



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



Unite through Activity

- ▶ Use your Unite activity funds to host a squadron resilience day. Step away from work to go bowling, play golf, or rent baseball equipment. Make sure everyone receives the invitation – in person if possible. Actively recruit those that are less outgoing to attend. Watch for the outliers and be sure everyone feels like they are included and belong.

It's about all Airmen knowing they are valued members of a high-performing team.

Related Resources

- ▶ Social Connectedness: https://www.cdc.gov/social-connectedness/about/?CDC_AAref_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/emotional-wellbeing/social-connectedness/index.htm
- ▶ Promote Social Connectedness and Support: <https://sprc.org/effective-prevention/a-comprehensive-approach-to-suicide-prevention/promote-social-connectedness-and-support/>
- ▶ How to Increase Your Sense of Belonging: <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-the-need-to-be-long-2795393>
- ▶ School Connectedness Helps Students Thrive: https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/protective/school_connectedness.htm

BELONGING

Belonging fosters trust, camaraderie, and cohesion among members, which are essential for mission success and for ensuring the safety and well-being of all involved. Belonging creates a sense of purpose and shared identity, motivating individuals to work together towards common goals, even in the face of adversity. In a military context, belonging isn't just about fitting in; it's about being part of something greater than oneself and knowing that every member has each other's backs. It's about all Airmen and Guardians knowing they are valued members of a high-performing team.

Belonging is crucial in the military for the following reasons:

- 1. Mission Success:** In military operations, teamwork is paramount. Belonging fosters strong bonds among unit members, enabling effective communication, coordination, and collaboration. Cohesion is essential for achieving mission objectives efficiently and safely.
- 2. Trust and Camaraderie:** Belonging builds trust among team members, which is essential in high-stakes situations. When Airmen feel like they belong to a unit, they trust their teammates to support them and act in their best interests. This trust strengthens camaraderie and morale, creating a supportive environment for all members.
- 3. Resilience:** Military operations often involve facing adversity and uncertainty. Belonging provides emotional support and resilience during challenging times. Knowing you are part of a cohesive team gives Airmen the confidence to overcome obstacles and persevere through difficult situations.
- 4. Shared Identity:** Belonging to a military unit instills a sense of pride and identity in its members. Airmen identify with their unit's history, traditions, and values, which strengthens their commitment to their teammates and the mission.
- 5. Effective Leadership:** Belonging enhances leadership effectiveness. Leaders who foster a sense of belonging inspire greater loyalty, commitment, and dedication from their troops. They create an environment where every member feels valued and respected, leading to higher morale and performance.

WATCH...



Bridge Chat – Belonging

<https://www.dvidshub.net/video/878967/bridgechat-belonging> (2:18)

Air Combat Command's April 2023 Bridge Chat was "Belonging".

Feelings of Isolation and Uncertainty

<https://www.dvidshub.net/video/771459/acc-mental-health-branch-chief-discusses-feelings-isolation-and-uncertainty> (1:19)

Lt Col Michael McCarthy, ACC Mental Health Branch Chief, discusses feelings of isolation and uncertainty Airmen are facing.

DISCUSS...



1. What community do you belong to and what creates your connectedness to it?
2. If you were commander for a day, what deliberate actions would you take to build community, a sense of belonging, and connectedness?
3. What do you do to make new team members feel welcome? What else can you do?
4. Having experienced COVID-19, what can we do to overcome the feelings of isolation that can come from lack of social contact? How can we help our children to cope with it?
5. How can isolation and lack of connectedness impact mission success?

“ True belonging is not passive. It's not the belonging that comes with just joining a group. It's not fitting in or pretending or selling out because it's safer. 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





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