



Bridge Chat Guidance

Pause, Understand, Listen, Share, Empathize

(PULSE)



CATALYST FOR BRIDGE CHATS

- In August 2019, CSAF General Goldfein directed units to initiate a resilience tactical pause (RTP) to improve connectedness between leaders and their personnel.
- In September 2019, RTP-style conversations resulted in overwhelming positive feedback and drove ACC/A1Z to create a framework for more deliberate and consistent chats across units.
- In December 2019, AF/A1Z developed an RTP Fragmentary Order/Playbook to help leaders build a caring culture around trust and team communication.
- In January 2020, ACC/PA and A1 partnered to build *The Bridge* website with tools/information grouped into three categories: Equip, Engage, Empower.

OBJECTIVES

1. Build connective teams.
2. Encourage wingman culture.
3. Meet training requirements within existing battle rhythm.

OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

- Conduct monthly *Bridge Chats*
- Complete *Wingman Intervention Chat* NLT 31 Dec; training managers' report stats in ADLS
- Ensure *first duty station* personnel attend 90-min Bystander Intervention training
- Present *SAPR Talking Points* NLT 31 Dec in coordination with the Installation SARC

SUGGESTED TOPICS & METHODS OF ENGAGEMENT

Each month's selected topic will be featured on a single-page handout for portability and quick reference. All contain a mini-bio on a subject matter expert, a video link and questions to prompt group discussion. Expect Bridge Chat guides to be posted under the *Engage* tab by the 15th of the previous month.

- Brown bag lunches with officers, enlisted or civilian personnel
- Physical training sessions or formation runs
- Guard mount or shift changes
- Wing stand up or recurring staff meetings

If feasible, extend invite to Key Spouses and resiliency partners to build a stronger support network

TIMELINE

- 18 Feb 20 – Website is live and accessible via ACC homepage; bookmark and provide feedback
- 1 Apr 20 – Command-wide implementation of monthly *Bridge Chats*



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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Question: Why are Bridge Chats being implemented across ACC?

Answer: Feedback collected through multiple channels after the resilience tactical pause confirmed personnel want more opportunities to connect with their leadership and teammates. Bridge Chats were developed to open up lines of communication in ways that improve trust, understanding and human support systems that exist across units.

Question: How will busy leaders/units have time to do Bridge Chats?

Answer: We can't afford not to do it. Leaders have the lawful authority and responsibility to balance mission and people needs, as outlined in AFI 1-2, *Commander Responsibilities*. Investing one hour or less each month in meaningful conversation benefits everyone over the short/long-term. Chats should be integrated into the unit's current battle rhythm to improve trust and understanding, address concerns elevated via the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI) Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS) and fulfill annual DoD/AF mandates more effectively.

Question: How will ACC ensure compliance and accountability?

Answer: The command will develop one or two supplemental questions for the DEOCS to give employees the opportunity to comment on Bridge Chat effectiveness to ensure they are making a positive impact and improving trust, mutual respect and organizational climate.

Question: How will mandatory training requirements be tracked?

Answer: Two mandatory topics focused on prevention and response must be tracked. The *Wingman Intervention Bridge Chat* will satisfy annual bystander intervention/suicide prevention training and be tracked by unit training managers in ADLS. In addition, unit leaders are required to review *SAPR Talking Points* to ensure personnel understand reporting options and take appropriate actions if/when an incident occurs. Installation SARCs will track and report the status of Talking Point reviews to ACC's SAPR Program Manager.

Question: Are Bridge Chats professional development training?

Answer: Yes, and more! Monthly discussions will focus on professional qualities directly tied to our wingman culture and AF Core Values, and create opportunities to learn from one another. We can all be a reliable sounding board and resource to support and encourage teammates. Bridge Chats will expand and strengthen our professional relationships and may even create anchors of support that hold steady after we change positions or move to new assignments.

Question: How do Bridge Chat topics change destructive behaviors?

Answer: Small group discussions help us recognize what kind of mindsets or habits contribute to a person's success or stress. Monthly chats serve as a vehicle for mentoring, coaching and skill-building to create positive shifts in attitude and behavior.

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