



AFMC Connect

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDANCE



Current as of 7 September 2021

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

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BACKGROUND

As we move into year two of our AFMC Connect initiative, the goal continues to be placing an emphasis on increasing unit cohesion and connectedness by highlighting opportunities for organizations to have deliberate and meaningful conversations, thus increasing 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 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 and builds relationships. 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
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 message 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 mandating training.

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 guidance for AFMC Connect.

GENERAL FORMAT

1. AFMC Connect discussions will occur once per month.
 - a. Recommended timeframe is 15-30 minutes.
 - b. This isn't training...these are conversations incorporating training requirements, led by supervisors who know their personnel best.
2. Discussions can be conducted during an existing forum (staff meeting, roll call, guard mount, shift turnover, PT etc.) or as separate monthly meetings at the leader's discretion.
 - a. Virtual delivery is an option due to current COVID-19 operating restrictions.
 - i. Utilize Microsoft Teams/CVR, Zoomgov or telecon as an alternative means for connection.
3. These discussions focus on deliberate and meaningful topics to be conducted in small groups.
 - a. This effort is designed to keep our MAJCOM focused on a synchronized message each month.
4. AFMC Connect tools and resources can be found at the following locations:
 - a. SharePoint: <https://usaf.dps.mil/teams/22370/AFMCWingmanDay/SitePages/Community%20Home.aspx>
 - i. 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. Report unit completion stats of quarterly AFMC Connect topic with embedded Suicide Prevention training requirement to MAJCOM by utilizing your Unit Training Personnel (see Appendix B for additional guidance).
 - d. Consider establishing a Resilience team within the unit to focus on helping create strong connections and morale, as well as planning continued efforts.

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, and Frontline-level:*
 - a. Facilitate monthly AFMC Connect discussions with assigned personnel.
 - i. Supervisors may utilize the monthly tools provided or formulate their own discussion on the assigned topic incorporating the annual Suicide Prevention training requirements listed in Appendix A.
 - ii. You are encouraged to integrate these discussions within the existing daily mission and not create an "additional check the box" requirement.
 - b. Report participation in quarterly AFMC Connect discussions through 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 requirements for assigned unit (see Appendix B for tracking requirements).
4. *Installation Violence Prevention Integrators (VPI)*
 - a. Primary POC for implementation of AFMC Connect for installation AFMC units.
 - b. Ensure AFMC Connect materials are distributed to 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 the delivery of content to support monthly AFMC Connect discussions.
 - b. Facilitate connection to installation Helping Agencies (i.e. Mental Health, Sexual Assault Response Coordinator, Airman & Family Readiness, Employee Assistance Program, etc.) as needed.

SUPERVISOR PREPARATION

1. The messenger matters! Discussions will be most effective if leaders spend time understanding the intent of the topic and how best to deliver the information.
2. Review the Facilitator Notes each month to help prepare for the discussion with your personnel.
3. Ensure the venue allows for open dialogue with the group.
 - a. Be flexible – explore virtual options if your personnel are working from home.
4. Be genuine...use this time as an opportunity for dialogue and mentoring.
5. Prepare for potential questions and how you'll respond; questions should generate productive discussion. Avoid yes/no questions.
6. If a group is difficult to engage, you may want to consider pointedly asking certain members of the group for input on questions to aid in the conversation.
7. Some AFMC Connect topics may include optional videos; if possible, consider a group location where you can use a computer/projector to play the video.

Note: Videos are located on the AFMC Connect SharePoint site and can be downloaded so that you do not have to play it using the Internet.
8. Consider utilizing a Master Resilience Trainer (MRT)/Resilience Training Assistant (RTA) to foster innovative ideas in delivering the message.

Note: Your installation CSC can assist in connecting you to an MRT/RTA.

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. Keep it Simple: Intended to be quick opportunities for skill building on the topic – at a minimum give this a try to generate action among your personnel.
8. Additional Resources: If included, may be used to enhance the monthly discussion.

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.

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

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/2021Connect>
 - b. QR Code:



3. In addition, leaders are welcome to provide comments/questions to the HQ AFMC Integrated Prevention and Resilience Branch at: afmc.a1rz.ipr@us.af.mil.

APPENDIX A: SUICIDE PREVENTION TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

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

APPENDIX B: UNIT TRACKING PROCEDURES

- A. Units will conduct monthly AFMC Connect discussion sessions with personnel. Annual Suicide Prevention training requirements have been embedded in the following monthly topics: March – Belonging, June – Connected, September – Resilient, December – Hopeful.
- B. Quarterly, HQ AFMC/A1RZ will task AFMC Centers via SOCCER to provide completion numbers for AFMC Connect. The SOCCER tasking is to route from the Center down to each unit’s respective workflows.
- C. 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.
- D. 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.
- E. 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.
- F. Personnel who PCS/PCA to non-AFMC units, deploy, or IMAs during their annual tour
 - 1. AFMC Connect completions will only be recorded in ADLS for the above individuals.
 - a. Supervisors will review with their member any remaining quarterly AFMC Connect discussions (March, Jun, September, and December) OR the CY21 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 ADLS or provide the member with a certificate of completion signed by the UTM to take to their gaining unit or UDM.
 - i. ADLS Course Title - 2021 Annual Suicide Prevention Training

APPENDIX C: POINTS OF CONTACT

1. Violence Prevention Integrators (VPI)

Installation	Name	Email
Arnold	Lee Smith	Lee.smith.19@us.af.mil
Edwards	William Brown	William.brown.169@us.af.mil
Eglin	Wendy Blevins	Wendy.blevins.2@us.af.mil
Hanscom	Abby Cutter	Abigail.cutter@us.af.mil
Hill	Dave Haltom	Michael.haltom.4@us.af.mil
Robins	Lesley Darley	Lesley.darley@us.af.mil
Tinker	Juan Flores	Juan.flores.2@us.af.mil
Wright-Patt	Thomas Tirey	Thomas.tirey@us.af.mil
HQ AFMC	Michael Owens	Michael.owens.21@us.af.mil
	Pamela Kallio	Pamela.kallio.2@us.af.mil

2. Community Support Coordinators (CSCs)

Installation	Name	Email
Arnold	Lee Smith	Lee.smith.19@us.af.mil
Edwards	Julie Wilbanks	Julie.wilbanks@us.af.mil
Eglin	Kelly Ewert	Kelly.ewert@us.af.mil
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Hill	Julie Pinchak	Julie.pinchak@us.af.mil
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