



# AFMC Connect

2023

## IMPLEMENTATION GUIDANCE



Current as of 22 March 2023

*AFMC ... Increase unit cohesion and connectedness of our personnel and their families to create the AFMC We Need.*

## Table of Contents

<a href="#"><u>Background</u></a> .....	3
<a href="#"><u>General Format</u></a> .....	4
<a href="#"><u>Roles and Responsibilities</u></a> .....	4-5
<a href="#"><u>Facilitator Preparation and AFMC Connect Tool Overview</u></a> .....	5
<a href="#"><u>Annual Suicide Prevention Training Requirements</u></a> .....	5
<a href="#"><u>Feedback</u></a> .....	6
<a href="#"><u>Appendix A: Suicide Prevention Training Requirements</u></a> .....	7
<a href="#"><u>Appendix B: Unit Tracking Procedures</u></a> .....	8
<a href="#"><u>Appendix C: Installation POCs</u></a> .....	9

## **BACKGROUND**

As we move into year four of our AFMC Connect initiative, the goal continues to be placing an emphasis on increasing unit cohesion and connectedness by offering opportunities for organizations to have deliberate and meaningful conversations, resulting in an increase of the level of commitment to the Air Force mission, the AFMC mission and ultimately to each other.

Connectedness is a key protective factor that assists with combating the everyday risk factors people may encounter in their lives. AFMC Connect has been developed to meet the needs of the individual units by providing tools and resources to assist leaders in effectively communicating with their personnel.

These concepts should be embedded into our everyday culture, in which individuals are engaging with one another in a way that fosters continual communication, strengthens relationships, and enhances the wellbeing of individual Airmen while building unity within their teams. When we build connections with others, we build strength in ourselves. As leaders, you can positively influence your workforce by reinforcing the following concepts:

1. Stress the importance of early help seeking by removing barriers.
2. Build connections with helping agencies by bringing services to your people.
3. Discuss risk factors for those in crisis and arm your personnel with resources to assist.
4. Build resilience by encouraging personal and professional development.

We do not intend to require a one size fits all, but rather provide a standardized framework with accompanying tools and resources to better assist in successful engagement. This is a holistic approach to strengthen resilience, reinforce protective factors, and reduce unwanted behaviors. We have combined this effort with our Suicide Prevention annual training requirements to better facilitate deliberate actions versus mandated training requirements.

Focusing on our mission, building a shared purpose, and strong connections will aid in assisting our most vital resource, our people and create the AFMC We Need!

*This implementation guide provides the overall intent and framework for AFMC Connect.*

## GENERAL FORMAT

1. AFMC Connect discussions will occur once per month.
  - a. Recommended timeframe is 15 – 30 minutes.
  - b. This is not intended to be delivered as training.... these are conversations led by supervisors who know their personnel best.
2. Focus:
  - a. Connect discussions focus on deliberate and meaningful topics to be conducted in small groups in a synchronized effort across the MAJCOM each month.
  - b. It is important that facilitators conduct the discussions in their own words in a way that will resonate well with their personnel.
  - c. Connect conversation topics incorporate annual suicide prevention training requirements on a quarterly basis.
3. Monthly tools can be accessed at either of the below links:
  - a. SharePoint: [https://usaf.dps.mil/teams/22370/afmcwingmanday/sitepages/community\\_home.aspx](https://usaf.dps.mil/teams/22370/afmcwingmanday/sitepages/community_home.aspx)
    - i. Additional videos and resources are also available here. Click to request access.
  - b. AFMC Connect Website: <https://www.afmc.af.mil/connect>

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. *Commanders/Directors/Materiel Leaders at the Center, Wing, Group, Squadron level*
  - a. Support AFMC Connect with unit personnel. For example, include messaging during Commander/Director/Materiel Leader calls or unit-wide emails.
  - b. Ensure monthly discussions are being conducted with unit personnel.
    - i. Goal is for 100% of personnel to participate in AFMC Connect discussions monthly.
  - c. Consider establishing a Resilience team within the unit to focus on helping create strong connections and morale, as well as planning continued efforts.
  - d. Responsible for ensuring monthly discussions are occurring.

