

# NEVER LEAVE A MARINE BEHIND



Suicide Prevention Training for Officers

# INSTRUCTOR GUIDE

SEPTEMBER 2011



# INTRODUCTION

## PURPOSE OF THE COURSE

The overall objective of the course is to support leaders in their efforts to promote resilience, encourage Marines to seek help early, and maintain an ongoing dialogue on suicide prevention.

### Specific Objectives

1. To learn the RACE method of suicide intervention. Through videos and guided discussions, the course will ensure that Marines understand the steps in RACE, which are:
  - RECOGNIZE the risks factors and warning signs associated with suicide.
  - ASK about thoughts of suicide.
  - CARE for Marines at risk for suicide.
  - ESCORT Marines at risk for suicide to the appropriate professionals.
2. To demonstrate ways in which leaders can encourage Marines to seek help when experiencing the normal and expected effects of stress. Through videos and guided discussions, the course will explore ways in which leaders can:
  - Let Marines know they can get help and continue to progress in their careers.
  - Demonstrate that all Marines, including leaders, occasionally have trouble coping with stress.
3. To ensure that leaders treat all Marines with respect, dignity, and compassion while maintaining standards, discipline, and unit cohesion. The course will explore ways in which leaders can:
  - Be consistent in enforcing rules and regulations, which can help prevent suicide by reducing high-risk behavior.
  - Balance enforcement with reassurance and hope.
  - Handle transitions, such as changes in duty status, with care.
  - Balance unit needs (mission completion) against individual needs.
4. To ensure that leaders foster resilience, emphasizing that all Marines need to be physically and psychologically fit. The course will explore ways in which leaders can:
  - Encourage healthy activities and behaviors that strengthen individual Marines and units.
  - Be there for their Marines 24/7 while also taking care of themselves.

## COURSE TIME

The total estimated time for this training is 60–75 minutes.

## **COURSE AGENDA**

Because the course is relatively short, it is designed to flow from one segment to another without obvious breaks in the training. It is also designed to be conducted in one sitting.

### **Segment 1 | Why Are We Here? (Slides 2–5)**

This segment stresses the importance of the training and offers some basic information about recent suicides in the Marine Corps. This segment also features a message from the Commandant and the Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps about every Marine's role in suicide prevention.

### **Segment 2 | The RACE Method (Slides 6–7)**

The segment features a synopsis of the RACE method of intervention as it is presented in Junior Marine suicide prevention training. It serves as a primer/refreshers on suicide prevention and also offers a glimpse of how it is being taught to Junior Marines and NCOs.

### **Segment 3 | Balanced Leadership: Managing Marines Who Are in Crisis (Slide 8)**

This segment features a case study in which leaders did everything right but still lost a Marine to suicide. The clips address factors and events that preceded the suicide as well as the command's response. Also addressed are the necessary consequences a Marine must face for bad decisions and the need to help Marines through these crises so they become more resilient and do not view suicide as an option.

### **Segment 4 | Focused and Engaged Leadership: Beyond Knowing Your Marines (Slide 9)**

Documentary video clips focus on leaders who are practicing a more intrusive style of leadership in the wake of a suicide. This video segment features some "above and beyond" actions by leaders who are available to their Marines 24/7.

### **Segment 5 | The Resilient Marine (Slide 10)**

This video segment features advice from leaders on building and maintaining resilience among themselves and their Marines. Leaders address the importance of being able to contextualize stressful circumstances and move on.

### **Segment 6 | Never Leave a Marine Behind: Suicide Prevention Is Every Marine's Job (Slides 11–12)**

The Marine Corps is arming all Marines, including NCOs and Junior Marines, for this battle. This segment features highlights from the NCO drama. Coupled with Segment 2 on the RACE method, this segment raises leaders' awareness of how their NCOs and Junior Marines are being trained in suicide prevention, allowing a common dialogue on the subject.

## **MATERIALS**

- PowerPoint slide presentation with embedded documentary video
- Instructor Guide
- Resource list and RACE pocket guide
  - To print, go to [www.usmc-mccs.org/suicideprevent](http://www.usmc-mccs.org/suicideprevent) and print out enough Resource lists and RACE pocket guides for all class participants.

