



OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
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OCT 11 2011

PERSONNEL AND
READINESS

MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARY OF THE ARMY
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY
SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE

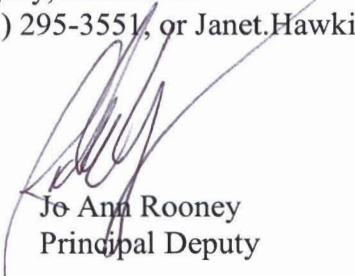
SUBJECT: Standardized Suicide Nomenclature (Self-Directed Violence Classification System) Policy

This memorandum implements the use of the Self-Directed Violence Classification System developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (Attachments 1 and 2) for future data collection, reporting, and/or system-wide comparisons between the Department of Defense (DoD) and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Requests for information on suicides, suicide attempts, and suicide risk factors from the Services, DoD, and VA have historically resulted in a variety of reports that appear inconsistent, or even contradictory. To resolve these inconsistencies, the 2009 DoD-VA Health Executive Council's Joint Strategic Plan required DoD and VA to adopt a standardized system of nomenclature for clinical events related to suicide.

A working group led by the Suicide Prevention and Risk Reduction Committee, in collaboration with the VA National Suicide Prevention Office, the Mortality Surveillance Division of the Armed Forces Medical Examiner, and CDC developed recommendations for common DoD/VA suicide nomenclature, definitions, and comparable suicide data. The working group agreed to use the Self-Directed Violence Classification System developed by CDC.

The Services will report suicide data using this standardized nomenclature within 60 days from the date of this memorandum. The long-term goal is to include this policy as well as the DoD Suicide Event Report in the DoD Instruction that is currently being prepared.

The point of contact is Commander Janet Hawkins, Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury, Resilience and Prevention Directorate. Commander Hawkins may be reached at (301) 295-3551, or Janet.Hawkins@tma.osd.mil.



Jo Ann Rooney
Principal Deputy

Attachments:
As stated

cc:

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
Assistant Secretary of Defense (Health Affairs)
Assistant Secretary of Defense (Readiness and Force Management)
Assistant Secretary of the Army (Manpower and Reserve Affairs)
Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Manpower and Reserve Affairs)
Assistant Secretary of Air Force (Manpower and Reserve Affairs)
Surgeon General, United States Army
Surgeon General, United States Navy
Surgeon General, United States Air Force
Medical Officer, United States Marine Corps
Joint Staff Surgeon