MARINE CORPS TOTAL FITNESS
MCTF IN ACTION
INVESTING IN OTHERS PAYS OFF
Q3 2026

STRENGTHENING OUR FORCE WITH THE ACT CARD

Combat readiness and operational excellence depend on total fitness—mental, physical, social, and spiritual.

When stress mounts or life challenges arise, looking out for one another is an operational necessity.

The ACT card is designed to fit in a wallet or uniform pocket, ensuring that life-saving crisis guidance and direct contact lines are always within reach.

If you believe a fellow Marine, friend, or loved one is in immediate danger, do not leave the person alone.

Ask: Assess their safety by asking direct questions: "How are you feeling?", "Thinking of giving up?", or "Are you thinking of killing yourself?"

Care: Provide active, non-judgmental support. Listen attentively with respect. Ensure they know they are not alone and that their unit stands with them.

Take Action: Secure any lethal means immediately. Connect the person directly to leaders, mentors, chaplains, or medical resources.

Crisis Response

If you believe a fellow Marine, friend, or loved one is in immediate danger, **do not leave them alone.**

- **Call:** Dial 988 and Press 1; call 911 in an emergency.
- **Chat Online:** Click on Veterans Crisis Line or 988 Lifeline
- **Text:** Send a message to 838255 or 988.
- If you are calling from a DSN phone, dial 988. If calling from off-base, visit www.usmc-mccs.org/protect and click on "I want to help someone else" to find a list of international phone numbers.

Support Resources

- **Chaplains:** 100 percent confidential support
- **Operational Stress Control and Readiness (OSCAR) Team Members:** Peer-to-peer identification of stress
- **Mental Health Providers:** Direct clinical care
- **Suicide Prevention Program Coordinator/Officer:** Your unit's primary contact for prevention
- Military & Family Life Counselors: Confidential counseling with virtual options
- Community Counselors: Counseling for individuals, couples, and families with virtual options
- Military OneSource: 24/7 access to specialized support with virtual options





PHOTOS BY MICHAEL STEVENSON/HQMC MFQ COMMSTRAT

Order ACT Cards for Distribution

To request ACT cards to distribute to your unit or at your program's office, contact your local Behavioral Health branch head or Embedded Preventive Integrated Capability (EPIC) director or regional primary prevention integrator.

CHECK IN—DON'T JUST CHECK THE BOX

The difference between checking in and checking the box comes down to one thing: intention.

Checking the box completes a requirement. Checking in is about building a connection.

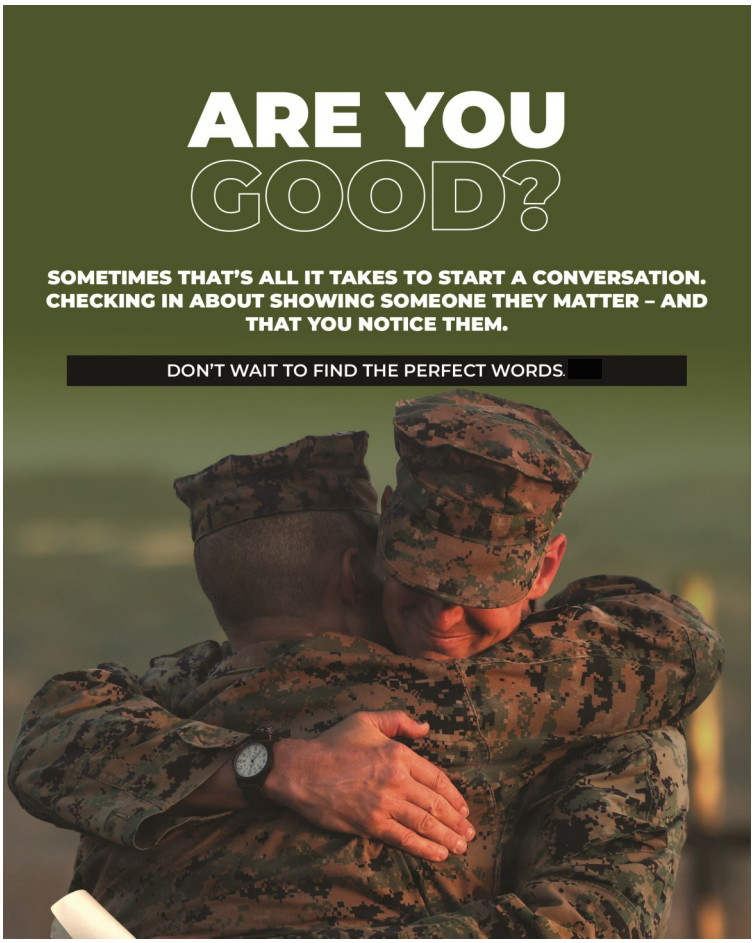
In a busy operational environment, it can be easy to focus on meeting deadlines, completing training, or fulfilling administrative requirements.

While these tasks are important, simply going through the motions can sometimes miss what matters most—the people behind the requirement.

Checking the Box

When leaders or peers "check the box," conversations may become rushed, routine, or surface-level.

A quick wellness check or mandatory training may satisfy a requirement, but it may not reveal signs of stress, burnout, anxiety, or other challenges that can affect a Marine's well-being and performance.



When to "Check In"

Checking in means taking the time to have a genuine conversation, actively listening, and showing sincere concern for another person's well-being.

It means noticing changes in behavior, asking meaningful questions, and creating an environment where Marines feel comfortable speaking up when they need support.

These simple actions can have a lasting impact. Early conversations help identify concerns before they escalate, reduce stigma around help-seeking, strengthen trust, and reinforce a culture in which Marines look out for one another.

The result is a stronger, more connected force.

Check your buddy. Check in.

