

Stories of Prevention Across Commands

PREVENTION IN ACTION

U.S. NAVY

Empowering Navy Women: Revolutionizing Prevention with EAAA and Beyond

As the Integrated Prevention Coordinator for Commander Navy Region Southeast (CNRSE), Tina Vaughn-Wardle's area of responsibility consists of 18 installations, including all tenant commands, and thousands of service members and Department of Defense (DoD) civilian employees. As of early 2024, the Navy is in the initial stages of establishing its prevention workforce, and several initiatives are underway at the operational level to support the proactive prevention of harmful behaviors. These initiatives include:

1. Creating an Onboarding Plan for Prevention Personnel:

Vaughn-Wardle strives to create some standardization on the expectations for her team, so she is referencing DoD resources, such as DoD instructions and the Prevention Plan of Action 2.0, to create an onboarding plan.

2. Supporting Fleet and Family Support Center (FFSC) Directors and Programmatic Personnel in their Understanding of the Integrated Primary Prevention Workforce (IPPW):

Vaughn-Wardle holds regular conference calls with directors to review policy and provide updates regarding upcoming training and other initiatives. She has also provided briefs to all FFSC programmatic partners: Work and Family Life, Counseling and Advocacy, Family Advocacy, and Sexual Assault Prevention and Response. This approach also ensures installation leadership are informed, allowing for familiarity with the primary prevention mission and the role of Integrated Prevention Coordinators.



"We know that in order to do true prevention, we have to move past a 'one size fits all' training model."

- Tina Vaughn-Wardle,
Integrated Prevention
Coordinator for Commander
Navy Region Southeast
(CNRSE)



U.S. Department of Defense



[PREVENTION]

CNRSE Initiatives for Prevention



3. Working closely with Integrated Primary Prevention staff from the Navy's Culture and Force Resilience Office (OPNAV N17) and Commander Naval Installations Command (CNIC):

Through communities of practice, Vaughn-Wardle offers feedback on future policy as well as practices that hinder the progress of the IPPW mission or facilitate its socialization. N17 has also provided Vaughn-Wardle and other members of the IPPW with information and resources on the Navy's Culture of Excellence 2.0 initiative, which focuses on building connected and inclusive teams built on trust and respect, believing that this is the best long-term way to prevent harmful behaviors.

4. Collaborating with CNRSE on the Command Climate Assessment:

Vaughn-Wardle collaborates with CNRSE on completing Comprehensive Integrated Primary Prevention plans that are based on data from the Defense Organizational Climate Survey, focus groups and interviews.

5. Forging Partnerships with Local Universities and the County Health Department:

Vaughn-Wardle has connected with these administrators and points of contact to introduce the Navy's integrated primary prevention program and initiatives and explore partnership opportunities, either through prevention-related research and evaluation efforts or public health-related community boards and action teams. She is hoping this approach further builds the Navy's prevention stakeholder network as well as its capacity to innovate and excel in primary prevention.

6. Implementing the Navy's Pilot of the Enhanced Assess Acknowledge Act (EAAA) Program:

Vaughn-Wardle's day-to-day activity supports the prevention of all harmful behaviors in her military community, but she believes the findings from the pilot of the EAAA, or E-Triple A, program will inform efficacy of the strategy in moving the needle on sexual assault, harassment and relationship violence for the Navy and potentially all services. To read more about the EAAA pilot, see next page.

LESSONS LEARNED

Effective primary prevention in military communities requires comprehensive planning, strategic collaboration, continuous communication with stakeholders, leveraging external partnerships, and a commitment to evaluating and refining strategies based on evidence and feedback.

These elements collectively contribute to building a resilient and supportive environment that aims to prevent harmful behaviors effectively.

EAAA: A Novel Concept For The DoD

EAAA is an educational, evidence and skills-based workshop supporting the intervention of multiple harmful behaviors. Sexual assault, sexual harassment, and relationship violence can affect both women and men, and the EAAA program holds unique promise for women in particular. The intent of the program is to empower women with the tools to assess risk in situations involving acquaintances or intimate partners; build an arsenal of strategies for boundary setting, resistance, and active defense (both verbal and physical); and give them space and language to formulate and communicate what a healthy relationship looks like, so they can recognize sooner when a relationship is toxic, or an individual is behaving in an unsafe way.

EAAA was first piloted in the DoD space at the U.S. Air Force Academy, but to ensure the feasibility of providing the program in a Navy setting, it is being piloted at the Naval Aviation Technical Training Command (NATTC), where sailors come from bootcamp and learn skills at “A” school, which most resembles a college setting. “EAAA allows us to focus on women aged 17-24 as they are the ones who are most likely to experience sexual assault,” said Vaughn-Wardle. Understanding that targeting only women for prevention can be somewhat controversial, she responded, “We know that in order to do true prevention, we have to move past a ‘one size fits all’ training model.” Research also shows that some sexual assault prevention is more effective when conducted in single sex groups, vice mixed sex groups.

EAAA is an at-will, 12-hour course spread across a weekend and taught by trained, volunteer program facilitators who are female enlisted instructors at NATTC. Both instructors and students are incentivized with volunteer hours, free pizza, and excusal from duty. “The incentives exist because these women are helping us shape this program into something that works well for the Navy,” said Vaughn-Wardle. “The feedback received from the women is the greatest source of impact.”

The training tempo for EAAA sessions is twice a month, and to date the program has trained nearly 300 female-identifying sailors, with many of the sessions at capacity or with waiting lists.

The EAAA pilot has the support of CNRSE’s regional commander, CNIC, and OPNAV as well as NATTC’s commanding officer, executive officer, and command master chief (provided activities do not interfere with the mission). “I am astounded every day that I go to [leadership], because I need to do something different or make a tweak, and they have been nothing but supportive,” said Vaughn-Wardle.

To learn more about EAAA, visit <https://www.sarecentre.org/the-program/flip-the-script-with-eaaa>.