## EQUIPMENT/ CLASSROOM SETUP

- The optimal class size is no more than 30 Marines.
- All locations must have audiovisual equipment, including a projector that can be connected to a computer.
- If possible, darken the room for optimal viewing of the videos. Close all shades or blinds and turn off the lights to view videos. Have lights up for guided discussion.
- Cell phones and all electronic devices should be turned off.
- Have the title slide on the screen as participants enter the room.
- A significant portion of this course consists of video segments that are integrated into the PowerPoint slide presentation, in the form of Windows Media Video (WMV) files. To provide the best viewing experience, consider the following tips.

NOTE: The disk contains two PowerPoint files, one for officers and one for staff NCOs. Make sure you open the correct PowerPoint file for your class.

- Copy the contents of the course folder onto your computer's desktop. The entire course is contained in a single folder on the disk. To copy this folder onto your desktop, simply drag the icon from the disk onto your desktop. Depending upon the speed of your computer, this may take several minutes to half an hour. If copying the folder to your computer is not possible, the course can be operated directly from the disk, though this is not optimal.
- Test the projection system before the training starts, allowing time for troubleshooting with an audio-visual technician.
- Make sure your set-up includes speakers. Sound quality is critical to the success of the video segments. Test the speakers beforehand, making sure you can hear clearly from all parts of the room. Make sure the computer's master volume control is on maximum. For most computer operating systems, use the following directions:
  - » Right click on the volume icon in the task bar at the bottom of your screen. Click on Open Volume Control. Adjust Master Volume to the maximum level. Close window. Right click on the volume icon again and go to Adjust Audio Properties. Look for Speaker Volume and set to high, and click on Advanced to select the speaker configuration. Consult an audio-visual technician for additional guidance on volume and speaker configuration.
  - » The video segments are launched from the PowerPoint slide. Each segment is identified by a still frame on the slide. The video does not play until you click on the play button. When you click on the button, the video should play in full-screen mode. (Move the cursor to a corner after launching each video.)
  - » After completion of the video, click anywhere on the slide EXCEPT the still-frame image to advance to the next slide.



## **FORMAT OF THE INSTRUCTOR GUIDE**

- A sample script and talking points are provided for each slide. In this guide, the slide appears at the top left-hand page with the talking points below. The talking points are an at-a-glance summary of the script, which appears on the opposite page. Ample space is provided for you to write in the guide so that you can customize the talking points and script to your training style and to the needs of your unit.
- For slides with embedded video clips, the guide tells you when to play the videos and how you might introduce them and put them into context.
- Slides 5, 8, 9, and 10 contain videos that are designed to launch guided discussions. Below the script that introduces these slides is a menu of discussion options. You should select one discussion for each of these segments.
- On the subsequent pages associated with each of those slides are two-page spreads for each discussion topic. A discussion prompt, which should be read aloud, is on the left-hand page of each discussion spread. The right-hand page provides discussion guidance. You should study this guidance before training but should not read it aloud during training.

## **TRAINING METHODOLOGY**

- Units have three courses of action with this training.
  1. Present the officer module to officers.
  2. Present the staff NCO module to staff NCOs.
  3. Present the course (either module) to officers and staff NCOs together.
- The course should be led by a senior officer or senior enlisted instructor.
- Central to the course is documentary video of real Marines who have experience with suicides or suicide attempts in their units.
- The videos have been carefully compiled as launching points for a series of guided discussions on leadership's role in suicide prevention.
- All participants are expected to engage in all discussions.

## **INSTRUCTOR PREPARATION**

- Prior to the training, watch the video segments and go through the slides. Familiarize yourself with the names of the Marine leaders who are prominently featured in the documentary videos. There is ample space for taking notes in this guide.
- Select ONE discussion question for each video segment based on concerns relevant to your unit. Familiarize yourself with the guidance provided for your selected question. This will help you facilitate discussion, keep it on track, and be prepared to correct misinformation that may arise.

## **INSTRUCTOR PREPARATION**

(continued)

- Stick to what you know. If you don't know an answer to a question, don't fake it. Offer to contact the Marine Corps Suicide Prevention Program office later to find out the answer.
- Avoid reading directly from the slides or script.
- Personalize the script. A sample is provided for your guidance, but tailor it to your teaching style and to your unit.

## **FACILITATION STRATEGIES**

Your job as a facilitator of this training is to help Marine leaders at all levels take ownership of suicide prevention through guided discussion. Your job is not to lecture, though there will be a few points in the training when you should make certain teaching points. Your job is to encourage group participation and steer the group in the right direction as pertains to enforcing current Marine Corps and organizational policy. Training participants should leave feeling they have learned from each other and have acquired additional tools for leading Marines.

