

PREVENTION IN ACTION

NETWORKS

L.I.N.K.S. HELPS CONNECT FAMILIES

With COVID-19 restrictions loosening, PCS season will be kicking into high gear.

Families will be settling into new environments, and they will need to familiarize themselves with the local resources, changes to the Marine Corps, and the overall lay of the land.

Where can Marine families accomplish all of this?

L.I.N.K.S. provides valuable information for every stage of a family's life or career.

L.I.N.K.S.—Lifestyle, Insights, Networking, Knowledge, and Skills—is a workshop that is as beneficial for new Marine Corps families as it is for ones with lots of experience.

Participants learn about Corps history, traditions, rank, local installation resources, services, benefits, military pay, separation, deployment, communication styles, and how to invest in their community. But the best part is the people that you meet and the spouse network that you build from attending.

Opportunities are limitless upon arriving at a new duty station. Check with your Marine Corps Family Team Building office to sign up for the next L.I.N.K.S. workshop.

—HQMC Personal and Professional Readiness Branch



WE ALL NEED NETWORKS

No man is an island.

English poet John Donne penned those words in 1624 to express the idea that people need to be around other people to be healthy.

Prevention in Action focuses on networks this month.

Support networks—the team of people we lean on for support, encouragement, and mentoring—play a vital role in helping us to maintain our mental health and well-being.

We should include people who can offer us different perspectives.

MensLine Australia, a mental health support resource, offers tips for building a strong support network:

- **Family:** Reach out to relatives who bring out the best in you, not the ones who push your buttons.
- **Friends:** Forge a small group of friends you can count on and a wider circle of acquaintances.
- **Co-workers:** Learn to get along with and work with everyone, and build closer ties with those you can learn from.
- **Neighbors and community members:** Join local clubs, groups, or sports teams to meet new people.
- **Web communities:** Search for groups that share an interest or can help you improve your life in some way.

—MF Prevention

INTEGRATING OUR PREVENTION EFFORTS

BY CHRISTINE HEIT
PREVENTION MANAGER, MF DIVISION

When we work together as a team, we're better at preventing problematic behaviors.

The Department of Defense and the Marine Corps both are aligning policy, responsibilities, and efforts to prevent violent, abusive, or harmful acts.

To integrate prevention efforts, we will coordinate existing resources to maintain and enhance force readiness and resiliency. Prevention efforts improve the overall well-being of Marines, attached Service members, veterans, Families, and civilians.

We will bring together experts who can help solve everyday challenges for the Marine Corps and community at large. We can identify and address gaps, reduce redundancies and increase efficiencies, work toward shared goals, and help Marines increase positive behaviors.

What can you do to start or reinvigorate integrated prevention?

- **Identify** others committed to the wellness of Marines and Families in your area. Be creative in who you choose because everyone has a role in prevention.
- **Collaborate** on how you can work together to benefit Marines and Families.
- **Plan** an initiative that builds skills, is solution-focused, and is proactive. A great example is Camp Lejeune–New River putting signs atop clothes racks in the Exchange that promoted positive parenting skills. Another is Marine Corps Recruiting Depot Parris Island's Embedded Preventive Behavioral Health Capability coordinator and her quarterly Prevention Forum, which was designed to improve communication between prevention and support programs.
- **Implement** the initiative, and seek feedback.

SINGLE MARINE PROGRAM HELPS MARINES STAY CONNECTED

As Marines, we are trained to adapt quickly to changes in our environments.

But for the past few months, we have faced new challenges: isolation, quarantine, and social distancing.

This situation is taking a significant emotional toll on many. Moreover, these changes to social norms have increased the complexity of meeting our normal challenges head-on: moving to a new duty station or transitioning out of the Corps, meeting mission, maintaining readiness. It's easy to see why some Marines may be feeling alone right now.

The Marine Corps' [Single Marine Program](#) (SMP) can help you stay connected.

Participating in SMP will help you build a strong network of support and provide you with resources you may



Marines with MCB Hawaii's Single Marine Program pose after 'defending the rock' by cleaning up the beaches at Kaneohe Bay.

not have known were available. You'll find resources to help you talk through and overcome challenges, or simply to relieve stress for a few hours.

