



Create cohesive, high-performing teams that foster trust & connection through small group discussions.



## Unite through Activity

- ▶ Use your unit's Unite funds to play paintball. Discover your warfighting spirit and develop team identity in friendly competition. Next time you're in a challenging situation, remember the sting of that paintball - how you healed and how much fun you had.

## Related Resources

- ▶ The Resilience Paradox:  
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-other-side/201902/the-resilience-paradox-why-we-often-get-resilience-wrong>
- ▶ AFMC Connect, Warfighter Culture:  
<https://www.afmc.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/3446056/afmc-connect-uly-focus-warfighter-culture/>
- ▶ Chaplain Corps forging warrior hearts:  
<https://www.expeditionarycenter.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/3389150/invigoration-pre-deployment-chaplain-corps-course-forging-warrior-hearts-and-spi/>



# BRIDGECHAT

DISCUSSION GUIDE

AUGUST 2023

## WHAT IS A WARFIGHTER?

"Warfighter" is a military term for all members of all military services. It stresses the idea that those members are trained in combat and prepared to support the combat mission. The term "warfighter" can also refer to a state of mind applicable to military and civilians alike.

A warfighter mindset is about viewing a stressful event as a challenge rather than as an obstacle. Sometimes we need to face our challenges head on instead of trying to avoid them. Good or bad, our past experiences make us stronger and more confident. Whatever life throws at us may not always work out in our favor, but that experience will teach us in ways that nothing else can. A warfighter mindset is about being in touch with what it feels like to fail, from understanding loss, the experience of being overwhelmed and then realizing that you can recover. It is about not giving into your fears. It is about letting go of things you can't control. Each life experience is just one life lesson among many. Remember the big picture. The repeating cycle of success, failure and experiences builds your toughness, grows your confidence, and cements your warrior mindset.

A warfighter also knows when to ask for help. When stress reaches a point that can no longer be managed with internal fortitude, a warfighter will lean on the resources around them. Asking for help shows self-awareness, wisdom, and resourcefulness. Supportive leadership will encourage you and help connect you to the care you need.

## WATCH...



Maj Gen Martin Speaks about Warrior Heart

<https://www.dvidshub.net/video/882867/maj-gen-martin-speaks-about-warrior-heart> (1:16)

The BMT Experience: <https://www.dvidshub.net/video/651565/bmt-experience> (3:17)

## DISCUSS...



1. What challenges have you faced in life and how did they make you stronger?
2. How can you grow the warfighter mindset in your workplace, social group or at home?
3. What is the difference between a stressful event and a challenge?
4. What are some barriers to seeking help? How can you reduce the perceived negative stigma of seeking mental health treatment?

**"We are not victims, we are warriors. We are protectors, not perpetrators. If we can see ourselves in this light - Warriors and Protectors - we may be able to work through anything, and help others do the same."**

– General Mark Kelly

**"Fate whispers to the warrior 'You cannot withstand the storm.' The warrior whispers back, 'I am the storm.'"**

– Jake Remington



<https://www.acc.af.mil/About-Us/The-Bridge/>

**Connect. Detect. Protect. Equip.**

# Barriers to Care: Security Clearance — Mental Health Section Endorsement and Treatment-Seeking Concerns



## Brief Security Clearance Overview

- A security clearance is an approval process which allows an individual access to classified national security information.
- Characteristics such as trustworthiness, reliability, and honesty are important factors in the process of obtaining a clearance.
- Security clearances are reinvestigated typically every 5-10 years.

**Myth:** Seeking, reporting, or receiving mental health treatment will negatively impact my ability to receive a security clearance.



**Did you know** that 24% of service members who reported mental health symptoms did not go for mental health treatment because they thought it would affect their security clearance?

**Fact:** It is extremely rare to have a security clearance denied or revoked solely on the basis of reporting mental health conditions or treatment.

**Evidence:** An analysis of security clearance adjudications over a six year period found that 85,000 people had their security clearances revoked or denied, and of those only 145 (0.002%) were denied due to mental health reasons alone.

## When must I answer “Yes” to Section 21?

In the November 2016 Standard Form 86 Revision, you must answer “Yes” if:



A court or administrative agency ever issued an order declaring you mentally incompetent or ordered you to consult with a mental health professional



You have ever been hospitalized for a mental health condition



You have ever been diagnosed by a provider with a serious condition such as schizophrenia, delusional disorder, bipolar disorder, borderline personality disorder, or antisocial personality disorder



Per your own judgment: You have (or have had) a mental health or other health condition that substantially negatively affects your judgment, reliability, or trustworthiness



## If I answer “Yes” to Section 21, what counts favorably?

- If the identified condition is readily controllable with treatment; and if in treatment, you are in compliance with the treatment plan
- If your mental health professional maintains that the identified condition occurred in the past and has been resolved or is in control/remission, there is a low probability of recurrence, and/or there are no indications of a current condition



## Is mental health treatment encouraged?

Yes! The proactive management of mental health conditions is encouraged, and seeking or receiving mental health care for personal wellness and recovery may contribute favorably to decisions about eligibility.



## What about my privacy?

Your mental health privacy is protected. Only the adjudicator has access to the information you report on the SF-86 form. Responses are not disclosed to your chain of command or health care providers.