

## RESOURCES

### Air Force

[www.afms.af.mil/suicideprevention/index.asp](http://www.afms.af.mil/suicideprevention/index.asp)

### National Prevention Lifeline

1-800-273-TALK (8255)

### Military One Source

1-800-342-9647

<http://militaryonesource.mil>

### Vets4Warriors

1-855-838-8255

### Airman & Family Readiness Center

<http://www.afpc.af.mil/lifeandcareer/>

### Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office

<http://www.sexualassaultpreventionresponse.af.mil/>

### Partners in Care (PIC)

[www.suicideoutreach.org](http://www.suicideoutreach.org)

### After Deployment

[www.afterdeployment.org](http://www.afterdeployment.org)

### National Resource Directory

[www.nrd.gov](http://www.nrd.gov)

### Moving Forward

[www.startmovingforward.org](http://www.startmovingforward.org)

### Parenting for Service Members and Veterans

[www.militaryparenting.org](http://www.militaryparenting.org)

### Military Kids Connect

[www.militarykidsconnect.org](http://www.militarykidsconnect.org)

## WHAT TO DO

If you are concerned that an Air Force member or someone in their family may be having difficulty or if you are worried about their safety it is important to discuss your concerns with the individual. You should find a private place to talk. Be open and honest when talking and express your concern without personal judgment. This will let them know that you care and want to help. While the goal is suicide prevention, this approach can be beneficial for a wide variety of problems. The guidelines below provide the tools to access available resources and care as appropriate.

## ACE

**ASK** When you see or hear any of the warning signs discussed in this section, or are aware of risk factors in someone's life, ask questions to learn more about the person's problems or concerns.

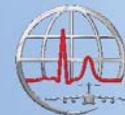
**CARE** It is important to show that you care for those at risk. Simply taking the time to ask about problems, listen to the response, and asking specifically about suicide shows caring and concern. If someone acknowledges thoughts of suicide, listen to them and allow them to share what is troubling them.

**ESCORT** After asking about suicide and showing care, the final step is to escort the person to command, or a professional support agency that can provide appropriate assistance.

# Air Force FAMILY GUIDE FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION



## Identifying and Supporting Family Members in Distress



AIR FORCE  
SUICIDE PREVENTION OFFICE

# AIR FORCE SUICIDE PREVENTION

The health and wellness of our Airmen and their families is a top Air Force Priority. We work to assure wellness at three points: through prevention, education and intervention.

Suicide is a major threat to that wellness and a public health concern that impacts not only our nation's military and their families but our society at large.

This guide has been developed to deliver some critical prevention information to our Air Force family about suicide as well as what to do if you believe an Airman or family member is at risk for suicide. This guide includes information about what to look for, how to determine if an Airman or family member is at risk of suicide, available resources and what to expect when treatment is sought.

Airmen who enter treatment will be treated with dignity and respect. An initial assessment will determine the course of care. The mental health provider will work with the Airman to identify what treatment will be of greatest benefit (psychotherapy, medication or both). The Airman will be asked to be an active participant in working towards solving challenges. Airmen often have many questions about treatment. They should ask their provider to clarify any unknowns or misconceptions.

When we prevent suicide and get our Airmen and their family members the care they need, we are a healthier, stronger Air Force with improved quality of life and stronger careers.

The Air Force approach to suicide prevention is based on shared responsibility. This means that Air Force Families look out for each other. Following are lists of Warning Signs, Risk Factors and Protective Factors. Warning Signs and Risk Factors indicate a problem may be present. Protective factors keep us healthy and resilient.

## WARNING SIGNS / RISK FACTORS

### WARNING SIGNS

- Changes in mood or personality to include serious anger or sadness
- Unexplained relief from a serious stress can be concerning and may mean an individual is contemplating suicide
- Making a plan for suicide
- Withdrawing from people and activities
- Increasing alcohol intake or other substance use
- Hopelessness
- Helplessness
- Worthlessness
- Withdrawal (from family, friends, or unit)

### RISK FACTORS (High Vulnerability)

- Prior suicide attempts
- Family history of suicide or mental illness
- Unresolved emotional trauma
- Relationship problems
- Family violence, neglect, or abuse
- Major financial difficulties
- Unresolved anger
- Pending significant legal actions
- History of mental illness
- Alcohol and substance misuse
- Prolonged or severe physical illness
- Easy access to lethal means such as guns
- Lack of social support and sense of isolation

## PROTECTIVE FACTORS

### PROTECTIVE FACTORS (Enhance Resilience)

- Engagement in effective clinical care for mental, physical, and substance abuse disorders
- Easy access to resources and support for help seeking
- Family and community support (connectedness)
- Support from ongoing medical and mental health care relationships
- Skills in problem solving, conflict resolution, and nonviolent ways of handling disputes
- Cultural and religious beliefs that discourage suicide and support instincts for self-preservation

Protective factors are critical when a member of the Air Force Family is striving or struggling. When we are succeeding, protective factors and healthy habits such as exercise/healthy diet help keep us strong and better able to recover when problems occur. When we are struggling, these same protective factors help get us back on track and perform to our peak capabilities.

Encourage members of the Air Force family to utilize these skills and grow them where possible.