### **Some of the *best* things a facilitator can do:**

- Explain the purpose and importance of the training.
- Speak in simple, direct language.
- Create an open and trusting atmosphere.
- Let participants know that everyone is expected to speak up.
- Treat all participants with respect.
- Listen to all comments, validate those that are good, correct misinformation, and keep the discussion on track.
- Probe for comments from those who aren't speaking up.
- Maintain a high energy level.
- Remain flexible.

### **Some of the *worst* things a facilitator can do:**

- Let discussions ramble without proper closure.
- Talk too much.
- Leave misinformation uncorrected.
- Be insensitive to differences of opinion that are based on culture or religion.
- Allow one or more people to dominate the conversation.
- Lose sight of the objectives or control of the discussion.

Note to the instructor: This course is designed as annual training. Each video segment offers discussion options. Questions not used in initial training can be used for training in subsequent years.

# SLIDE 1

NEVER LEAVE A  
MARINE BEHIND



## TALKING POINTS

- Take your seats.
- Turn off your cell phones.
- Participate.




**SCRIPT**

- Leaders, take your seats.
- Turn off your cell phones and BlackBerries.
- This training is interactive and you are all expected to participate in discussions.
- We can all learn from each other.

# SLIDE 2

## CMC/SMMC MESSAGE

CMC/SMMC Message



2

### TALKING POINTS [\[Play Video\]](#)

- NCOs and Junior Marines are being trained.
- We all have a responsibility in this fight.
- We must prevent suicides.
- We must establish a climate of trust.
- We also have a role in the wake of a suicide.

**SCRIPT**

**[Play Video]**

- As you heard in the message from the Commandant and the Sergeant Major, the Marine Corps is training NCOs and Junior Marines to watch out for Marines who are in distress.
- But they made it clear that all Marines—including officers and Staff NCOs—have a responsibility in this fight.
- As leaders of Marines, we have a role to play in reducing the number of suicides.
- We must help establish a climate of trust so that Marines will feel comfortable asking for and getting help.
- And we also have an important role to play in the wake of a suicide.

# SLIDE 3

WHY ARE WE  
HERE?

Why Are We Here?

We are losing too many  
Marines to suicide.

3

## TALKING POINTS

- Too many Marines are dying.
- Even one is too many.
- Most suicides are preventable.

**SCRIPT**

- Too many Marines are taking their own lives.
- Even one suicide is too many.
- Most of these suicides are preventable.



# SLIDE 4

WHY ARE WE  
HERE?

## Why Are We Here?



### Objective

The overall objective of the course is to support leaders in their efforts to promote resilience, encourage Marines to seek help early, and maintain an ongoing dialogue on suicide prevention.



4

### TALKING POINTS

- Resilience, early intervention, and suicide awareness are objectives.
- These are all part of Saving Marines' Lives.
- We will watch short videos.
- These feature real Marines.
- We will talk about what leaders can and should do.



**SCRIPT**

- Resilience, early intervention, and suicide awareness. All of these things are geared toward one terminal objective: Saving Marines' Lives.
- We are going to watch a series of short videos.
- These videos feature real Marines talking about their experiences with suicide in their ranks.
- We can learn from their experiences, and from each other.
- After some of the videos, we will talk about what we, as leaders, should be doing to help Marines be more resilient.

# SLIDE 5

WHY ARE WE  
HERE?

Why Are We Here?



5

**TALKING POINTS** • This short video brings the point home.

[\[Play Video\]](#)

**SCRIPT**

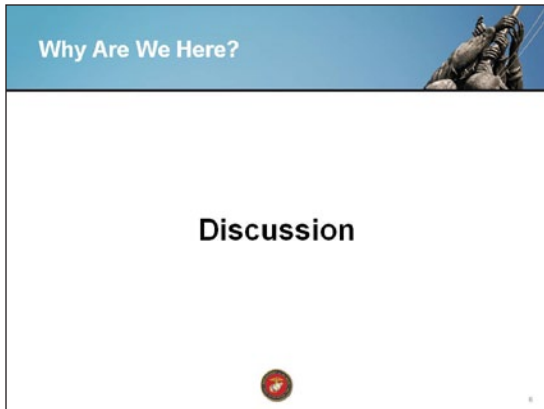
- This short video brings the point home about why we are here today.