NOTE: You can utilize already trained Master Resilience Trainers (MRTs), Resilience Training Assistants (RTAs) to foster innovative ideas (Contact your local Community Support Coordinator (CSC) to assist in identifying MRTs/RTAs – See Appendix C).
2. *Supervisors at the Division, Branch, Flight, Frontline-level, or Unit Appointed Designee:*
  - a. Facilitate monthly AFMC Connect discussions with assigned personnel.
    - i. Supervisors may utilize the monthly tools provided or formulate their own discussion on the identified topic.
    - ii. You are encouraged to integrate these discussions within the existing daily mission and not create an “additional check the box” requirement.
  - b. Report unit completion stats via TMT each quarter for the AFMC Connect topic identified as the Suicide Prevention training requirement (Mar, Jun, Sep, Dec) to MAJCOM by utilizing your Unit Training Personnel (see Appendix B for additional guidance).
3. *Unit Training Personnel (Unit Training Managers (UTMs), Unit Ancillary Training Monitors (UATMs), or Training Focal Point (TFP)):*
  - a. Track and document completion of quarterly Suicide Prevention training requirements (Mar, Jun, Sep, Dec) for assigned unit (see Appendix B for tracking requirements).
4. *Installation Violence Prevention Integrators (VPIs)*
  - a. Primary POC for implementation of AFMC Connect for installation AFMC units.
  - b. Ensure AFMC Connect materials are distributed by AFMC Leaders at all levels.
  - c. Provide assistance with questions concerning Suicide Prevention annual training or the implementation of monthly AFMC Connect discussions as needed.
5. *Installation Community Support Coordinators (CSCs)*
  - a. Provide units with assistance in identifying Master Resilience Trainers (MRTs) or Resilience Training Assistants (RTAs) who can assist with delivery of content to support monthly AFMC Connect discussions.
  - b. Facilitate connection to installation Helping Agencies (i.e., Mental Health, Sexual Assault Response Coordinator, Military & Family Readiness, Employee Assistance Program, etc.) as needed.

## FACILITATOR PREPARATION

1. The messenger matters! Discussions will be most effective when time is spent understanding the intent of the topic and how best to deliver the information.
2. Attend a Train-the-Trainer workshop with your installation Integrated Prevention and Resilience office (See Appendix C for POCs).
3. Review the “Facilitator Notes” each month to help prepare for the discussion with your personnel.
4. Ensure the venue allows for open dialogue with the group.
  - a. Be flexible, discussions can occur virtually.
    - i. Establish rules of engagement (ex. Cameras on) so participants understand expectations.  
Note: If you would like to explore other opportunities to make the most of your discussion contact your local VPI or CSC who can assist (see Appendix C).
5. Be genuine...use this time as an opportunity to dialogue with your personnel.
6. Prepare for potential questions and how you’ll respond, questions should generate productive discussion.
7. Use discussion questions from the tool to ensure engagement of all members. Avoid yes/no questions.
8. Some AFMC Connect topics may include optional videos available at the AFMC Connect SharePoint site.
9. Utilize your Unit Resiliency Team to foster innovative ideas in delivering the message. Note: Your installation CSC or VPI can assist in building your Unit Resiliency Team (see Appendix C).

## AFMC CONNECT TOOL OVERVIEW

1. Quarterly Theme: Each quarter a message will be provided by our AFMC Senior leaders on the overarching AFMC Connect theme.
2. Monthly Topic: Each month will have a different discussion topic that builds on the quarterly theme.
3. Goal: Defines the overall objective of that month’s discussion.
4. Facilitator Notes: Assists facilitators with effectively utilizing the AFMC Connect tool.
5. Framing the Conversation: Provides the narrative to the topic identified and includes discussion points which may be used to generate discussion.
6. Take Action: Exercises or teambuilding opportunities to develop skills connected to the monthly topic.
7. Additional Resources: If included, may be used to enhance the monthly discussion, and will be in the folder with the monthly topic.

## ANNUAL SUICIDE PREVENTION TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

1. The content for the annual Suicide Prevention training has been broken down into four learning objectives. Each objective has been embedded into one AFMC Connect discussion tool per quarter (Mar, Jun, Sep, Dec).

Month	Theme	Learning Objective
March	Connection	Importance of connectedness
June	Attentive	Risk factors/warning signs of persons in distress
September	Resilient	How to take clear and quick action to effectively intervene
December	Caring	Identify personal coping strategies and problem-solving skills

2. New! AFMC Connect Train-the-Trainer Workshops:
  - a. AFMC Connect Train the Trainer workshops are offered by your installation Integrated Prevention & Resilience Office.
  - b. Training workshops are approximately 60 minutes in length and include: AFMC Connect Background, Overview of AFMC Connect Tools, Tips for Leading a Successful AFMC Connect Session, Overview of all Annual Suicide Prevention Training Content, and Installation Best-Practice Discussion.
  - c. Installation POCs can be found by visiting the Installation POC quick link tab on the left of the AFMC Connect SharePoint or in Appendix C.

