

Encourage Seeking Help Early

Slide 1 – Getting Help for Problems / Issues

- Sometimes it's difficult to ask for help; it may be embarrassing or we may feel ashamed of our circumstances. Asking for help is a sign of sound judgment and motivation to get better.
- Our military duties require us to be both physically and mentally fit in order to function at our peak for example when we deploy.
- It is always better to address problems or issues when they are small instead of waiting until they become larger, influences our work performance or leads to legal problems
- There are often myths about what it means to get help for mental health issues including career impact and who will hear about it, confidentiality.
- Let's talk about these two issues (go to next slides for this)

Slide 2 – Percentage that had a Career Impact Based on Type of Referral to Mental Health

Fear Seeking Help Will Impact Job

- It's ironic, some people mistakenly believe seeking help will negatively impact their career, yet by putting off getting help, their job performance is negatively impacted and they may become disqualified from their job because of the accumulation of Letters of Counseling, Letters of Reprimand, poor performance evaluations, Article 15s, etc.
- It's the impaired performance and poor choices they make that impacts the job, not seeking help.
- People need to seek help early before their problems expand to the severity that everyone recognizes there is a problem.

Study

- A study was performed involving 1205 Airmen who sought assistance from the Mental Health Clinics at 8 bases during 2002.
- Self-Referrals: 3% career impacting recommendations made by Mental Health Clinics
- Chain of Command Referral (anyone in the Airman's chain of command encouraging them to seek treatment but not mandating it, most of the time it is the immediate supervisor): 5% career impacting recommendations
- Command Directed Evaluations: 39% career impacting recommendations.

Study Facts on People Who Visited Mental Health Clinics

Getting Help for Problems / Issues

- 69% either had no diagnosis or one that quickly improved: 19% no diagnosis; 31% normal life situations such as marital, parenting, work problems; 19% that involved adjusting to life situations that resolved quickly.

Lesson Learned

- Getting help early can save your life and career.
 - **If you wait until your commander is involved due to duty performance problems you have a much higher chance of your career being negatively affected**

Slide 3 – Percentage that had their Confidentiality Maintained Based on Referral Type to Mental Health

2003 Study

- The same study mentioned in the previous slide examined the issue of confidentiality and visits to Mental Health Clinic.
- Again, the study was performed involving 1205 Airmen who sought assistance from the Mental Health Clinics at 8 bases during 2002.
- Self-Referrals: 90% no contact made with unit; when contact was made 70% were simply to inform command that there were no concerns or to provide recommendations to support the Airman.
- Chain of Command Referral (anyone in the Airman's chain of command encouraging them to seek treatment but not mandating it, most of the time it is the immediate supervisor): 25% of the time no contact made with unit; when contact was made, 93% were simply to inform command that there were no concerns or to provide recommendations to support the Airman.
- Command Directed Evaluations: contact with command always made; by regulation the command is provided a written report of pertinent findings from the evaluation.

Information Shared

- Information typically only shared with Commander and/or First Shirt.
- The contact is usually to answer questions regarding safety, fitness for duty, and whether there is anything the command can do to help.
- Minimal information placed in medical record, no medical information is placed in your personnel record.
- If not World Wide Qualified, he/she is put on temporary medical profile so he/she can complete treatment.

Getting Help for Problems / Issues

- Commanders and First Shirts are frequently a tremendous asset in addressing scheduling issues to allow members to pursue help and collaborating with Airmen in finding resources to address work/family issues.

BOTTOM LINE: if you seek help on your own your privacy is maintained 90% of the time vs waiting for problems at work to prompt a referral

Also, command is often very helpful and part of the solution

Slide 4 – Help is Readily Available

- Bottom line, get help if you need it. There's lots of people available to assist you.