



The following established style guidelines reflect the long-standing practices of developers and editors of content for the Crisis and Prevention Program area. They are consistent with the rules and guidance outlined in The Associated Press Stylebook and reflective of Office of Military Community and Family Policy style and usage preferences.

## Content Tips

- Use the following disclaimer on all content related to clinical mental health treatment:  
Military OneSource does not provide health care services. Confidential counseling through Military OneSource or Military and Family Life Counseling does not provide diagnoses or treat diagnosed mental health conditions. Therapy services may be available through TRICARE or your nearest military treatment facility, or other appropriate resource.
- Use the following language to refer individuals in crisis — or those who know someone in crisis — to the Military Crisis Line: If you or someone you know is in a crisis, there is help — contact the Veterans/Military Crisis Line. Dial 988 then press 1 or text 838255, or [chat online with a VA responder](#).
- Use the following language to refer individuals experiencing domestic abuse: Find your nearest Family Advocacy Program office and domestic abuse victim advocates by using the [DAVA Locator](#).
- Pay attention to the overall organization and flow of an article. Information and ideas should be logically organized and there should be some sense of continuity or flow from one idea to the next.
- Avoid redundancy.
- Write in neutral language that includes all groups, except if otherwise appropriate.
- Write in relationship-neutral terms, such as “partner,” “spouse” or “couple.”
- Always lowercase and hyphenate “post-traumatic stress disorder” unless it is used as a compound word in the name of an organization, like the National Center for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder.
- Flesh out and clarify statements and ideas.
- Ensure that subheads reflect the content of the following text.
- Use “softening” or qualifying words, such as “generally,” “may be,” “can be” or “might,” to avoid making blanket statements about how people feel, react, etc., in different circumstances.



## Things to Avoid

- Make assumptions.
- Tell people how they feel.
- Tell people what they should/need to/must/ought to/can't/won't do.
- Tell people what they always/never do.

## Preferred Terms

Acceptable
military treatment facility (instead of medical treatment facility)
might, can (instead of ought, should, must)
sometimes, occasionally (instead of always, never)
dies by suicide, takes own life (instead of commits suicide)

## Definitions

Term	Definition
counseling for mental health issues or therapy	Support designed to address long-term or ongoing mental health issues that can be better handled with medical treatment or medication, like those that meet diagnostic criteria for common mental disorders found in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders — Fifth Edition, including depression, substance abuse and PTSD. Individuals with a diagnosable mental disorder will be referred to a military treatment facility, TRICARE or other medical health care providers.

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Term	Definition
Military OneSource counseling or Military and Family Life Counseling	Support for short-term, solution-focused issues not requiring medical attention, such as improving relationships at home and work, stress management, adjustment issues (for example, returning from a deployment), marital problems, parenting, and grief and loss issues. For more information, refer to the Counseling Through Military OneSource and Military and Family Life Counseling Content Guide.

**Other cases inappropriate for Military OneSource counseling or Military and Family Life Counseling** — These cases include, but are not limited to:

- Someone with active suicidal or homicidal thought or intent, or other threats of harm to self or others
- Family Advocacy Program cases, sexual assault cases and situations involving child abuse or neglect, domestic violence, alcohol and substance abuse
- Someone who has required recurring in-patient hospitalizations
- Someone currently receiving therapy by another practitioner
- Fitness for duty evaluations
- Court-ordered counseling

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## Topic List

Counseling for Mental Health Issues or Therapy Topics	Military OneSource or Military and Family Life Counseling Topics
Addictive behaviors	Stress management
Substance abuse	Conflict resolution
Combat stress	Issues related to PCS
PTSD	Managing deployments
Suicide or suicidal or homicidal ideation	Coping with grief or loss
Depression and anxiety	Problems at work
Mental illness	Relationship issues
Vicarious trauma	Parenting