In addition to helping you navigate life's challenges, SMP gives you the opportunity to voice your concerns about quality of life issues to your Command. It is also a great forum for expressing ideas on how to create, improve, or expand initiatives focused on single Marines. SMP has been instrumental in creating positive change across a wide variety of issues



affecting single Marines.

SMP also provides an opportunity to give back to the community.

Volunteering with SMP is an awesome way to network with others who are committed to service and positive change.

Marines across the Corps are already out volunteering with their communities. SMP of MCAS Iwakuni is safely moving forward with volunteer projects on

base. MCB Hawaii's SMP has been "defending the rock," by keeping the beaches at K-Bay clean.

Although the world is changing, the three pillars of the Single Marine Program—Quality of Life, Community Involvement, and Recreation—remain constant.

Quarantine has not stopped the SMP from taking care of Marines and their needs.

Installation SMPs have been finding ways to provide each other support and to make a real, positive difference.

If you are interested in participating in SMP, reach out to your unit's SMP representative or visit your local MCCS website to find your SMP coordinator.

Marines will continue to adapt and overcome, no matter the challenge—the Single Marine Program is here to help.

—Semper Fit

DISCOVER THE 'SECRET SAUCE'

For Marines, "The Few. The Proud." is more than just a phrase. It's the ethos that makes our Corps the most lethal fighting force on the planet.

It's the secret sauce.

Except, it really isn't that much of a secret at all. You're definitely familiar with some of its main ingredients—esprit de corps, camaraderie, cohesion. So, what is this secret sauce?

Social fitness. Social fitness, per the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Total Force Fitness Framework, means engaging in healthy social networks that promote overall well-being and optimal performance.

The social fitness of a unit comes from knowing that up and down the chain of command there's a foundation of trust, competence, and selflessness. For individuals, social fitness depends on the strength of all your networks and relationships—your unit, your family, your friend group, your significant other.

And just like physical fitness, to maintain social fitness takes practice and commitment. Semper Fit will help build healthier relationships. Here are some activities to try*:

- Take a HITT class.
- Go to yoga.
- Go to a Healthy Cooking class.
- Rent kayaks or bikes.
- Take the kids to the playground.
- Play an intramural sport.

*Subject to COVID-19 guidance

—Semper Fit

FIND SUPPORT FOR KICKING THE SMOKING HABIT

If you're thinking about quitting tobacco, Semper Fit has a network of resources to help.

In person. Your installation offers free in-person tobacco cessation classes through the Operation Tobacco-Free Marine Program. Semper Fit staff are specifically trained to provide support to Marines who want to

quit tobacco. You can also talk to your primary care manager to address any other concerns you have about quitting.

By phone. Call 800-QUIT-NOW or 855-QUIT-VET to talk to a counselor.

By text. Sign up for free at veterans.smokefree.gov for tips, updates, and tools.

Online. Visit the websites for organizations like YouCanQuit2 and Project UNIFORM for education, resources, live chats, and tools.

You don't have to do it alone. [Semper Fit](#) is here to provide the support you need to succeed.

—HQMC Semper Fit

NAVIGATE SOCIAL NETWORKS SAFELY

Social networks can be a positive part of modern life. We can connect with family members who live far away, keep in touch with old friends, and stay up to date on news and community events. But those same social networks can become an obsession, can eat up too much of our time, make us feel inferior to online “friends,” and leave us vulnerable to scammers, thieves, and stalkers.

ONLINE DOs

- Connect with family and friends around the world.
- Find new friends and communities; network with others who share similar interests or hobbies.
- Support worthy causes; raise awareness on important issues.
- Request or offer emotional support during difficult times.
- Share your creativity and humor with others.
- Find verified sources of information on topics of interest.
- Check the privacy settings on any app or social media site you use.
- Be wary of public Wi-Fi because your online activity can be intercepted by others.
- Stick to secure, HTTPS websites, particularly if you are banking or shopping. Pay close attention to URL addresses when browsing.
- Do set up an app that tracks the time you spend online and on specific apps to monitor your usage.

