



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



# BRIDGECHAT

DISCUSSION GUIDE

J U N E 2 0 2 5

## BRIDGE CHAT CREATION GUIDE – BALANCING THE SCALES

Work-life balance describes the (ideally harmonious) relationship between military responsibilities, personal pursuits, and family obligations. In fact, it is more reasonable to use the term harmony as opposed to balance because there are times when certain circumstances necessitate a significant amount of time and attention without the promise of compensation. This is perhaps most apparent in the lives of individuals who have dedicated themselves to military service, whether as civilians or in uniform.

Our commitment to building and sustaining an always ready and lethal warfighting force often creates an imbalance between mission time and time dedicated to personal priorities. Deployments, exercises, and other circumstances requiring extended service hours inevitably result in missed family gatherings and activities. Thus, we must strive to develop and maintain a sustainable work-life harmony that considers the frequently unpredictable situations that may arise in our personal or professional lives.

Adopting a work-life harmony mindset requires intentional action. The demand for 100% dedication to the mission often clashes with the equal need to give 100% to family and personal well-being. This is NOT about compartmentalizing or dividing your efforts into neat percentages. Instead, it's about recognizing these three interconnected truths and striving for work-life harmony:

**The Mission's Non-Negotiable Demand** - Whether you are an Airman or a Guardian; enlisted, officer, or civilian, you took an oath that demands unwavering commitment, driven by a deep sense of honor and full understanding of the implications that result from breaking your oath/promise.

**Family's Unwavering Dependence** - The demanding nature of military life makes truly "being present" with loved ones vital-quality time, active engagement, and demonstrating they are a priority despite mission demands. This requires intentional effort, not just physical proximity.

**The Imperative of Self-Care** - Sustaining mission readiness and family well-being require prioritizing physical and mental health. Ignoring self-care undermines everything.

Achieving sustainable work-life harmony in the military requires a shift from seeking an impossible "balance" to a more adaptable approach. By acknowledging the sacrifices of service, prioritizing well-being, and recognizing the interconnectedness of our roles, we can build resilience amidst military challenges. This holistic approach, rooted in commitment to the mission, family, and self, helps us navigate the complexities of service with intention, enhancing our contributions to our mission and the lives we cherish.

### WATCH...



U.S. Air Force Chief Master Sergeant Jeremiah Ross, 7th Air Force command Chief, discussed his personal journey of developing a work-life balance and prioritizing his mental and physical health.

[www.dvidshub.net/video/944816/radio-around-region-7th-air-force-command-chief](https://www.dvidshub.net/video/944816/radio-around-region-7th-air-force-command-chief) (1:00)

Fleet Master Chief James "Smitty" Toczcz shares the correlation between rest and readiness to take on the mission.

[www.dvidshub.net/video/916781/fridays-with-fleet-use-lose-leave](https://www.dvidshub.net/video/916781/fridays-with-fleet-use-lose-leave) (1:22)

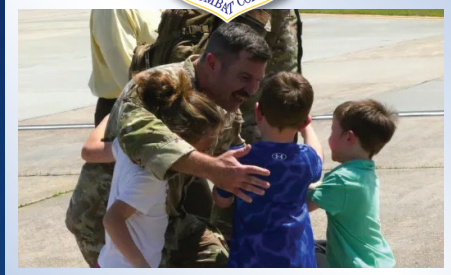
### DISCUSS...



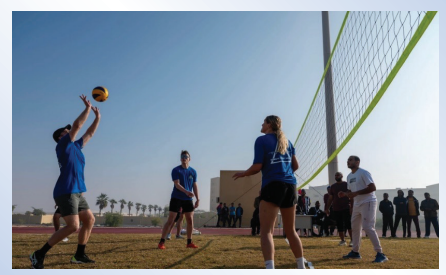
1. In what ways can you best align professional goals with personal/family commitments?
2. How do you set boundaries between work and personal life?
3. What types of conversations do you have with loved ones to convey the unique nature and demands of military service (including civil service)?

“We all have the same 24 hours in a day, but what matters is not necessarily how much time you spend doing whatever, but the dedication and focus you give to that time you are spending.”

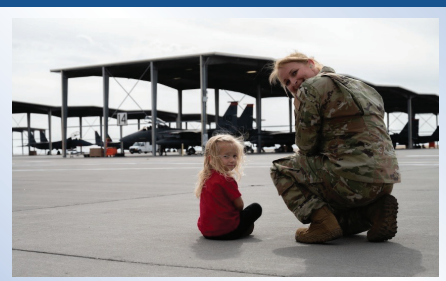
– CMSgt (ret) Nathaniel "Mike" Perry



Col Paul Sheets, 23d Wing/CC, hugs his children after returning from a six-month deployment to Al Dhafra Air Base in the United Arab Emirates



U.S. Air Force and Qatar Emiri Air Force members compete in volleyball during Qatar National Sports Day, Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar



U.S. Air Force Senior Master Sgt. Sarah Flagg, superintendent for the 391st Fighter Generation Squadron, chaperones a child on the flight line during a tour at Mountain Home Air Force Base, Idaho, Oct. 10, 2024.

