Navy Installations Command Introduces New SAPR-CREDO Program

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Navy Installations Command (NIC), Department of the Navy Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office (DON SAPRO) and the Navy Chief of Chaplains are collaborating to deliver a new SAPR-CREDO (Chaplains Religious Enrichment Development Operation) pilot program March 4-6 at Naval Station Norfolk, Virginia.

The program was developed to allow survivors of sexual assault a place to come together and learn from each other, with the help of Navy resources that are already in place.

"It's a pretty exciting collaboration that addresses a very real need in our Navy. There is more awareness and more resources in place about addressing Health of the Force issues. One of those issues requiring concentrated attention is supporting survivors of sexual assault." said NIC Force Chaplain Capt. Gary Clore. "We have been doing the prevention. Now the question is what are we doing for post-vention? What about the ongoing care for survivors?"

The program has been set up to start with three pilot locations: Naval Station Norfolk; Camp Pendleton, California; and Naval Air Station Jacksonville, Florida. Planning for this retreat began in September with a meeting at Marine Corps Base, Camp Pendleton. The other retreats are scheduled for later this summer and fall.

This retreat is the first of its kind.

"The significant thing about this retreat is that it marks historic collaboration. This is the first time that we have had a Navy subject matter expert interdisciplinary team comprised of chaplains, counselors, mental health and social workers all coming together to develop this kind of therapeutic response in caring for Fleet, Fighter and Family, said Lorenzo York, NIC program manager and deputy to the force chaplain. "We have a broad spectrum of gifted experts who in their own professional world respond on a daily basis to Sailors and their families presenting with all types of Health of the Force issues. For this CREDO retreat, we are bringing to bear the best professional capabilities in our Navy to deliver a comprehensive therapeutic response."

"This pilot program is an excellent opportunity for collaboration amongst entities that have a unique relationship with Sailors, Marines and their families," said Ms. Jill Loftus, Director, DON SAPRO. "Both Navy Installations Command and the Navy Chief of Chaplains are critical partners, advocates and command resources for survivors of sexual assault. My hope is that together we can continue to improve upon the ways we provide invaluable assistance and guidance for Sailors and Marines afloat, ashore and across the globe."

Since this is a pilot program, an evaluation of lessons learned from each of the retreats will be done immediately after each retreat has concluded. The goal, according to York, is to live out the NIC's Guiding
Principle of "living out a culture of continuous improvement" by making this retreat format and experience the best it can be during the pilot's progression.

"Immediately after each retreat is over, the team will begin processing what we did right and what we did wrong and what adjustments need to be made to improve the program for the next site," said York.

After the initial retreat, the attendees can elect to attend, for eight weeks, two-hour follow up sessions which will be a combination of cohort and skills building sessions geared toward enriching the participants' lives and building on principles addressed at the retreat.

"The common core experience is the retreat. The retreat provides the creation of a cohort-a group of people who have a common experience. Afterwards it's all about enhancing life skills and underscoring aspects of empowering those who went through the horrific experience of sexual assault," said York.

NIC was identified as the program of choice to launch this innovative program because of the 45 year history of CREDO as a Navy program with a proven history of providing transformative support to Fleet, Fighter and Family in addressing all Health of the Force issues.

For more information about the Navy's CREDO program visit: http://www.cnic.navy.mil/regions/cnreurfswa/om/services_and_resources/religious_programs/credo.html

Navy Installations Command is comprised of approximately 52,000 military and civilian personnel worldwide responsible for the operations, maintenance and quality of life programs to support the Navy's fleet, Sailors and their families.