## FEEDBACK

1. Feedback is a critical component in the success of this initiative.
2. Please use of the following options to provide feedback.
  - a. Feedback link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CY23Connect>
  - b. QR Code:



3. In addition, you are welcome to provide comments/questions to the HQ AFMC Integrated Prevention and Resilience Division at: [afmc.a1z.ipr@us.af.mil](mailto:afmc.a1z.ipr@us.af.mil)

## APPENDIX A: SUICIDE PREVENTION TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

Quarterly Theme	Learning Objectives	Key Content
<b>March - Connection</b>	Understanding the importance of connectedness for the prevention of suicide.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connectedness means that people feel a sense of belonging. They feel seen and heard and know that others will be there for them.</li> <li>• Listening allows us to learn more about one another, recognize changes in behavior, and work as a team to build up and support one another.</li> <li>• When we feel connected to others, we have people we can reach out to and recognize when they are in distress.</li> </ul>
<b>June - Attentive</b>	Recognize risk factors and warning signs of persons in distress.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk Factors – Characteristics or conditions that increase the chance a person may begin exhibiting signs of distress.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Examples: Relationship problems, financial challenges, increased alcohol usage, and workplace/legal issues.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Warning Signs – Usually visible behaviors that indicate someone is in distress and needs someone to check in with them.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Examples: Withdrawal, showing extreme mood swings, misuse of alcohol, and talking about dying.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>September - Resilient</b>	Know how to take clear and quick action to effectively intervene utilizing the Ask Care Escort (ACE) model.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barriers exist that may make it difficult to effectively intervene. There are ways to work through these barriers so you can be there for a fellow Airman.</li> <li>• A stands for “Ask.”               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Asking about thoughts of self-harm or suicide will not “plant” the idea or make a person suicidal.</li> <li>○ It is important to be direct and ask if they are thinking of dying by suicide or hurting themselves.</li> <li>○ Demonstrate authentic concern.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• C stands for “Care.”               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Care is showing empathy while expressing concern for someone.</li> <li>○ Listen carefully to learn what the person is feeling or thinking; active listening is critical.</li> <li>○ Avoid blaming or minimizing language.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• E stands for “Escort.”               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Resources include Mental Health, Religious Affairs Personnel, Emergency Room, or call 911.</li> <li>○ Try to separate the person from potential means of harm, but not at the risk of your own safety.</li> <li>○ It is important to follow-up with the person to see how they are doing; don’t avoid them.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>December - Caring</b>	Identify personal coping strategies and problem-solving skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support an environment where checking in with others and seeking help when you need it is common, encouraged, and normalized.</li> <li>• Connectedness and belonging help foster protective, supportive environments where colleagues are more resilient to stressors.</li> <li>• Connectedness also helps us recognize signs of distress earlier on in others.</li> </ul>

## **APPENDIX B: UNIT TRACKING PROCEDURES**

- A. Units will conduct monthly AFMC Connect discussion sessions with personnel.
- B. Annual Suicide Prevention training requirements have been embedded each quarter into the following monthly topics: March – Connection, June – Attentive, September – Resilient, December – Caring.
- C. Quarterly, HQ AFMC/A1Z will task AFMC Centers via TMT to provide completion numbers for AFMC Connect. The TMT tasking is to route from the Center down to each unit's respective workflows.
- D. Unit Leaders are to report number assigned, number who participated and percent complete in the March, June, September, and December discussions through their respective workflows.
- E. Personnel must complete all four quarters in order to receive credit for the annual training requirement.
- F. Unit Training Personnel (Unit Training Managers (UTMs), Unit Ancillary Training Monitors (UATMs), or Training Focal Personnel (TFP)) will report completions to their unit leadership so they can respond to the quarterly Suicide Prevention completion spreadsheet.
- G. Unit Training Personnel Guidance
  - 1. Unit Training Personnel will track and document completion of quarterly requirements (March, June, September, and December) for their assigned unit personnel.
  - 2. Unit Training Personnel may track/document the quarterly requirements via any method (i.e., sign-in sheets, spreadsheet/database, etc.) they deem appropriate.
  - 3. Unit Training Personnel will maintain training completion records for their assigned personnel for two years.
- H. Personnel who PCS/PCA to non-AFMC units, deploy, or IMAs during their annual tour.
  - 1. AFMC Connect completions will only be recorded in myLearning for the above individuals.
    - a. Supervisors will review with their member any remaining quarterly AFMC Connect discussions (March, June, September, and December) OR the CY23 Suicide Prevention Learning Objectives in Appendix A.
    - b. Supervisor informs the Unit Training Personnel of completion.
    - c. Unit Training Personnel will record completion of Suicide Prevention in myLearning or provide the member with a certificate of completion signed by the UTM to take to their gaining unit or UDM.
      - i. myLearning Course Title - 2023 Suicide Prevention Annual Training