



## Thriving Airmen and Families

Multiple Air Force initiatives are working towards a common goal: **Empowering Leaders and Airmen to increase morale, cohesion, and readiness by recognizing when Airmen need help, decreasing barriers to help-seeking, and creating a culture in which Airmen and their families thrive.** Here are actionable steps you can take today to advance this common goal:

- **Communicate** in a way in which people feel valued and their contributions are meaningful;
- **Set norms** that convey intolerance of any form of harassment or interpersonal violence;
- **Establish the expectation** that everyone is responsible for preventing negative outcomes/increasing positive ones.

The small choices that foster a culture of help-seeking and connectedness can seem separated from stopping an assault or suicide; but cultural norms will only be established by a lot of people making these choices every day.

Here are some small things you can do today to establish norms that contribute to a culture in which everyone thrives:

- **Talk** about times you struggled and the support—mental, physical, spiritual, social—that helped you get through it;
- **Encourage** all Total Force Airmen (civilians, enlisted, officers, family members) to seek help early;
- **Dispel** the myth that seeking help—especially seeking help early—will have negative career impact (for related facts, see “Career Impact” handout on [www.resilience.af.mil](http://www.resilience.af.mil)).

Identify the specific opportunities you have to shape norms across your sphere of influence and leverage them:

- **Newcomers:** Check in often with newcomers and their family members. Ask how you can help them...don't wait for them to ask for help. This contributes to a culture in which help-seeking is expected.
- **Helping Agencies:** Proactively learn about your installation's helping resources. Use the ones that will help you and/or your family and encourage coworkers to do the same.
- **Informal mentoring:** Check-in regularly with Airmen and discuss their personal and/or professional stressors and ensure they are connected to helping resources. Distress may result from:
  - Perceived dissolution of relationship, includes family relationships and especially romantic relationships
  - Occupational problems, especially related to a high stress job and lack of perceived social support
  - Legal problems, especially related to crimes of sexual nature and divorce
  - Mental health diagnoses, history of suicidality/extreme anger, and impulsive behavior
  - Alcohol and substance use-related problems
  - Financial problems
  - **Note:** Multiple and compounding problems place someone at highest risk

**Remember ACE: Ask, Care, Escort** when concerned about someone and download the **ACE card/Save a Life Questionnaire on the free “Air Force Leaders” app on your phone** (found on app store for androids and iPhones)

**Self-care is essential to serving effectively and to our ability to create a culture in which Airmen and families thrive.** Balance is often elusive in the face of the demands of personal and professional commitments and responsibilities. However, research is clear that as stress increases, our ability to cope with stressors decreases and often unhealthy behaviors increase. When we don't take care of ourselves, we place ourselves in jeopardy of making poor decisions and performing less effectively. Here are some actionable steps you can take to practice and model self-care:

**2-8/10-5-7:** Aim for balance each day: 2 hours of “me time”, 8-10 hours of work, 5 hours unplugged/social/family time, and 7 hours of sleep. While this may not be achievable every day, this formula helps guide daily balance efforts.

**Self-Assessment:** Take an honest assessment of your physical, mental, spiritual and social health and seek help when needed. Choose a mentor that exhibits strong well-being and be a well-being mentor for others. Your self-care is contagious and will motivate and inspire others' self-care.