**[Play Video]**

Instructions: Facilitators should select ONE discussion from the options below and read it to the group. The discussion should be selected in advance so the facilitator can be prepared to lead a positive and productive discussion. The following pages provide guidelines for each discussion. Please study the guidelines for the selected discussion. Allow 10–12 minutes for discussion.

**DISCUSSION  
OPTIONS**

1. To play an active role in suicide prevention—and ensure the well-being and effectiveness of our units—we, as leaders, have a need to know. Confidentiality rules are often at odds with this need to know. What can we do to overcome this obstacle? What can we do to encourage our Marines to self-report to leadership so confidentiality is not an issue?  
  
Phrased another way: How can we, as leaders, build trust so that Marines will not be afraid to tell us when stress is getting to them and they need to get help?
2. Leaders sometimes need help coping with stressful situations. Is it effective and/or appropriate for us to speak openly with the Marines in our charge about our own struggles? Should leaders speak openly about seeking counseling?
3. Confidential counseling options are available to support Marines who might not otherwise seek help. How can we, as leaders, effectively promote these options without reinforcing the misperception that seeking help is a sign of weakness or will potentially damage a Marine's career?
4. Leaders are naturally inclined to feel like they have failed when one of their Marines takes his or her life. What can we do to ease our own grief and sense of failure in the aftermath of a suicide? How can we gather information on suicides without blaming ourselves or our subordinate leaders during the investigative process?
5. What can leaders do to help their Marines through the grieving process?



# SLIDE 6

## WHY ARE WE HERE?

### DISCUSSION OPTION 1

**Read the following discussion prompt:**

To play an active role in suicide prevention—and ensure the well-being and effectiveness of our units—we, as leaders, have a need to know. Confidentiality rules are often at odds with this need to know. What can we do to overcome this obstacle? What can we do to encourage our Marines to self-report to leadership so confidentiality is not an issue?

**If necessary to get the discussion going or to move it along, add:**

How can we, as leaders, build trust so that Marines will not be afraid to tell us when stress is getting to them and they need to get help?



## DISCUSSION GUIDANCE

The information to the right is provided so that you, as a discussion leader, can steer the discussion in a direction that is consistent with Marine Corps guidance. You should be familiar with these talking points but should not read them during discussions. There are multiple right answers, and the leaders in your class may have some good ideas that are not addressed here. Use your judgment about which of those ideas you should endorse.

### Effective leaders:

- Ensure a supportive environment.
- Speak openly about behavioral health services and encourage at-risk Marines to seek help.
- Publicly state that getting help is a sign of strength.
- Publicize a zero-tolerance policy for hazing of those who are struggling with stress or seeking help for stress.
- Make sure Marines are properly trained to recognize risk factors and warning signs as well as how to properly intervene.
- Encourage NCOs and Junior Marines to report another Marine's distress.
- Practice focused and engaged leadership.
- Follow up with Marines after medical appointments; ask them how they are doing.
- Talk to each other about at-risk Marines to form a complete picture of the situation.
- Watch for signs of self-medicating (alcohol or substance abuse) and express concern directly to the Marine.
- Handle discipline fairly and consistently, acknowledging that good Marines sometimes make mistakes but that they can get past mistakes.
- Allow/encourage Marines to remain with the unit while they seek treatment, except in extreme circumstances.

### Effective leaders do not:

- Push medical or behavioral health providers to break privacy or confidentiality rules.
- Place the burden of knowing Marines solely on the shoulders of NCOs.
- Circumvent medical and behavioral health, but should refer Marines to professionals when stress becomes overwhelming.
- Avoid disciplining Marines when necessary or dwell on a Marine's mistakes unless there is a pattern of negative behavior.
- Shy away from seeking administrative separation when necessary; in some cases, it is the best solution for the Marine in question and for the unit.
- Compromise good order and discipline.
- Assume a Marine who seeks help is malingering.



# SLIDE 6

## WHY ARE WE HERE?

### DISCUSSION OPTION 2

**Read the following discussion prompt:**

Leaders sometimes need help coping with stressful situations. Is it effective and/or appropriate for us to speak openly with the Marines in our charge about our own struggles? Should leaders speak openly about seeking counseling?

