



Connectedness

Connectedness is a simple way, but often, an underestimated protective factor in preventing suicidal behavior. It involves positive relations between individuals (friends, family, neighbors, and co-workers; connectedness to community organizations (schools, faith communities, etc.); and groups (e.g. minority groups) to their cultural traditions or history. It's these strong associations, positive and supportive relationships, and community cohesion that are key protective factors that help buffer the effects of risk factors in people's lives. Being connected empowers us to seek help from others in times of distress and enables access to helping resources. To mitigate risks and failure, we all can play a role in supporting the development of relationships; in building positive attachments between families and leadership, the unit, or community organizations; in supporting peers; in implementing activities that promote proactive behaviors within your environment (at work or home) to strengthen connections. Everyone should be inspired by General Brown's encouragement to ask for help. Ask for help, give help, or inspire others to be someone's source of help; either way, make every connection count!

Make Every Connection Count

Getting the Conversation Started

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

"Success takes help, failure you can do alone. Don't be afraid to ask for help, we all need it at one time or another"

– General Charles Q. Brown, Chief of Staff of the Air Force

Suggested Discussion Questions ▶

1. What does connectedness mean to you?
2. How can connectedness prevent interpersonal violence/suicide?
3. Define stress & distress; what are healthy ways to cope with it?
4. What are risk factors & warning signs of someone in distress?
5. What does **ACE** stand for? (Answer: Ask, Care, Escort)
6. What prevents us from asking if someone is thinking about suicide? How do we overcome barriers?
7. What does caring mean? What prevents us from showing someone in distress that we care?
8. What can we say/do to show someone we care? How do we ask if one has access to weapons? Discuss how **SLO** can protect from self-harm. **SLO** – Use **S**afes, **L**ocks, or store lethal means **O**utside of the home?
9. After escorting someone to direct care, what follow-up can we do and what are barriers that may prevent us from following up?
10. How can you make someone feel welcome and included after they've experienced thoughts of self-harm or a mental health challenge?
11. Imagine an environment where checking in with others & seeking help when you need it is as common as asking for help when your car breaks down or you break your leg or chip a tooth. What role can we play in creating an environment like this?
12. What makes YOU feel connected to others? What can YOU do to help others feel connected & like they belong?

Facilitator Actions:

- Distribute to all participants the resource hand-out located in the Bridge Chat folder on The Bridge
- Encourage participants to complete the training evaluation by using the QR code or link below:



http://usaf.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_57QvX2AW

- Document training completion and send to your parent wing's VPI (WG/CVI)