



COMMANDER'S CALL TALKING POINTS

NOVEMBER 2019



“Show of Strength” for Warrior Care Month

The Department of Defense is celebrating the 11th anniversary of Warrior Care Month, dedicated to applauding the resiliency and strength of all service members, families, and caregivers. This year's theme, *Show of Strength*, is focused on highlighting opportunities and resources for the physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, and career readiness of all service members, families, and caregivers.¹



As leaders, lead by example and encourage your Airmen to stay mentally strong, physically fit, and mission ready; and promote help-seeking behavior, peer support, and resilience within your team. Airmen who seek help for [invisible wounds](#) and who support each other through difficult times are the heartbeat of our squadrons. There is no better time than the present to take the first step in creating and fostering a culture of trust within your unit. This is your squadron—your team—inspire trust and unity by having sincere conversations with your Airmen about mental health and invisible wounds. We are strongest when we support each other and recognize that Airmen who ask for help are inspiring.

Building squadron unity and resilience starts with having open and honest dialogues across leadership, within families, and within your unit. Downloading the Invisible Wounds Initiative's [invisible wounds fact sheet](#) and [resource fact sheet](#) is a great start for these conversations. Talk to them about invisible wounds, as well as the signs and symptoms, common causes, impacts to an Airman's personal and professional life, and resources available. Educating your team on invisible wounds provides you and your Airmen the power to recognize when help is needed and where to begin the recovery journey. An empowered Airman is an innovator and problem-solver and showcases our greatest strengths.

Recognizing Military Families and Caregivers

November is also Military Family Appreciation Month and National Family Caregivers Month. Our Airmen rely on their spouses, siblings, parents, children, relatives, neighbors, friends, and other caregivers for strength and support. In return, these caregivers endure relocations, separations, and numerous hardships in support of our Airmen. During this month, take time to recognize their contribution to the Total Force and to our country and show our caregivers they are appreciated. This is family business.

Caring for our Airmen and their Caregivers

Just as we ask caregivers (e.g., spouses, family members, and friends) to support our Airmen, we support our Airmen's caregivers. Airmen should download the [resource fact sheet](#) and provide it to their caregivers as a tool to stay mentally, emotionally, and physically healthy and resilient.

Additionally, equip our caregivers with knowledge and resources to care for themselves. Their role in our Air Force can be challenging and affect their overall emotional and physical health. Share the following information with your Airmen and their caregivers to ensure everyone is supported:

- ✧ **Air Force Wounded Warrior Caregiver Support Program:** This Air Force program helps caregivers learn how to enlist the help of others, how to enjoy personal time away from a loved one without guilt, and learn about resources and assistance available.²
- ✧ **Caregiver Support Line:** The VA offers support to caregivers in determining which programs or services are the best fit for themselves, their service member, and their family.³ There are also a number of [factsheets for caregivers](#) that are helpful in navigating the important but demanding role of caring for America's service members.
- ✧ **Caregiver Resource Directory:** This resource includes the most commonly referenced resources, organizations, agencies, and programs that provide support to caregivers of service members. The Caregiver Resource Directory is designed to connect communities with caregivers, building public awareness and support for caregivers.⁴

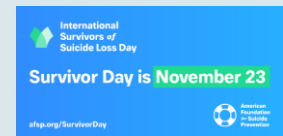
This month, recognize and communicate the value of your Airmen and their caregivers, highlight their essential role to the Air Force mission, and encourage everyone to learn more about invisible wounds and the resources available to keep our Airmen and caregivers safe and healthy.

Resources



Veterans Day is November 11th.

Thank your Airmen and other service members for their continued dedication to defending and protecting America.



International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day is November 23rd.

Also known as [Survivor Day](#), this annual holiday is held to honor and support those who have lost a loved one to suicide. Ask your Airmen how they are doing, talk with your team about supporting each other through difficult times, and encourage help-seeking behaviors.



The [Air Force Key Spouse Program](#) is an official Air Force Unit Family Readiness Program designed to enhance readiness, personal and family resiliency; and establish a sense of Air Force community. Key Spouses are commander-appointed, serving as a vital resource to command teams to support Air Force families.

¹ Health.mil. Warrior Care Month. (2019). <https://health.mil/News/In-the-Spotlight/Warrior-Care-Month>
² AF Wounded Warrior Program. Caregiver Support. (2019). <https://www.woundedwarrior.af.mil/Support/Caregiver-Support/>
³ Department of Veteran Affairs. VA Caregiver Support. (2019). <https://www.caregiver.va.gov/help/landing.asp>
⁴ Defense Health Agency. Caregiver Resource Directory. (2019). <https://warriorcare.dodlive.mil/files/2019/08/Caregiver-Directory-2019-Edition.pdf>