## DISCUSSION GUIDANCE

The information to the right is provided so that you, as a discussion leader, can steer the discussion in a direction that is consistent with Marine Corps guidance. You should be familiar with these talking points but should not read them during discussions. There are multiple right answers, and the leaders in your class may have some good ideas that are not addressed here. Use your judgment about which of those ideas you should endorse.

### Effective leaders:

- Recognize that leaders who talk openly about seeking help in dealing with our stress inspire other Marines to seek help when necessary.
- Acknowledge that all Marines, including leaders, are at risk for stress-induced injuries.
- Seek help when stress becomes overwhelming because talking about one's struggles can contribute to resilience and may make someone a better Marine and leader of Marines.
- Recognize that stress-induced injuries almost always heal when dealt with swiftly.
- Seek help as soon as possible during high-stress situations, such as combat operations, particularly if we are concerned that our struggles will affect our ability to lead.
- Remember that adverse reactions such as survivor's guilt or traumatic stress injury are normal during times of high stress and, with proper treatment, should have little or no impact on a Marine's ability to lead.
- Speak openly with Marines about our experiences with high-stress situations and how we overcame stress-induced injuries.
- Speak positively and openly about mental health services.

### Effective leaders do not:

- Refuse to get help when we need it.
- Judge other leaders who at times struggle with adverse reactions to stress.
- Consider ourselves weak if we need to seek mental health services.
- Self-medicate to overcome difficulties.



# SLIDE 6

## WHY ARE WE HERE?

### DISCUSSION OPTION 3

**Read the following discussion prompt:**

Confidential counseling options are available to support Marines who might not otherwise seek help. How can we, as leaders, effectively promote these options without reinforcing the misperception that seeking help is a sign of weakness or will potentially damage a Marine's career?

## DISCUSSION GUIDANCE

The information to the right is provided so that you, as a discussion leader, can steer the discussion in a direction that is consistent with Marine Corps guidance. You should be familiar with these talking points but should not read them during discussions. There are multiple right answers, and the leaders in your class may have some good ideas that are not addressed here. Use your judgment about which of those ideas you should endorse.

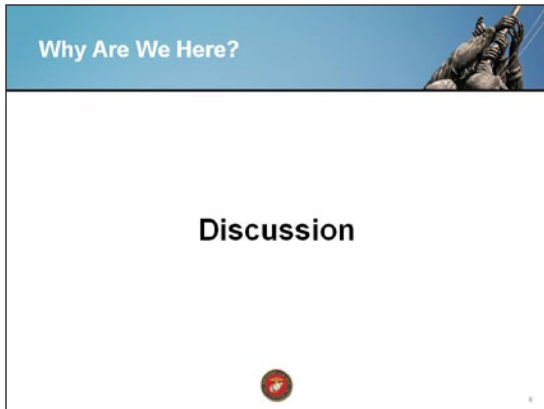
### Effective leaders:

- Encourage Marines to seek counseling at the first sign of a negative reaction to stress.
- Follow up with Marines who are known to be experiencing a negative stress reaction.
- Ensure Marines that seeking counseling will not have a negative impact on their careers.
- Let Marines know that everyone occasionally experiences a negative stress reaction.
- Publicize all available counseling options.
- Encourage Marines to self-refer and to tell us when they are experiencing a negative stress reaction.
- Let Marines know that they can trust us to look out for their best interests.
- Recognize that upbringing and family and cultural influences affect Marines' attitudes toward counseling.
- Acknowledge that confidential counseling is the only way that some Marines will seek help.

### Effective leaders do not:

- Ostracize Marines who acknowledge a negative stress reaction.
- Allow peers to belittle a Marine who seeks counseling help.
- Promote one counseling option over another.
- Criticize counseling services in front of others.





# SLIDE 6

## WHY ARE WE HERE?

### DISCUSSION OPTION 4

#### Read the following discussion prompt:

Leaders are naturally inclined to feel like they have failed when one of their Marines takes his or her life. What can we do to ease our own grief and sense of failure in the aftermath of a suicide? How can we gather information on suicides without blaming ourselves or our subordinate leaders during the investigative process?

## DISCUSSION GUIDANCE

The information to the right is provided so that you, as a discussion leader, can steer the discussion in a direction that is consistent with Marine Corps guidance. You should be familiar with these talking points but should not read them during discussions. There are multiple right answers, and the leaders in your class may have some good ideas that are not addressed here. Use your judgment about which of those ideas you should endorse.

