- Voter suppression, election influence/fraud



How can you improve your ability to determine whether the information is real or not? Ask yourself these questions and do a little research?

1. Where did the information come from? What is the source?
2. Use a fact-checker. Good fact-checker websites present sources and evidence that lead them to their conclusions. Examples: Snopes, FactCheck.org, Washington Post Fact Checker, & Politifact. Media Bias Fact Check can be useful for determining bias or the legitimacy of a news source.
3. Corroborate—Do multiple sources share the same info? Are they trustworthy?
4. Is it alarmist or sensational? Sensational stories often stir hatred & animosity.
5. Is it a meme? The most popular method of spreading disinformation.
6. Is there a quote from a famous personality? Often wrong in terms of context, attribution, or even in their entirety. Confirm original source of the quote.
7. Does the info agree with you? Does confirmation bias play a role?
8. Is it hateful? Does the information negatively generalize a population based on religion, ethnicity, culture, sex or gender?
9. Check the URL: fake websites look like trustworthy news sources created to trick the user.
10. Ground yourself in reality. Foreign disinformation strategies want you to “question more,” clouding reality and to destroy the concept of truth.
11. Use basic math. Do the numbers add up? Statistics are often used to make bogus claims—assuming most people won’t take time to fact-check.

Remember, just because it’s on the internet doesn’t mean it’s factual. It’s best for one to build literacy skills, understand the threat, and to protect yourself.



## Resource Spotlight

### Air Force EAP

For more information, visit [www.AFPC.AF.MIL/EAP](http://www.AFPC.AF.MIL/EAP) or call your Air Force EAP at 1-866-580-9078 (TTY 711) for compassionate and caring support. The Employee Assistance Program is there for all AF civilian personnel. The EAP offers free, confidential services to help you and your household members manage everyday challenges and work on more complex issues. They also provide management support to help staff thrive and self-care programs to improve your emotional health.

### **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

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

### Self Care Strategy—Add this to your Tool Box!

**ReFrame—Be aware that your thoughts about an event drives how you react. ReFrame helps you:**

- Improve your performance
- Act based on your values
- Strengthens relationships

The ReFrame skill is about changing your thought process. When an event happens, you have a thought about that event, and then you react based on your thoughts. An event is neither positive or negative, but our thoughts about them are. Use this skill: to understand why you reacted in a certain way, when your reaction was not helpful, or in the moment, to slow down. ReFrame is one of eight skills taught in a RTA or MRT course.



**RESILIENCE**