

# 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 reduce stigma and help warriors get care:



### Create a unit culture of support and trust

- Encourage your warriors to support each other and 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

- Remind your warriors that stress is a normal part of military life and highlight 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 and delaying treatment, emphasizing its impact on individual and unit readiness



### Teach the importance of psychological health

- Encourage service members to maintain their psychological health just like their physical health
- Direct warriors to the Real Warriors Campaign at [realwarriors.net](https://realwarriors.net) to find resources about maintaining psychological health



### Connect directly with struggling warriors

- Follow up one-on-one if you notice someone seems off or is struggling
- Visit [realwarriors.net/depression-suicide/prevention-tools](https://realwarriors.net/depression-suicide/prevention-tools) to learn to identify struggling warriors with warning signs of depression, anxiety and suicide



### Guide warriors to resources

- Promote Real Warriors Campaign resources, like video profiles of warriors overcoming life's challenges ([realwarriors.net/personal-stories](https://realwarriors.net/personal-stories)), fact sheets and booklets ([realwarriors.net/materials](https://realwarriors.net/materials)), and more
- Connect warriors to the Psychological Health Resource Center by phone (866-966-1020) or live chat ([realwarriors.net/livechat](https://realwarriors.net/livechat)) for confidential 24/7 help
- Encourage warriors to visit Military OneSource at [militaryonesource.mil](https://militaryonesource.mil) for help locating national and local resources, including chaplains