ONLINE DON'Ts

- Don't assume anything you post will remain private.
- Don't share information about work travel or vacation because it could leave you vulnerable to burglars.
- Don't geotag your photos. GPS coordinates are embedded into photos taken with a smart phone. Turn this feature off in your camera app to guard your privacy.
- Don't breach operational security by sharing details about a spouse's deployment or other military affairs.
- Don't take quizzes or viral surveys that ask you to provide personal information (e.g., mother's maiden name, first pet's name, etc.) because scammers use them to steal identities.
- Don't post personal information online (e.g., birthdate, address, phone numbers, etc.).
- Don't accept friend requests from strangers. They could be phony accounts created by scammers.
- Don't compare your life to what you see others post on social media. Most people only share a highlight reel, not the struggles and challenges they face.

ADDITIONAL TIPS FOR PARENTS ON KEEPING KIDS SAFE ONLINE

The DOs and DON'Ts above can apply to children as well, but here are some additional pointers for parents:

- Teach your kids to be nice—in life and online. Tell your kids you expect them to treat others with respect and to never post messages meant to hurt, shame, humiliate, or bully someone. Ask them to always tell you about any hurtful messages that others post about them or people they know.
- Encourage them to consider WWGS (What Would Grandma Say?) before sharing anything online. Teach kids not to share anything that they wouldn't want their teachers, college admissions officers, future bosses – and yes, grandma – to see.
- Tell them **NEVER** to share their passwords with anyone—even a close friend or boyfriend/girlfriend. If the relationship sours, the person entrusted with the passwords could share embarrassing information to hurt your child.
- Make it absolutely clear that they **NEVER** should send or share explicit or risqué photos of themselves or others with anyone. Not only could those photos be used to embarrass someone, but the distribution also could be against the law.
- They should never “friend” strangers. Online predators often approach children on social media and online games.
- Consider parental control apps to limit your child's data usage, or restrict their phone use to certain times of the day.

For more information, check out these articles from [Help Guide](#) or [KidsHealth from Nemours](#), or contact Marine Corps Family Team Building to sign up for a social media safety workshop.

RESPOND TO ONLINE SUICIDE WARNING SIGNALS

As you scroll through your Facebook feed, you come across a post from an old friend who recently PCS'd indicating that he's struggling with his recent separation from his wife, and he's having trouble paying the bills. The Marine says he feels like it's all just too much to bear, and he doesn't see a way out. His post concerns you—but you're unsure of how to help or what you should do.

Social media can help us identify people at risk for suicide. Those who talk about suicide, or who share concerning images on social media, provide others with an opportunity to intervene before suicidal behavior occurs.

Look for:

- Dramatic shifts between positive and negative emotional content.
- Posts about stressful events and then posts about emotional stress and negative thoughts.
- Posts about death, dying, hurting themselves, suicide, or self-destructive behavior

If you see worrisome posts, don't wait for someone else to take action. If you think it's an emergency, don't delay in responding. Call the duty (if the Marine lives in the barracks) or report the post immediately to your chain of command. If you believe the person is suicidal, call 911 immediately.



If the situation is concerning but not an emergency, offer options to talk to someone on the phone, online, or in person:

- [Military Crisis Line](#): 800-273-8255 and Press 1
- [DSTRESS Line](#): 877-476-7734
- Community Counseling Center
- Chaplain
- The Veterans Administration

also has put together a [Social Media Safety Toolkit](#) with various online scenarios and suggested responses.

It includes links for reporting suicidal posts to various social media companies.

The toolkit also provides a list of suicide prevention resources.

—HQMC Suicide Prevention Capability

SOCIAL MEDIA TIPS FOR COUPLES

If you're in a relationship, make sure you and your partner agree on social media activities.

- Discuss and agree on what you share about your relationship online.
- Establish boundaries. Discuss how each of you feels about interactions with others on social media and set some ground rules. Is it OK to have contact with exes?
- Limit the time you spend on social media, and spend more time with people. Paying attention to your partner is especially important.
- Use social media to build your partner up and to praise—not only in private messages but in messages intended for a broader audience.
- Slow down. Don't get ahead of yourselves; don't speak first and then think later. It's easy to overreact online, to jump to conclusions, and to act impulsively.

—Submitted by Camp Lejeune-New River, Marine & Family Programs, Behavioral Health

EXERCISE CAUTION WHEN USING DATING APPS

Be careful when using dating apps.

