



# Commanding Officer's Suicide Statement



Suicide is a leading cause of death for Marines and Sailors across the Marine Corps. Our Corps is the nation's most elite fighting force, fiercely upholding a reputation for taking care of its own. I ask that every Marine, Sailor, and Civilian in this command do their part and continue this proud legacy. Each of us has a valuable role, and plays an integral part in our organization. **Suicide prevention starts with you!** As leaders, we must be educated, alert, and compassionate when nurturing the mental well-being of our peers and subordinates. Additionally, each of us must first possess mental clarity, a strong sense of self, and the courage to ask for help when needed.

Suicide prevention is everyone's responsibility. We must use every available resource to assist those in need and ensure we never let one of our fellow Marines, Sailors or Civilians go unnoticed or unassisted. We must be diligent in our understanding of available support and resources and encourage their use. In order to easily remember the steps for suicide prevention, the Marine Corps uses the acronym R.A.C.E. to ensure the situation is handled properly.

R-recognize risk factors and warning signs: relationship problems, financial troubles, etc

A-ask the tough questions: are you thinking about killing yourself?

C-care for the Marine: actively listen to them and DO NOT leave them unsupervised

E-escort the person to a professional caretaker

Resources are available for training and treatment through our Chaplains, MCCS, and Mental Health Providers. If you or someone you know is contemplating suicide, seek assistance through your chain of command. Immediate and 24-hour support is provided by contacting the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK, the DSTRESS hotline at 1-877-476-7734, or the website at: <http://www.dstressline.com>. Leaders at all levels must know the signs of distress and not hesitate to render immediate assistance if you suspect someone needs help.

I am committed to ensuring every Marine, Sailor and Civilian cared for, and I ask for your commitment in this effort. You must know personnel and engage in frequent open discussions and training to increase suicide awareness. Vigilance is critical to the early detection of those at risk for suicide. **Observe, listen, empathize, and act!** I expect leaders to create an environment where personnel are encouraged to seek/ask for assistance in times of distress and get it promptly.

There is no stigma associated with seeking help. At some point in our life, everyone needs help. Being part of a team means being there when a teammate reaches out. Our key to success is to build an environment that promotes optimal mental and physical readiness in order to build resiliency, and standing ready to assist our teammates at all times.

Semper Fidelis,

G. W. BURNETT

Colonel, U.S. Marine Corps

Commanding Officer

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