



Mindstrong Guardians was founded by U.S. Coast Guard veterans to improve mental health outcomes for military members. We accomplish this through lived experience conversations that model peer support and provide a roadmap for difficult mental health discussions. Our team draws upon the talents and lived experience of:

Veterans | Licensed clinicians | Trauma survivors | Peer specialists | Professional coaches | Client contributors¹

BLUF: The Coast Guard has a responsibility to provide more engaging mental health tools to better prepare our young men and women for the challenging jobs our nation asks them to do. Are you aware Boat Station personnel experience comparable mental health outcomes to those of larger military Services returning from combat deployment.² Mandatory computer-based resilience training does not build enduring resilience over time. We provide a different approach:

Think of Mindstrong Guardians as a non-clinical bridging strategy to address immediate mental health needs of the member while Coast Guard continues to build-out its Service capability. Our OST programs are:

Clinician-led | Peer-supported | Trauma-informed | Evidence-based | Pre-crisis (upstream) or post traumatic (downstream) | Social in nature | In-person, virtual, blended | Half day focus | Designed for community-building | Supportive of culture change

Evidence shows trauma-informed peer engagements:

Model mental health agency & post-traumatic growth | Increase self-esteem and confidence | Provide social support | Promote help-seeking behaviors | Encourage self-care and wellness activities | Foster hope and inspiration | Instill sense of control and ability to bring about change in one's life

VISION: Imagine a safe and relaxed atmosphere, perhaps off-base in civilian clothing, where audiences interact with our licensed clinician and lived experience peer(s) as they share personal stories of Service-connected operational stress and trauma AND their hard-fought, life-changing journey through recovery. Real conversations about trauma and healing come under the umbrella of suicide prevention and can be life-saving.

Mindstrong Guardians programming is intentionally aligned with:

DoDI 6400.11 Integrated Primary Prevention Program | CG Behavioral Health Playbook (BHP) | CG Culture of Respect Report | USDVA Health Systems Research | SAMHSA National Model Standards for Peer Support | RAND Military Health Policy Research

OST Lived Experience Conversations: Conversations center around the lived experience(s) of diverse veterans with Service-connected mental health disability who model post-traumatic growth. Our clinician provides expert context and safety while guiding audiences through the complexities of stress, trauma, and recovery. Discussion may include:

Differences between stress, trauma, and disorder | Incurring & internalizing mission-related trauma | How the brain, mind, and body process & store trauma | Contextual factors | Moral Injury | Impact on work-life | Reaching-out for help | Healing modalities | Peer support and social networks | Building protective factor & reducing risk factors | Key take-aways: individuals, command, organization

Virtual Follow-on Sessions: We always recommend six (6) one hour follow-on sessions (one per month) as a community-building extension to our in-person service. This is our method to move beyond traditional Coast Guard “one-and-done” training. Our clinician/peer team guides their prior audience, over time, to continue healing conversations and build a self-sustaining community to strengthen Service culture.

“Every Coast Guard leader needs to become comfortable talking about the behavioral health of shipmates and their family members.” USCG BHP

Please contact us for more information: [Mindstrong Guardians](#)

¹ Client contributors may include: District/Unit Chaplain, EAP Coordinator, Regional Health Managers, Local Mental Health Partners

² Servatius RJ, Handy JD, Doria MJ, Myers CE, Marx CE, Lipsky R, Ko N, Avcu P, Wright WG and Tsao JW (2017) Stress-Related Mental Health Symptoms in Coast Guard: Incidence, Vulnerability, and Neurocognitive Performance. *Front. Psychol.* 8:1513. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2017.01513.