- Use unique photos for your profile. If you use an image that is on a social media site, it's easier for someone to ID you before you're ready.
- Don't connect with suspicious profiles. If the person you matched with has no bio, linked social media accounts, and has only posted one picture, it may be a fake account.
- Check out dates on social media. Make sure they aren't "catfishing" you with a fake account.
- Block and report suspicious users. Trust your instincts.
- Video chat before

Avoid falling prey to a "sextortion" scam. Criminals engage in online sexual activity with a person and then demand money/favors in exchange for not publicizing images, videos, or information. Check out this NCIS [brochure](#) for more tips.

you meet a person for first time. Always meet in a public place the first time and tell a friend where you're going. Use your own transportation.

- Be wary if person:
 - ⇒ Requests your home or work address under guise of sending flowers or gifts.

⇒ Asks for money in any way, often because of a sudden crisis.

⇒ Claims to be from U.S. but is living, working, or traveling abroad.

⇒ Claims to be recently widowed with children.

⇒ Disappears from the site then reappears under a different name.

⇒ Gives vague answers to questions.

⇒ Is overly romantic and complimentary too early in your exchanges.

⇒ Pressures you to provide your number to talk outside the app.

For more tips, visit [RAINN's](#) site.

—MF Prevention

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BUILD YOUR PROFESSIONAL NETWORK TO EXPAND CAREER OPTIONS

Due to the pandemic, face-to-face networking has become difficult, but that doesn't mean you have to stop networking.

If you're a transitioning Marine or Service member, you've likely been told about the importance of networking. Most studies show that effective networking is responsible for nearly 80 percent of jobs landed in the civilian workforce. Here are four ways you can network virtually:

1. Use social media platforms to your advantage. Your public image on social media is arguably more important now than ever before. Take this time to review your social media accounts because companies will Google you to learn more. Clean up your photos and posts.

Leverage [LinkedIn](#). If you don't have a LinkedIn account, you should create one ASAP. LinkedIn is the go-to social media platform for most business professionals.

Sign up for a FREE, 1-year premium account offered to Service members, veterans, and military spouses. Join a LinkedIn group to



expand your network and make professional connections. The [Marine for Life Network](#) (M4L) has region-specific groups that are a great place to practice virtual networking.

Use LinkedIn Learning networking training opportunities. If you have LinkedIn Premium, check out Digital Networking Strategies.

2. Become video conference savvy. Video conferencing platforms like Zoom and Microsoft Teams have taken off in recent months, for obvious reasons. Find out what video conferencing platforms you'll likely

need to communicate with prospective employers in your chosen field.

3. Attend virtual networking events and webinars. Follow M4L and veteran-friendly employers and organizations on social media. Follow sites that connect employers with veteran talent such as Hiring Our Heroes and RecruitMilitary.

4. Connect with veteran resources that are offered digitally. Most Veteran Service Organizations, including American Job Centers and USO Pathfinders, are offering virtual support. M4L has a great relationship with the Marine Corps League (MCL). Ask your local M4L representative to be connected to the MCL liaison nearest you.

There are also good online resources such as the National Resource Directory, 211, and PatriotLink that can help guide you to vetted, cost-free veteran services.

Still searching for more in-depth assistance with networking? Contact your installation's [Transition Readiness](#) staff and join M4L.

—HQMC Personal & Professional Readiness Branch

EXPAND YOUR PERSONAL NETWORK BY VOLUNTEERING YOUR TIME

With COVID-19 distancing rules and lots of our usual fun spots closed, staying occupied over the summer can seem difficult, but here's one way: volunteer.

Volunteering can be done in person or virtually. Installations have information on programs that are looking for volunteers for the summer months. What are some of the benefits of volunteering?

Make new friends. Are you new to your installation? Have you been there a while, but are having trouble meeting new

friends? With some of the social distancing rules starting to relax, consider an in-person volunteer opportunity. Volunteering is a great way to meet new people. Ask your volunteer coordinator about opportunities that will include working with groups.

Find out what's going on in your community. Do you feel like you always hear about the fun summer events after they've happened? Volunteer to get the inside scoop. Planning for installation and community events starts weeks, sometimes

months, ahead and most events are looking for people to help.

Help out the kids in your community. Your installation Youth Sports Program is always in need of coaches and volunteers. Volunteering gives you the benefit of taking part, but also ensures that the families aboard your installation have an outstanding sports program.

