



BRIDGECHAT

FACILITATOR GUIDE



THE FACILITATOR ROLE

Bridge Chats are designed to build connective teams and strengthen protective factors. Monthly chats serve as a vehicle for mentoring, coaching, and skill-building to create positive shifts in attitude and behavior.

The role of the facilitator is to encourage discussion by showing empathy and guiding the group to a deeper understanding of individual experiences.

- **Encourage everyone to participate.** Use inclusive language and give participants time to gather their thoughts and contribute. Ask quiet members “How do you feel about this?”
- **Be genuine.** Show that you really care and treat participants with respect and consideration.
- **Listen.** Active listening means that you are listening intently to what the speaker is saying. Let someone know that you heard them by paraphrasing or saying, “Thank you for sharing your story.”
- **Remain neutral.** Avoid making someone feel that their views are wrong. You can ask, “Can you tell us more?” or “What makes you feel that way?” to understand more.



SAFE SPACE

Creating a safe space for this discussion is essential. This is achieved by laying out ground rules before starting the conversation such as: don’t interrupt, listen respectfully and be open to different perspectives.



FACILITATION TECHNIQUES

Plan ahead, be familiar with the topic but remain flexible. Review the discussion guide and watch the videos prior to your group discussion. Then decide what part(s) of the guide you would like to use in what order. If you go off subject, you can either lead the team back to the topic or roll with it!

- The first section describes the topic. This is generally written by a guest author and subject matter expert on the subject.
- Listed video(s) are a great starting point for your group chat. Best viewed on a large screen.
- The discussion questions help get conversations started.
- Quotes provide another person’s perspective and opportunity for discussion.
- Related Resources help if you want to take a deep dive on the subject.
- “Unite through Activity” provides ideas for team building and reinforces concepts.



► Bridge Chat History

The August 2019 resilience tactical pause feedback told us that our teammates overwhelmingly want continued, sustained and consistent opportunities to talk to their peers and supervisors about issues impacting their quality of life. Leaders have flexibility. HQ ACC provides the topic, but the timing, delivery, and discussion questions are at the commander's discretion.

Connection and healthy relationships are a proven protective factor for well-being. DEOCS data confirms that when Bridge Chats are utilized, people feel more connected to their team and their overall work experience is improved.