



OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1000

To: All Individuals Completing the SF86 Questionnaire for National Security Positions


The purpose of this cover letter is to reaffirm that the Department of Defense strongly endorses the practice of seeking professional help to address all health-related concerns, whether mental or physical. The Department considers it a mark of strength and maturity to seek appropriate healthcare, whenever required. This is especially important for DoD, whose members are routinely exposed to traumatic events with psychological and physical impact beyond those encountered in other environments.


The Secretary of Defense has successfully advocated a revised Question 21 of the SF86 Questionnaire for National Security Positions, which asks about mental health treatment. The revised question, which is attached for reference, excludes counseling related to marital, family, or grief issues, unless related to violence by you. It also rules out counseling for adjustments from service in a military combat environment.

Seeking professional care for these mental health issues should not be perceived to jeopardize an individual's security clearance. On the contrary, failure to seek care actually increases the likelihood that psychological distress could escalate to a more serious mental condition, which could preclude an individual from performing sensitive duties.

Thus, we encourage you to seek care when necessary, knowing that getting professional assistance as needed is the best way to sustain one's ability to perform well. A grateful Nation entrusts you with its safety and wellbeing, and counts on you to maintain your mental and physical health.

Sincerely,

  
James R. Clapper, Jr.  
Under Secretary of Defense  
Intelligence

  
David S. C. Chu  
Under Secretary of Defense  
Personnel and Readiness

Attachment:  
Question 21 – Revised (Feb 08)



THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
1000 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1000

APR 18 2008

MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS  
CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF  
UNDER SECRETARIES OF DEFENSE  
ASSISTANT SECRETARIES OF DEFENSE  
GENERAL COUNSEL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF  
DEFENSE  
INSPECTOR GENERAL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF  
DEFENSE  
DIRECTOR, ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT  
DIRECTORS OF DEFENSE AGENCIES  
DIRECTORS OF THE DOD FIELD ACTIVITIES

SUBJECT: Policy Implementation – Mental Health Question, Standard Form (SF) 86,  
Questionnaire for National Security Positions

The Department of Defense (DoD) successfully advocated a revision to Question 21 on the SF86 regarding mental and emotional health. Effective immediately, DoD Components will distribute the attached letter and the revised Question 21 language to all Service members, and to all DoD Civilians occupying sensitive positions.

Until the updated SF86 (Office of Management and Budget Approval Number 3206-0005) is published later this year, all individuals completing the form will respond to Question 21, whether hard copy or in electronic format, using the revised language. DoD Components must ensure the immediate implementation of this policy. Questions may be directed to Ms. Andrea Upperman at [Andrea.Upperman@osd.mil](mailto:Andrea.Upperman@osd.mil) or (703) 604-1112.

Attachments:

1. Memorandum to All Individuals Completing the SF86 Questionnaire for National Security Positions
2. Question 21 – Revised (Feb 08)



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