



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
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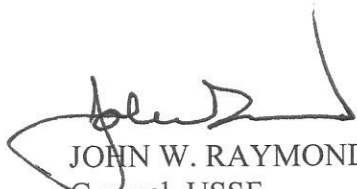
Leaders,

Readiness of the joint team relies on the well-being of the men and women who serve in our respective services. Our effectiveness as a fighting force depends on key fitness pillars: physical, spiritual, social, and mental fitness. During September's Suicide Awareness and Prevention month we took the opportunity to highlight connectedness, and the Department of Defense launched the annual theme "Connect to Protect." We call on each command team to act—to lead, support, and engage our Airmen and Guardians living with invisible wounds. An invisible wound is a cognitive, emotional, or behavioral condition that can be associated with trauma or serious adverse life events and can present due to many reasons including post-traumatic stress, major depression, and traumatic brain injury. It is essential that leaders foster supportive environments for everyone and in particular those who suffer with invisible wounds.


Open and honest conversations about personal challenges, and providing access to support resources, fight stigma and reduce barriers to help-seeking. Now, as ever, we ask you to create an opportunity for focused leadership – it matters, and engaged command teams, modeling behaviors to build connectedness, trust, and openness to tough conversations, will make a difference in the lives of your people.

To support you in this, we are launching the Invisible Wounds Command Team Guide and Toolkit. The guide and associated tools will help you and your team engage, build knowledge and understanding of invisible wounds, and continue to make substantive changes to address mental health openly and honestly. The Department of the Air Force has launched a website: www.missionreadyforce.com where you can access the Command Team Guide and Toolkit as well as other helpful resources.

Strong, resilient Airmen and Guardians strengthen our mission. Thank you for all you do every day in the world's best Air and Space forces.



JOHN W. RAYMOND
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Chief of Space Operations



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