



COMMANDER'S CALL TALKING POINTS

January 2021



Prioritize Your (And Your Airmen/Guardian's) Resilience in the New Year

Every year, many people make New Year's resolutions to change for the better. Eating healthier, quitting a bad habit, exercising more, and spending less money are often some of the top resolutions. This year prioritize taking care of your Airmen/Guardian's mental health and increasing their resilience.

As a leader, you set the culture for your personnel. Be a role model for positive communications about mental health and encourage your personnel to recognize the signs and symptoms of invisible wounds, provide support to their fellow Wingman and seek treatment if needed.

Here are five resolutions you can make to help your Airmen/Guardians maintain resilience in the new year:

1. **Recognize the efforts of those who assist others with invisible wounds.** Writing a letter of commendation, identifying them during a Commander Call, or giving time off are just a few of [the many ways you can reinforce a positive culture](#) around invisible wounds.
2. **Communicate about available resources.** Knowing about [available resources](#), and making sure that your members also know about them, can help show that you and the Department of the Air Force is there to support them.
3. **Communicate more than you think you need to.** If you've shared resources, share them again. Talking about mental health and invisible wounds isn't a one and done conversation. Weave the topic into your regular communications to demonstrate that you are truly supportive.
4. **Hold regular check-ins.** Meet with your personnel on a reoccurring basis and go beyond a simple "how are you?" and ask specific questions. If you notice someone needs to talk, use the [IWI Wingman Discussion Guide](#) to have a conversation.
5. **Model healthy behaviors.** Actions speak louder than words. Go beyond saying you support mental health and share that you're taking action to maintain your resilience. Mention activities you're participating in to take care of your mental health, like your exercise routine, how you use available resources, or how you take breaks to avoid burn out.

Recognize the Signs of Increased Risk for Suicide

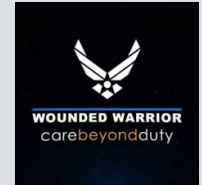
While it's common to think that suicide rates are highest during the winter, research shows that [suicide rates are highest in the spring](#). However, you should still be vigilant in looking out for signs that your Airmen are struggling. Because of COVID-19, this past holiday season may have been particularly challenging for many of your Airmen.

Be on the lookout for Airmen/Guardians with factors that may increase the risk of suicidal thoughts. Some risk factors include:

- Significant loss, such as the death of a loved one
- Current/pending disciplinary legal action
- Relationship problems
- Substance abuse
- Financial problems
- Transitions (retirement, PCS, separation from service)
- A serious medical problem
- Stress that is severe, prolonged, and/or that a person thinks they cannot manage

For a complete list of risk factors, and signs that an Airmen/Guardians may be having suicidal thoughts, take a look at the [Department of the Air Force Resilience fact sheet on suicidal behaviors](#).

Resources



Anyone can refer an active-duty Airman/Guardian) into the AFW2 program. [Download the worksheet](#) and submit the form via email.

MILITARY ONE SOURCE

[Military OneSource](#) offers Airmen/Guardians with mental health information, providers, and resources that have been vetted by the DoD.



[The AFRC Psychological Health Advocacy Program](#) provides psychological health referral services to AFRC Reservists and their families.