



# INVISIBLE WOUNDS & SUICIDE PREVENTION

Suicide prevention begins long before an Airman or Space Professional has suicidal thoughts. It starts with recognizing and treating invisible wounds and maintaining resiliency. Treating invisible wounds may reduce the risk of suicide.

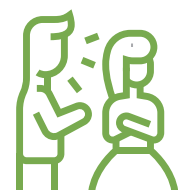
**What Is an Invisible Wound?**  
An invisible wound is post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), traumatic brain injury (TBI), or other cognitive, emotional, or behavioral conditions associated with trauma experienced by an individual.

## Suicide Statistics

There is a real need to help Airmen across Total Force.

**110** active-duty service members were lost to suicide in 2019, a 37.5% increase over the previous year<sup>1</sup>

**1 IN 2** Airmen that die by suicide had relationship problems as their #1 stressor<sup>2</sup>



**1 IN 3** Airmen lost to suicide experienced administrative, legal, or workplace problems in the 3 months prior to death (i.e., DUIs, assaults, UIFs)<sup>3</sup>

**1 IN 5** Air Force suicides involve alcohol consumption at the time of death<sup>4</sup>



## Warning Signs of Suicide

Warning signs for suicide may be observable and should be responded to immediately.<sup>5</sup>

### Thoughts and Emotions



- Talking about wanting to die
- Expressing great guilt or shame
- Being a burden to others
- Feelings of emptiness, hopelessness, being trapped, or having no reason to live
- Feeling extremely sad, anxious, agitated, or full of rage
- Emotional or physical pain being unbearable

### Changes in Behavior



- Making a plan or researching ways to die
- Withdrawing from important relationships or saying goodbye
- Giving away prized possessions
- Taking dangerous risks or showing no regard for safety
- Displaying extreme mood swings
- Eating or sleeping more or less than usual
- Using drugs or alcohol more often than usual

## Help Is Available

Certain warning signs, such as making a plan or researching ways to die, require immediate action. **Call 911** or contact an emergency hotline for anyone in crisis.

- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:** 1-800-273-8255 or chat online at [suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org)
- **Military Crisis Line:** 1-800-273-8255, then press 1
- **Crisis Text Line:** 24/7 confidential crisis support. Text HOME to 741741 to connect with a counselor

<sup>1</sup> Department of Defense Quarterly Suicide Report 1st Quarter, CY 2020  
[https://www.dspo.mil/Portals/113/Documents/QSR\\_CY2020\\_Q1.pdf](https://www.dspo.mil/Portals/113/Documents/QSR_CY2020_Q1.pdf)  
<sup>2</sup> Department of Defense Suicide Event Report (DoDSER), CY 2017  
<https://www.dspo.mil/Portals/113/Documents/2017-DoDSER-Annual-Report.pdf?ver=2019-07-19-110951-577>  
<sup>3</sup> Department of Defense Suicide Event Report (DoDSER), CY 2017:

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<sup>4</sup> Department of Defense Suicide Event Report (DoDSER), CY 2017  
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<sup>5</sup> National Institute of Mental Health publication  
<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/warning-signs-of-suicide/index.shtml>



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