### Effective leaders:

- Explain the importance of Eight-Day Briefs and 30-Day Briefs in preventing future suicides.
- Reassure junior leaders that we can do everything right and a suicide may still occur.
- Remind all Marines, in the wake of a suicide, that help is available and that seeking help is not a sign of weakness.
- Conduct additional resilience training and suicide prevention and awareness training in the wake of a suicide.
- Speak with a chaplain or counselor about our own grief.
- Bring in a chaplain or counselor to talk with all affected Marines, and set up individual sessions for those who are particularly troubled by the death.
- Remind Marines that suicide creates more problems than it solves and should not be considered an option.

### Effective leaders do not:

- Blame peers, mentors, or anyone in the chain of command for a Marine's suicide.
- Blame ourselves for a Marine's suicide.
- Ignore the impact of a Marine's suicide on the unit.



# SLIDE 6

WHY ARE WE HERE?

## DISCUSSION OPTION 5

**Read the following discussion prompt:**

What can leaders do to help their Marines through the grieving process?

## DISCUSSION GUIDANCE

The information to the right is provided so that you, as a discussion leader, can steer the discussion in a direction that is consistent with Marine Corps guidance. You should be familiar with these talking points but should not read them during discussions. There are multiple right answers, and the leaders in your class may have some good ideas that are not addressed here. Use your judgment about which of those ideas you should endorse.

### Effective leaders:

- Acknowledge our grief and the grief of everyone in the unit.
- Bring in a chaplain or counselor to talk with all affected Marines, and set up individual sessions for those who are particularly troubled by a death.
- Allow Marines an opportunity to remember the fallen Marine.
- Provide a forum for grieving Marines to talk openly about their feelings of loss.
- Reassure Marines that moving on after a death does not dishonor the fallen Marine.
- Reassure Marines that they are not at fault.
- Keep a close eye on all Marines who were close to the fallen Marine.
- Remind all Marines, in the wake of a suicide, that help is available and that seeking help is not a sign of weakness.
- Conduct additional resilience training and suicide prevention and awareness training in the wake of a suicide.
- Remind Marines that suicide creates more problems than it solves and should not be considered an option.


### Effective leaders do not:

- Tell Marines to suck it up.
- Try to hide our own grief.
- Ignore the impact of a Marine's suicide on the unit.

# SLIDE 7

## THE RACE METHOD

The RACE Method




**RECOGNIZE**

**ASK**

**CARE**

**ESCORT**



7

### TALKING POINTS

- The RACE method is being taught to NCOs and Junior Marines.
- Recognize, Ask, Care, and Escort.
- Recognize risk factors and warning signs.
- Ask tough questions.
- Care for Marines.
- Escort them to a professional.
- Here is how this method is taught to Junior Marines and NCOs.



**SCRIPT**

- The Junior Marine and NCO “Never Leave a Marine Behind” suicide prevention courses introduce the RACE method of intervention.
- RACE stands for Recognize, Ask, Care and Escort.
- “Recognize” is about knowing risk factors and warning signs.
- “Ask” is about asking tough questions, including “Are you thinking about killing yourself?”
- “Care” is about knowing what to do if a Marine is considering suicide, but it’s also about showing Marines that we care every day.
- “Escort” is about knowing where to take a Marine who is contemplating suicide.
- Here is a glimpse of how this method is taught to Junior Marines and NCOs.

# SLIDE 8

## THE RACE METHOD

The RACE Method



6

### TALKING POINTS [\[Play Video\]](#)

- That's the basics.
- Some common risk factors are relationship or financial problems and non-judicial punishment.
- Some common warning signs are increased alcohol use and changes in behavior.
- Asking tough questions is important.
- Remove means by which the suicidal Marine may harm himself or herself.

**SCRIPT****[Play Video]**

- That's just the basics of suicide prevention.
- Some common risk factors are relationship problems, financial problems, PTSD, loss of rank, and non-judicial punishment.
- Some common warning signs are increased alcohol use and changes in behavior.
- Asking tough questions is important.
- In some cases, caring means asking a Marine if there are firearms in his or her place of residence, and if so, asking if he or she will allow someone else to temporarily keep those firearms. This is a proven method of reducing suicide.



# SLIDE 9

## RESOURCES

### Resources



[www.usmc-mccs.org/suicideprevent](http://www.usmc-mccs.org/suicideprevent)



9

### TALKING POINTS

- Chaplains are one resource.
- Multiple resources available.
- I will hand out a resource list.
- List available on this web page.

