

MYTHBUSTERS

MYTH OR FACT: HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW ABOUT CHAPLAINS? CHECK YOUR KNOWLEDGE

The chaplain has my best interest in mind, no matter my circumstances.

FACT The chaplain will never determine the level of care and concern based on your situation.

I want to talk to someone, but chaplains only help Marines and Sailors who are religious.

MYTH Chaplains can offer you confidential guidance and counsel on various topics. No one will be turned away, regardless of personal beliefs or religious preference (including no preference). Furthermore, chaplains are well-trained in knowing when and where to provide a referral. Because there are times when a chaplain will recognize that a Marine or Sailor would benefit by receiving a referral, the chaplain can ensure that a service member or family member is connected to the right resource.

I know chaplains have confidentiality, but this only includes certain information shared with a chaplain.

MYTH Chaplains maintain absolute confidentiality. This means that anything and everything that is disclosed to a chaplain. This isn't just a "good practice" maintained by all chaplains. Chaplains are bound by policy to maintain confidentiality in all conversations other than interviews for religious accommodation requests. In the event of an interview regarding a religious accommodation, the chaplain will inform you that the discussion is not confidential. If you wish to release the chaplain from confidentiality, you can sign an authorization to disclose confidential communication. (SECNAVINST 1730.11).

I know I can talk to my chaplain, but my family members don't have that same access.

MYTH All military family members are afforded the same access and privileges, including confidential communication. Furthermore, a family member's military member (sponsor) does not have to accompany them.

I know chaplains maintain absolute confidentiality, meaning I can share confidential information with the chaplain over email.

MYTH Although chaplains will try to maintain confidentiality in email correspondence, there is an increased chance that the information will be unintentionally seen. Therefore, email should not be the preferred method for sharing confidential information.