## Unite Through Activity

Engage in an outdoor hike with members from your unit. Encourage them to bring their families and pets. Ensure the hike can accommodate all personnel and all fitness levels. Use the time during the hike to talk with those members you are not as familiar with.

## Related Resources

[www.betterup.com/blog/how-to-have-good-work-life-balance](https://www.betterup.com/blog/how-to-have-good-work-life-balance)

[www.16af.af.mil/Newsroom/Article/2376385/work-life-balance-dispelling-the-myth/](https://www.16af.af.mil/Newsroom/Article/2376385/work-life-balance-dispelling-the-myth/)

[www.acc.af.mil/About-Us/The-Bridge/FIVE-MINUTES-TO-THRIVE/](https://www.acc.af.mil/About-Us/The-Bridge/FIVE-MINUTES-TO-THRIVE/)

Connect. Detect. Protect. Equip.

[www.acc.af.mil/About-Us/The-Bridge/](https://www.acc.af.mil/About-Us/The-Bridge/)

# mHEALTH TOOLS

## MOBILE APPS

- |                          |   |  |                          |   |  |                          |   |   |
|--------------------------|---|--|--------------------------|---|--|--------------------------|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> |    | <b>BREATHE2RELAX</b><br>Manage stress by learning and practicing deep-breathing exercises                    | <input type="checkbox"/> |    | <b>CBT-i COACH</b><br>Use with cognitive behavioral therapy for insomnia (CBT-i) to improve your sleep     | <input type="checkbox"/> |    | <b>ACT COACH</b><br>Add acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) tips to daily life                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> |    | <b>CPT COACH</b><br>Use with cognitive processing therapy (CPT) to reduce PTSD symptoms                      | <input type="checkbox"/> |    | <b>DREAM EZ</b><br>Based on imagery rehearsal therapy (IRT) can help diffuse nightmares                    | <input type="checkbox"/> |    | <b>CONCUSSION COACH</b><br>Identify concussion symptoms and cope with related problems                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> |    | <b>LIFEARMOR</b><br>Take self-assessments and learn more about topics like PTSD, anger, depression and more  | <input type="checkbox"/> |    | <b>MINDFULNESS COACH</b><br>Learn to practice mindfulness meditation to live in the present                | <input type="checkbox"/> |    | <b>FEEL ELECTRIC!</b><br>Help your grade-school children identify and express their feelings              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> |   | <b>MILD TBI POCKET GUIDE</b><br>Access this handy reference when assessing and treating symptoms of mild TBI | <input type="checkbox"/> |   | <b>PARENTING2GO</b><br>Strengthen your relationships with your children                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> |    | <b>MOVING FORWARD</b><br>Learn problem-solving techniques that help you make better decisions             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> |  | <b>PFA MOBILE</b><br>Get support as a responder when your job is to provide psychological first aid (PFA)    | <input type="checkbox"/> |  | <b>POSITIVE ACTIVITY JACKPOT</b><br>Find local activities to improve your mood and avoid negative thinking | <input type="checkbox"/> |   | <b>PE COACH</b><br>Use with prolonged exposure (PE) therapy to improve results                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> |  | <b>PTSD COACH</b><br>Get support in managing PTSD symptoms   | <input type="checkbox"/> |  | <b>STAY QUIT COACH</b><br>Get help either while in smoking cessation treatment or to prevent relapse       | <input type="checkbox"/> |  | <b>PROVIDER RESILIENCE</b><br>Use when dealing with burnout and compassion fatigue                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> |  | <b>TACTICAL BREATHER</b><br>Learn to use breathing to control your response during times of stress           | <input type="checkbox"/> |  | <b>THE BIG MOVING ADVENTURE</b><br>Help prepare military children emotionally for the stress of moving     | <input type="checkbox"/> |  | <b>T2 MOOD TRACKER</b><br>Monitor your emotional health by tracking your moods over time                  |
|                          |   |  |                          |   |  | <input type="checkbox"/> |  | <b>VIRTUAL HOPE BOX</b><br>Helps reduce symptoms of depression with a digital version of hope box therapy |

## WEBSITES

- |                          |  |                          |  |                          |   |
|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> |  <b>afterdeployment</b><br>afterdeployment.dcoe.mil<br>Resources for psychological health and personal growth | <input type="checkbox"/> |  <b>PARENTING</b><br>For Service Members and Veterans<br>veterantraining.va.gov/parenting<br>Resources to strengthen your parenting skills  | <input type="checkbox"/> |  <b>SESAME STREET</b> for <b>Military Families</b><br>sesamestreetformilitaryfamilies.org<br>Resources for families with young children  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> |  <b>MOVING FORWARD</b><br>veterantraining.va.gov/movingforward<br>Resources to improve your decision-making   | <input type="checkbox"/> |  <b>MILITARY KIDS CONNECT</b><br>TOGETHER. EVERYWHERE.<br>militarykidsconnect.dcoe.mi.<br>Resources for military children and their parents |                          |   <p>Developed by the National Center for Telehealth &amp; Technology, a Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health &amp; Traumatic Brain Injury Center.<br/>Released: Aug 2016</p> |