**SCRIPT**

- Chaplains were mentioned as one resource in the escort section of RACE.
- There are multiple resources that leaders should be aware of.
- I will hand out a resource list at the end of class.
- It is also available on this web page.

# SLIDE 10

BALANCED LEADERSHIP:  
MANAGING MARINES WHO ARE IN CRISIS

## Balanced Leadership: Managing Marines Who Are in Crisis



10

### TALKING POINTS

- Loss, transition, and disciplinary action are stressful.
- This video is about a Marine who faced administrative separation.

[\[Play Video\]](#)

## SCRIPT

- Loss, transition, and disciplinary action are major stressors that can propel Marines into crisis.
- We are going to watch a video about a Marine who was injured and faced administrative separation.
- He had great leaders who had his best interests in mind when they transferred him to a Wounded Warrior Battalion.

### [Play Video]

Instructions: Facilitators should select ONE discussion from the options below and read it to the group. The discussion should be selected in advance so the facilitator can be prepared to lead a positive and productive discussion. The following pages provide guidelines for each discussion. Please study the guidelines for the selected discussion. Allow 8–10 minutes for discussion.

## DISCUSSION OPTIONS

1. Sometimes we must pursue a medical discharge because of a physical injury. This can be one of the most difficult transitions for any Marine. What can we, as leaders, do to make such transitions easier for our Marines, particularly those who are young and have limited experience overcoming difficulties?
2. If there is a serious psychological condition that warrants separation from the Marine Corps, how can we do what is necessary and still reinforce the notion that asking for and seeking help will not automatically have a negative impact on a Marine's career, or life beyond the Marine Corps?
3. After a suicide, everyone in a unit is at increased risk for stress-related illness. How can we permit Marines the proper time to mourn and offer them guidance when there are no clear answers as to why their friend took his or her life? How can leaders honor a Marine and allow his/her peers to pay tribute without glorifying the act of suicide?



# SLIDE 11

## BALANCED LEADERSHIP: MANAGING MARINES WHO ARE IN CRISIS

### Discussion



11

### DISCUSSION OPTION 1

#### Read the following discussion prompt:

Sometimes we must pursue a medical discharge because of a physical injury. This can be one of the most difficult transitions for any Marine. What can we, as leaders, do to make such transitions easier for our Marines, particularly those who are young and have limited experience overcoming difficulties?

## DISCUSSION GUIDANCE

The information to the right is provided so that you, as a discussion leader, can steer the discussion in a direction that is consistent with Marine Corps guidance. You should be familiar with these talking points but should not read them during discussions. There are multiple right answers, and the leaders in your class may have some good ideas that are not addressed here. Use your judgment about which of those ideas you should endorse.

### Effective leaders:

- Balance discipline and other negative actions with compassion and support.
- Reassure Marines that they will always be Marines.
- Reassure Marines that things can get better and that the Marine Corps takes care of its own.
- Recommend counseling or other behavioral health assistance to ease the transition and follow up with Marines. Recommending isn't enough in all cases; offer to make the call or to go with them.
- Are focused and engaged.
- Follow up consistently with Marines to make sure they are coping with transitions.
- Ensure that Marines are aware of medical resources.
- Help Marines find answers to questions about what's next.
- Reassure Marines that there is life after the Marine Corps.
- Connect Marines with Marine For Life and other resources that offer transition assistance.
- Talk openly about ways to build resilience.
- Encourage Marines' peers to keep an eye on each other.

### Effective leaders do not:

- Let sentiment or compassion get in the way of transitioning a Marine if it's in the Marine's best interest.
- Put the needs of one Marine above the needs of the remainder of the unit.
- Lose focus of overall mission objectives.
- Neglect a Marine after a transition decision has been made.
- Remove a Marine from his or her job if at all possible.



# SLIDE 11

## BALANCED LEADERSHIP: MANAGING MARINES WHO ARE IN CRISIS

### Discussion



11

### DISCUSSION OPTION 2

#### Read the following discussion prompt:

If there is a serious psychological condition that warrants separation from the Marine Corps, how can we do what is necessary and still reinforce the notion that asking for and seeking help will not automatically have a negative impact on a Marine's career, or life beyond the Marine Corps?

