

# 5 WAYS

## MILITARY LEADERS CAN ADDRESS STIGMA

Psychological strength is critical to maintaining a mission-ready force. For service members with psychological health concerns, getting care is vital—the earlier the better.

Research shows that the stigma associated with psychological health concerns can keep service members from reaching out for help. As a leader, here are five ways you can potentially reduce stigma and help warriors get care:



### Create a unit culture of support and trust.

- Encourage your warriors to support each other as battle buddies. They can motivate struggling unit members to get help.
- Encourage use of an open-door policy so warriors feel comfortable raising concerns or asking for guidance.



### Speak openly with your unit.

- Tell your warriors that stress is a normal part of military life. Use personal anecdotes or real stories of perseverance.
- Explain how professional help can strengthen careers and personal relationships.
- Discuss the risks of ignoring psychological health concerns. Delaying treatment can hurt individual and unit readiness.



### Teach the importance of psychological health.

- Encourage service members to maintain their psychological health just like their physical health.
- Share resources about maintaining psychological health by pointing your warriors to the Real Warriors Campaign at [realwarriors.net](http://realwarriors.net).



### Connect directly with struggling warriors.

- Listen to service members during daily interactions and take all concerns seriously. Follow up one-on-one.
- Learn to identify struggling warriors with warning signs of depression, anxiety, and suicide. Visit [realwarriors.net/active-psychological-strength](http://realwarriors.net/active-psychological-strength).



### Guide warriors to resources.

- Real Warriors Campaign: Video profiles of warriors coping with invisible wounds ([realwarriors.net/multimedia](http://realwarriors.net/multimedia)), fact sheets and booklets ([realwarriors.net/materials](http://realwarriors.net/materials)), and more.
- Psychological Health Resource Center: Confidential 24/7 help by phone (866-966-1020) or live chat ([realwarriors.net/livechat](http://realwarriors.net/livechat)).
- Military OneSource ([militaryonesource.mil](http://militaryonesource.mil)): Help locating national and local resources including chaplains.

For sources visit [realwarriors.net/sources](http://realwarriors.net/sources)

REAL WARRIORS \* REAL BATTLES  
**REAL STRENGTH**

