

## MILITARY MENTAL HEALTH FOLLOW UP

### VIDEO TRANSCRIPT ON INSTRUMENTAL SUPPORT

As a leader, you are in a unique position of reducing stress and bolstering the psychological readiness of your soldiers through instrumental support. Instrumental support refers to assisting others in a tangible way, such as providing resources, facilitating connections. Advocating for subordinates and educating your soldiers.

When it comes to providing resources to your soldiers, it's beneficial to know the policies, locations, and hours of all major offices on post. A leader that knows the details of legal childcare and the family advocacy program is in a better position to answer some of the questions that their soldiers may have while reducing their cognitive load. And the time it takes to reach a solution.

Another facet of providing resources may take the form of adjusting soldiers' duties while considering their unique obstacles. Let's say a few of your soldiers are parents. When snow days occur and childcare services are closed, they may end up scrambling for options, tailoring their duty, hours or places of duty is a way that you can provide tangible support during challenging times.

A leader can also provide instrumental support by facilitating connections among your soldiers. Your soldiers all have unique experiences when it comes to life stressors. Knowing the challenges that your soldiers have successfully overcome enables you to pair them with soldiers who are currently dealing with that particular stressor, whether it be related to behavioral health, divorce, or financial debt.

Advocating for subordinates or having your soldiers back is another great way that you can provide instrumental support to your soldiers. For example, in discussions with your chain of command, you may be in a position to better understand the stressors of your soldiers and articulate them to your leaders. Leading to outcomes that better fit the needs of the soldiers and the unit as a whole. It is well known that people tend to stigmatize behavioral health related events, which often lead to barriers that prevent soldiers from seeking the help that they need. Being publicly supportive of your subordinates who seek behavioral, healthcare, parenting, behavioral health resources in a positive light, and correcting those who contribute to behavioral health are ways that you can advocate for the behavioral health of your soldiers.

Lastly, you can provide instrumental support to your soldiers through education. In experience, can contribute to stress and adversely affect the soldiers ability to deal with challenges. Leaders who notice that their units are frequently afflicted with family stressors, financial issues, failure to meet body composition standards and substance abuse may benefit from educating their soldiers on healthy relationships, personal finance, nutrition, and healthy coping mechanisms. By identifying these teachable areas and implementing some form of education, you collectively increase the readiness of your soldiers.

Providing instrumental support makes you a better leader to your soldiers and leads to optimizing unit readiness, increasing unit cohesion, and improving the psychological readiness of the unit as a whole across all rank. This week, print out or save the infographic attached to this exercise and use it to

identify areas for improvement in your own leadership style and strengthen the instrumental support that you provide to your soldiers.