Break the monotony as you help from home. We understand that there are lots of families that are concerned about being out of the safety of their own home.

We've got an answer for you: [virtual volunteering](#). There are many opportunities available that fit different types of interests.

There are many great reasons to volunteer at your installation this summer. This list is just a beginning.

Volunteering benefits you, your installation, and your community. Don't hesitate. Reach out to your installation [volunteer coordinator](#) for summer opportunities today.

—HQMC Personal & Professional Readiness Branch

TAP INTO OSCAR TEAMS TO PROMOTE PREVENTION

Operational Stress Control and Readiness (OSCAR) teams can help build a prevention culture by making Marines more aware of programs and how to find them.

Marines who know about their network of support may be more likely to seek help when they need it, trust their fellow Marines, and believe they'll always have their back.

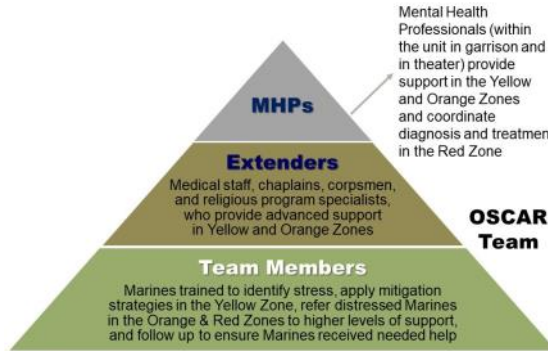
OSCAR teams should cultivate strong working relationships with command, installation, and community

resources.

These programs are the foundation of support for the core concepts of Combat and Operational Stress Control (COSC) and OSCAR teams.

The most effective OSCAR teams maintain strong ties with Behavioral Health programs, Semper Fit, the Martial Arts Program, Force Fitness, Family Team Building, the Single Marine Program, and many others.

OSCAR teams also include extenders, who



are medical staff, religious programming specialists, Chaplains, and corpsmen. Mental health professionals also serve on teams.

Headquarters Marine Corps released OSCAR Gen III training in January, and the course offers more strategies

for prevention and helping Marines build skills.

For more information, contact a member of your unit's OSCAR team, your local COSC representative, or your regional training coordinator.

—HQMC COSC Capability



The United States Marine Corps Prevention System publishes the Prevention in Action newsletter to share information and resources. To suggest topics or submit questions, email Prevention Manager Christine Heit at christine.heit@usmc.mil.

August's newsletter will focus on problem-solving, and September's topic will be connectedness.

JOIN SAPR CONNECT TO EXCHANGE IDEAS FOR ELIMINATING SEXUAL ASSAULT

SAPR Connect is an online community of practice designed to foster collaboration and learning among prevention personnel across the Department of Defense (DoD).

The goal of SAPR Connect is to provide members a forum to ensure DoD's sexual assault prevention activities are as effective as possible.

The 4,700+ members of SAPR Connect come from across DoD, including from the Office of the Secretary of Defense, each Service, the National Guard, and the Coast Guard. (Of that total, 225 are in the Marine Corps.)

Members reflect an array of fields—prevention professionals, victim advocates, Chaplains, and Equal Opportunity experts to

name a few. Regardless of whether prevention is their primary role or just part of their job, all SAPR Connect members have joined to share and learn in the prevention space.

To help advance effective prevention efforts across DOD, SAPR Connect members can access a range of resources, such as the Prevention Plan of Action, chat forums, event calendars, and more.

Webinars and other resources can be downloaded for individual viewing or can be shared within a team to spark a discussion.

Anyone within DoD who has a CAC can join SAPR Connect. To allow for discussion of ideas and resources within just the DoD community, SAPR Connect is a



“members only” site.

Go to sapr.mil/prevention to join. Scroll down to mid-page and click on the SAPR Connect logo to start the easy registration process.

As a quick look-ahead, it is important to note that the needs of the prevention community have expanded significantly since SAPR Connect was first set up on milSuite in 2014. To help meet

those needs, SAPR Connect will be transitioning to a new platform in late 2020. It will be easier to search for topics of interest and engage with prevention professionals.

A new name is in the works as well. All SAPR Connect members will receive regular updates as this transition gets underway.

—Submitted by [Dr. Suzanne Holroyd](#), DoD SAPRO