



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

J U L Y 2 0 2 5

THE LEADER WITHIN

Leadership is an action, not a position. Whether in a uniform, professional attire or casual clothes, there's a leader inside each of us. It's the instinct to lean forward, make things better, and inspire those around you, regardless of who they are or what they do. That's the leader within, ready to ignite connection and drive mission success.

Becoming a truly effective leader starts with looking inward. Knowing your strengths, weaknesses, and values is critical. Be honest with yourself, even when it's tough. That self-awareness and honesty form the foundation upon which you build and grow.

Then there's authenticity. Be real; be yourself; no pretending. When you're genuine, when your words and actions align with who you are, you build trust and inspire others. It's not about perfection; it's about being your best self. It's about living both the Air Force core values and your personal ones, not just talking about them.

Leadership isn't about you; it's about the people you impact. It's about shared values and working towards a common goal. It's the compass guiding your actions and decisions, the bedrock that sustains your team through tough times.

Leadership is influence. It's motivating and empowering people to reach their full potential and helping them develop the leader within them. It's not just about giving orders; it's about inspiring action, igniting a shared desire to achieve the mission. This also means making timely and sometimes difficult decisions, even when faced with uncertainty.

Ultimately, it's about sustaining and motivating those around you. Good leadership fuels momentum even when challenges loom large, celebrates wins, big and small, and steadfastly supports your team through setbacks. It's about cultivating an environment where everyone feels valued, respected, and intrinsically motivated to contribute their best to accomplish the mission.

For the sake of yourself, your team, and the mission, don't be afraid to embrace and develop the leader within.

WATCH...

[The Link Between Us All](#) (3:30)



DISCUSS...

1. How can we create environments where everyone feels empowered to embrace their inner leader, regardless of their formal role or position?
2. What strategies do you use to identify and foster shared values within a team or organization? How do you ensure those values are more than just words on a wall?
3. What are the biggest challenges you face in being truly honest with yourself about your strengths and weaknesses?
4. How do you measure the impact you have on others as a leader? What specific outcomes or changes do you look for?



“As leaders, we need to provide the opportunity to do things that are difficult together. When you have difficult things to do together, perhaps you fail, you get coached and mentored, you learn from your mistakes, and you get better. If we don't provide those opportunities, then we never will actually grow.”

– Gen. Kenneth Wilsbach, Commander of ACC



Capt. Christopher Cook, Head Coach, and Master Sgt. Derrick Raley, Team Mentor, pose for a photo at the Offutt Air Force Base Field House on March 6, 2025. Cook and Raley have been instrumental in turning the Warhawks basketball program around. (U.S. Air Force photo by Chad Watkins)



Ms. Janine Sijan poses for a group portrait with the winners of the annual Lance P. Sign Award for Leadership in the Hall of Heroes, Pentagon, Arlington, Va. on April 30, 2025. (U.S. Air Force photo by Andy Morataya)

Related Resources

Air Combat Command Public Affairs. (2024, March 22). Air Combat Command lays out new priorities. Air Combat Command. Retrieved from <https://www.acc.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/3928251/air-combat-command-lays-out-new-priorities/>

“Dare to Lead: Brave Work. Tough Conversations. Whole Hearts” by Brené Brown

Brown's work focuses on vulnerability, courage, and empathy as essential leadership qualities, encouraging individuals to embrace their authentic selves.



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 CARE ESCORT

Directly **ASK** the individual if they are having thoughts of death, self-harm, or suicide.

CARE about their answers. If they hesitate, or seem uncertain, ask follow-up questions to convey that you care about their well-being.

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? 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.		

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