



Create cohesive, high-performing teams that foster trust & connection through small group discussions.



Unite through Activity

- ▶ Create a "Belonging Paper Chain". Have your unit break out into teams of 4-5. Set a 5-minute timer. Have teams respond to the following statement on a strip of paper provided: "I know I belong when _____". Each member fills out as many pieces of paper as they can. When the time is done, link them together as a paper chain. As you staple each link to the chain, read out the statements. Which team can create the longest chain?

Related Resources

- ▶ "Peer to Peer support team members cultivate sense of belonging"
<https://www.dvidshub.net/news/395386/peer-peer-support-team-members-cultivate-sense-belonging>
- ▶ Employees Share What Gives Them a Sense of Belonging at Work
<https://www.linkedin.com/business/talent/blog/talent-engagement/employees-share-what-gives-them-sense-of-belonging-at-work>
- ▶ Beyond Diversity: How Firms Are Cultivating a Sense of Belonging,
<https://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/article/belonging-at-work/>

BELONGING

Belonging is the feeling of security and support we experience when we have a sense of acceptance, inclusion, and identity as our true selves. Creating genuine feelings of belonging for everyone is a critical factor in a high-performing team and thus mission success.

According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, belonging is paired with love, making the need for belonging as important as our need for love. To achieve a sense of belonging, each Airman should be seen for their unique contributions; they need to know they "are enough" as human beings. Building a sense of belonging in others includes creating connection with teammates; providing support in their daily work and career development; respecting and acknowledging each person's individuality; and demonstrating pride in our organization's values through actions.

Team members who develop relationships within the workplace are more likely to seek help are better equipped to share resources, meet mission requirements more efficiently, and reduce individual stress and burnout. They look forward to being with their team and contributing to mission success. The value of having a sense of belonging becomes a critical starting point in creating a more supportive culture within an organization.

Creating a feeling of belonging requires our deliberate and consistent effort. Belonging needs to pervade everything we do throughout our commands. We need to be always ready. When a crisis arises, it is too late to create a sense of belonging in our teams and units. We need to establish it today and practice it every day so belonging is just a natural part of our culture.



WATCH...

The Marine Corps has a recruiting effort called Battle to Belong:

<https://www.dvidshub.net/video/766904/battle-belong-75-second>

With a similar theme, this video showcases an Airman who has experienced that feeling of belonging:

<https://www.dvidshub.net/video/739173/finding-place-belong>



DISCUSS...

1. How is belonging similar to or different from inclusion?
2. What does belonging at work / in your unit mean to you?
3. How would you describe the similarities/differences between your work relationships and your family/friend relationships?
4. When was the last time you told a teammate, colleague, or family member, you are enough?
5. How can you recognize the unique differences and contributions of everyone in your life?
6. What actions can you take to build a feeling of belonging in your unit?

"We need our youngest leaders to know that they belong, that they are relevant, that they are enough, and that they are part of a high-performing team."

– Gen Mark Kelly, ACC Commander

"True belonging is not passive. It's not the belonging that comes with just joining a group..It's a practice that requires us to be vulnerable, get uncomfortable, and learn how to be present with people without sacrificing who we are."

– Brene Brown, American professor



<https://www.acc.af.mil/About-Us/The-Bridge/>



Air Combat Command INTEGRATED RESILIENCE

SUPPORTING OUR TOTAL FORCE AIRMEN AND FAMILIES



PREVENTION TAKES ACTION

Learn new skills to improve your well-being such as self-care and resilience, healthy relationships, meaningful connections, effective communication. Act in ways to show your family and Airmen that you care and they matter. Proactive behaviors can be small things that create a positive culture in mitigating risks.

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 answers. 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 **SLO** – use **SAFES**, **LOCKS** or store mean **OUTSIDE** of the home.

SMALL STEPS SAVE LIVES.
www.resilience.af.mil

HELPING RESOURCE	COMMANDER/ SUPERVISOR	MILITARY & 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	✓	✓	✓ (One Source)	✓	✓		
Retirement/Separation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

ASK. CARE. ESCORT. QUESTIONS THAT CAN SAVE A LIFE

ANSWER QUESTIONS 1 AND 2	IN THE PAST MONTH	
	YES	NO
1. Have you wished you were dead or wished you could go to sleep and not wake up?		
2. Have you actually had any thoughts about killing yourself?		
IF YES TO #2, ANSWER QUESTIONS 3, 4, 5 AND 6. IF NO TO #2, GO DIRECTLY TO QUESTION 6		
3. Have you thought about how you might do this?		
4. Have you had any intention of acting on these thoughts of killing yourself, as opposed to you have the thoughts but you definitely would not act on them?		
5. Have you started to work out or worked out the details of how to kill yourself? Do you intend to carry out this plan?		
ALWAYS ASK QUESTION 6	IN THE PAST 3 MONTHS	
6. Have you done anything, started to do anything, or prepared to do anything to end your life? <i>Examples: Collected pills, obtained a gun, gave away valuables, wrote a will or suicide note, held a gun but changed your mind, cut yourself, tried to hang yourself, etc.</i>		

ANY YES MUST BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY. SEEK HELP FROM A FRIEND, CO-WORKER, CHAPLAIN AND INFORM YOUR SUPERVISOR/OTHER MEMBER IN YOUR CHAIN OF COMMAND AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

- If the answer to 4, 5 or 6 is **YES**, immediately **ESCORT** Wingman to the nearest Chaplain, Mental Health Provider, Unit Leader or Emergency Department.
- **DON'T LEAVE YOUR WINGMAN ALONE** even to go to the bathroom.
- **STAY ENGAGED** until you make a warm hand-off to someone who can help.

MILITARY CRISIS LINE 1 (800) 273-8255 24/7 - 365