

Customized Screening Sites Could Save Lives

In June, the military not only reported the highest number of combat related deaths in Afghanistan since the start of the war, it also reported the highest number of Army suicides. These alarming numbers have many concerned over the mental health of today's military. But most of all, it has created a sense of urgency to find ways to quickly identify the signs and symptoms of mental illness and get military personnel the help they need before a tragedy occurs.

Realizing the importance of detecting mental health problems early, Military Pathways® is now offering installations, units and military groups the opportunity to create their own customized online mental health and alcohol screening websites. The new customized sites allow users to go online-at any time, from anywhere - and take anonymous self-assessments for depression, bipolar disorder, generalized anxiety disorder, and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Nearly 100 military groups have already collaborated with Military Pathways to create their own site. This is encouraging news as a 2009 study of the non-military online program revealed that more than half sought depression treatment in the three months following their initial screening.

“These data provide compelling evidence regarding the ability of web-based screening programs to provide individuals with referral resources that lead them into treatment,” said Dr. Robert Aseltine, Ph.D., Professor and Director of the Institute for Public Health Research at the University of Connecticut Health Center, who conducted the study.

The screening sites consist of a series of questions that, when linked together, help create a picture of how an individual is feeling. After completing a self-assessment, participants receive immediate feedback. The sites also feature specific resources available in their community, such as Tricare providers, installation chaplains, and local family support groups. In addition, logos and pictures can be added to the sites to give them a personal touch.

To watch a demonstration of how a customized screening site works by click [here](#) or to find out how your military group can create their own customized online screening site email Military@MentalHealthScreening.org or call 781.239.0071

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