It strengthens morale, reinforces resilience, and supports the readiness of Marines, families, and units across the Corps.

A conversation may only take a few minutes, but its impact can last far longer.

When a check-in signals something more, support is available.

The **Community Counseling Program (CCP)** offers confidential, non-medical counseling to help Marines, Sailors, and families work through life's challenges and strengthen overall well-being.

Connect your buddy with CCP for confidential support when they need it.

"How have you *really* been doing lately?"

"You've seemed quieter than usual. Everything OK?"

"Want to grab chow or go for a walk?"

ABOUT THE NEWSLETTER

The Marine Corps' Marine & Family Programs Division publishes MCTF in Action quarterly.

The contents are for information only and not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment.

To access hot links, right-click on link, copy link, and paste it into a browser window.

Visit **www.usmc-mccs.org/news/prevention** or scan the QR code to sign up for our mailing list or view past issues.

Your address will only be used for the newsletter. Unsubscribe at any time by responding to the sender.

To suggest topics or questions, email **hqmcprevention@usmc.mil**.

NO MARINE WALKS ALONE

Military life comes with unique challenges, including frequent moves, demanding schedules, deployments, and time away from family.

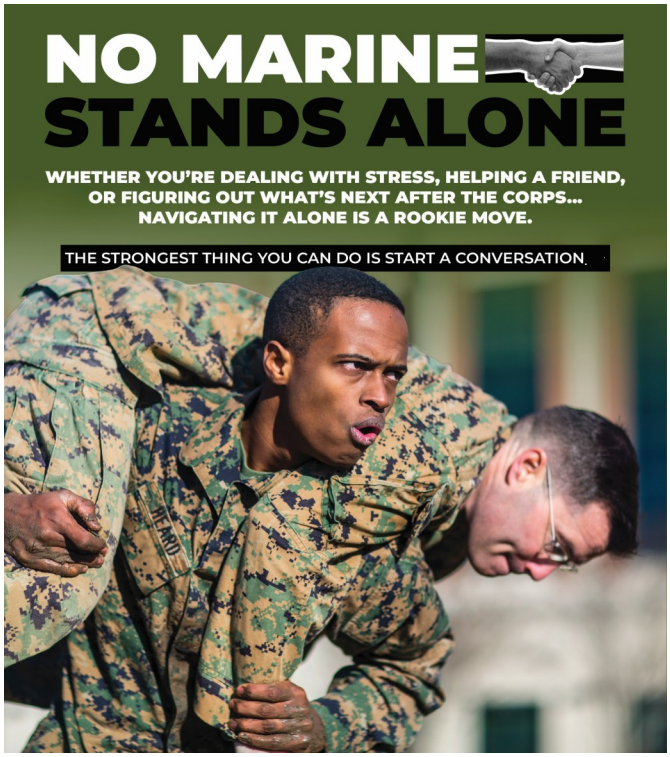
While these experiences can build resilience, they can also create stress.

Peer support programs help Marines, veterans, and military families connect with others who understand those experiences and can offer guidance, encouragement, and resources.

By Marines, For Marines

Operational Stress Control and Readiness (OSCAR) Teams provide peer support directly within Marine units and workplaces.

Built on trust, OSCAR team members help identify signs of operational stress early and encourage Marines to access support before challenges escalate. Through OSCAR, Marines know they do not have to face challenges alone—their team has their six.



Career and Life Support

The Marine for Life Network (M4LN) connects transitioning Marines, veterans, and family members with employment opportunities, educational resources, and services that support long-term success.

Whether preparing for civilian life or expanding professional networks, Marines can rely on fellow Marines to help them navigate the next chapter.

Additional Peer Support

Several military and veteran organizations also provide peer support and community connections:

- Vets4Warriors: A 24/7 support network staffed by veterans offering phone, text, and chat support.
- Hope for the Warriors: Provides counselors and mentors with military backgrounds virtually or in person .
- Modern Military Association: Promotes supportive communities and resources for service members, veterans, and families.

The Bottom Line

Peer support reduces stigma, strengthens resilience, and reinforces the understanding that seeking help is a sign of strength. Often, the most meaningful support comes from someone who has faced similar experiences.

Regardless of age, rank, or stage of life, Marines and their families are never alone. Peer support programs strengthen social connections, promote well-being, and contribute to overall Marine Corps Total Fitness and readiness.

Use and Share These Prevention Resources

DOW resources and tools: Check out the Department of War's www.prevention.mil. It includes information about resources, tools, research, and policy.

Marine Corps Interactive Suicide Prevention and Mental Fitness Resource: This online asset provides suicide prevention and skill-building information for all Marines and families. This is a resource users can come back to as often as they need it. Go to www.usmc-mccs.org/mfitness.

MCCS website: Visit the Marine Corps Community Services website (www.usmc-mccs.org) to find information about programs and resources and read articles that offer skill-building information.

Prevention in Action—Stakeholders Training: This self-guided online training is designed for service members and civilians who engage in prevention. Participants learn more about how and why to champion prevention.

Visit www.mcele.usmc.mil and search Prevention in Action.

JUST GIVE A FOXTROT

DON'T LET A BROTHER OR SISTER FIGHT ALONE.



MARINES ARE THE TOUGHEST PEOPLE ON THE PLANET.

BE TOUGH ENOUGH	TO TELL SOMEONE THEIR DRINKING MIGHT BE A PROBLEM.
BE TOUGH ENOUGH	TO HAVE A CONVERSATION IF SOMEONE ISN'T THEMSELVES.
BE TOUGH ENOUGH	TO HAVE A CONVERSATION ABOUT SUICIDE OR LETHAL MEANS.
BE TOUGH ENOUGH	TO SHOW SOMEONE THAT YOU CARE.

988 | SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE

MCCS MARINE CORPS COMMUNITY SERVICES