



THE USAFE-AFAFRICA (U-A)

# CONNECTED WARRIOR



## GOAL

Airmen setting positive norms that cultivate connectedness in their work centers

## FACILITATOR'S NOTES

### HOW TO PREPARE

1. Watch Connectedness video to help you prep: [https://cs2.eis.af.mil/sites/13819/Articles%20and%20Suggested%20Reading/Connectedness\\_1080p.mp4](https://cs2.eis.af.mil/sites/13819/Articles%20and%20Suggested%20Reading/Connectedness_1080p.mp4)  
(Be patient—takes a few minutes to load)
2. Read Connectedness: An Expanded Approach to Suicide Prevention: <https://www.amc.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/786550/connectedness-an-expanded-approach-to-suicide-prevention/>
3. Consider a personal story to express what connectedness means to you to set the stage for a discussion on building connections
4. Have situational awareness of the resources available virtually and locally
5. Prepare handouts of ACE (Ask-Care-Escort) cards to have in your work center; consider the Mission Challenge as an additional activity.

## THE EXTRA MILE

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

1. Check with your Violence Prevention Integrator and consider organizing or attending an in-depth suicide prevention and response training such as Suicide First Aid, ASIST, or SafeTalk if available.
2. Play the video and discuss "Voices of Resilience: Gregg Hesterman" <https://www.dvidshub.net/video/718579/voices-resilience-gregg-hesterman>
3. Play the video and discuss "Firefighter honored for saving colleague from suicide" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mLqTnY8VRrU>

## MISSION PLAN

### HOW TO EXECUTE

#### FRAMING THE CONVERSATION

Connections matter—we know that people with strong ties to family, friends and community are happier and healthier. Daily interaction with people you are close to provides chances to laugh, argue, empathize, love, etc... Some professionals have gone as far to compare these daily connections with the importance of a regular multivitamin.<sup>1</sup> Connecting with the people around you is an essential part of a healthy lifestyle like eating the right foods and drinking plenty of water.

Connected communities will instill sense of belonging, value, and hopefulness in people that live, work, and play in them. You can take meaningful steps to build connectedness in your own life by being there for others too. The quality of your social connections is much more important than the number of people you interact with, so remind people that you care about them and appreciate having them in your life to let them know they are a valued member of your "squad." Always remember that we are stronger together!<sup>2</sup>

#### SUGGESTED DISCUSSION POINTS:

1. What helps you feel like you belong in your family/friend group?
2. How is this the same/different for you in your unit or work center?
3. Discuss the importance of connecting with others & why we need it.
4. What are some suggestions for how to connect with others (some examples: smile, eye contact, body language)
5. Share what you would do or say if someone told you they felt overwhelmed, unable to cope, or that stress was too much.

\*\*This check 6 includes content to meet by-law requirements for Suicide Prevention\*\*

## MISSION CHALLENGE

### HOW TO APPLY THE LESSON

When we are connected it helps us notice if our teammates aren't acting like themselves. This can signal us to check on that change in behavior and determine if our friend/co-worker is in distress and needs help. Take time to prepare for tough conversations before they happen. For this month's Mission Challenge, practice Ask—Care—Escort (ACE). Hand out ACE cards and have your Airmen identify signs of distress. Ask the questions out loud to each other, demonstrate Care and identify where you would Escort the person to get professional help. Please see page 2 for details.

1. Martino, J., Pegg, J., & Frates, E. P. (2015). The Connection Prescription: Using the Power of Social Interactions and the Deep Desire for Connectedness to Empower Health and Wellness. American journal of lifestyle medicine, 11(6), 466–475.  
2. Connections Matter—<http://beyondblue.org.au>

USAFE-AFAFRICA



CORE VALUES ● PROFESSIONALISM ● WARRIOR ETHOS

This Check 6 is a guide to allow you to have a discussion with your employees on the values and culture that represent the Air Force. This 15-30 minute discussion replaces traditional formalized training and CBTs to allow you to frame the concepts in the way that best meets the needs of your Airmen.

**Symptoms/states of distress may be overwhelming and lead to having thoughts of death, self-harm, or suicide. It is important to ASK someone directly “are you thinking about harming yourself, or of suicide?” Do not avoid this important question.**

# DAF RESILIENCE



## PROMOTE RESILIENCE

Practice self-care such as regular exercise, sufficient sleep, and relaxation time. Invest in resilience skills like balance your thinking, mindfulness, and looking for the good to manage stress.

## RECOGNIZE SIGNS OF DISTRESS

Mood changes, such as depression or anxiety  
Irritability, agitation, or anger  
Sleep difficulties  
Withdrawing from social activities, family, friends, or others  
Lack of interest in activities that were previously enjoyed (hobbies, work, etc.)

## ASK

Directly ask the individual if they are having thoughts of death, self-harm, or suicide.

## CARE

Care about their answer. If they hesitate, or seem uncertain, ask follow-up questions to convey that you care about their well-being.

## ESCORT

If the individual is having thoughts of suicide or needs help, escort them to a qualified professional or leadership.

## GO SLO

If someone demonstrates signs of distress, consider their access to LETHAL means including firearms, medications or other means of fatal methods. Airmen should remember to “go SLO” - use **Safes, Locks,** or store means **Outside** the home.

**SMALL STEPS SAVE LIVES.**

[www.resilience.af.mil](http://www.resilience.af.mil)

**Empower a person to reach out for help by letting them choose from 2-4 appropriate resources, see several options that would be appropriate below:**

## MILITARY CRISIS LINE: 1 (800) 273-8255

HELPING RESOURCE:	COMMANDER/ SUPERVISOR	AIRMAN & FAMILY READINESS CENTER	MILITARY ONESOURCE/ MILITARY FAMILY LIFE COUNSELOR (MFLC)	CHAPLAIN	CIVILIAN EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM	MENTAL HEALTH (MH) CLINIC	EMERGENCY ROOM
Contact:							
CAN ASSIST:	All	All	Military and Family Members	All (full confidentiality)	Civ/NAF	Military	All
Suicidal Thoughts	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Relationship Problems	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Loneliness / Isolation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Workplace Stress or Problems	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Alcohol / Drugs	must report to ADAPT			✓	✓	✓	
Fatigue / Sleep	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Anxiety / Panic Depression	✓			✓	✓	✓	
Grief and Loss	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Deployment	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Finances / Budget	✓	✓	✓ (OneSource)	✓	✓		
Retirement / Separation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

**Do not leave a person in distress alone. Be sure to follow up in the days and weeks after a connection to help is made.**