## DISCUSSION GUIDANCE

The information to the right is provided so that you, as a discussion leader, can steer the discussion in a direction that is consistent with Marine Corps guidance. You should be familiar with these talking points but should not read them during discussions. There are multiple right answers, and the leaders in your class may have some good ideas that are not addressed here. Use your judgment about which of those ideas you should endorse.

### Effective leaders:

- Balance the needs of the unit against the needs of an individual Marine.
- Recognize that a Marine who requires constant supervision may be a detriment to unit morale and welfare.
- Balance discipline and other negative actions with compassion and support.
- Reassure Marines that you have their best interests in mind.
- Recommend counseling or other behavioral health assistance to ease the separation.
- Are focused and engaged.
- Follow up consistently with Marines to make sure they are getting adequate care and are coping with pending separations.
- Ensure that Marines are aware of medical and transition resources.
- Consider limiting a Marine's access to firearms if he or she is considered to be at risk.
- Help Marines find answers to questions about what's next.
- Talk openly about ways to build resilience.
- Help Marines set goals for life after the Marine Corps.
- Encourage Marines' peers to keep an eye on each other and alert you of any problems.
- Tell Marines that many people have psychological conditions that do not affect their ability to perform their missions. Only when a disorder interferes with the mission does it become a problem.
- Encourage Marines to seek help for their problems early, and reassure them that most psychological issues can be resolved if dealt with early.

### Effective leaders do not:

- Feel daunted by the time required to pursue an administrative discharge.
- Give up if medical and behavioral health representatives repeatedly return a seriously distressed Marine to the unit.
- Put the needs of one Marine above the needs of the remainder of the unit.
- Lose focus of overall mission objectives.
- Neglect a Marine after a separation decision has been made.





## SLIDE 11

### BALANCED LEADERSHIP: MANAGING MARINES WHO ARE IN CRISIS

#### Discussion



11

#### DISCUSSION OPTION 3

##### Read the following discussion prompt:

After a suicide, everyone in a unit is at increased risk for stress-related illness. How can we permit Marines the proper time to mourn and offer them guidance when there are no clear answers as to why their friend took his or her life? How can leaders honor a Marine and allow his or her peers to pay tribute without glorifying the act of suicide?

## DISCUSSION GUIDANCE

The information to the right is provided so that you, as a discussion leader, can steer the discussion in a direction that is consistent with Marine Corps guidance. You should be familiar with these talking points but should not read them during discussions. There are multiple right answers, and the leaders in your class may have some good ideas that are not addressed here. Use your judgment about which of those ideas you should endorse.

### Effective leaders:

- Acknowledge our grief and the grief of everyone in the unit.
- Bring in a chaplain or counselor to talk with all affected Marines, and set up individual sessions for those who are particularly troubled by a suicide.
- Allow Marines an opportunity to remember the fallen Marine in an appropriate but not excessive way.
- Remind Marines that suicide creates more problems than it solves and should not be considered an option.
- Provide a forum for grieving Marines to talk openly about their feelings of loss.
- Reassure Marines that moving on after a death does not dishonor the fallen Marine.
- Keep a close eye on all Marines who were close to a fallen Marine.
- Remind all Marines, in the wake of a suicide, that help is available and that seeking help is not a sign of weakness.
- Conduct additional resilience training and suicide prevention and awareness training in the wake of a suicide.

### Effective leaders do not:

- Tell Marines to suck it up.
- Try to hide their grief.
- Ignore the impact of a Marine's suicide on the unit.

# SLIDE 12

FOCUSED  
AND ENGAGED  
LEADERSHIP:  
BEYOND  
KNOWING  
OUR MARINES

## Focused and Engaged Leadership: Beyond Knowing Our Marines



12

### TALKING POINTS

- Some leaders are hyper-aware of Marines at risk.

[\[Play Video\]](#)

## SCRIPT

- After a suicide, leaders become hyper-aware of other Marines who are at risk.
- They are determined to never let it happen again.

### [Play Video]

Instructions: Facilitators should select ONE discussion from the options below and read it to the group. The discussion should be selected in advance so the facilitator can be prepared to lead a positive and productive discussion. The following pages provide guidelines for each discussion. Please study the guidelines for the selected discussion. Allow 10–12 minutes for discussion.

## DISCUSSION OPTIONS

1. The burden of leadership means, in part, that we must be focused and engaged with the Marines we lead. This takes a lot of time and energy. It's important to set an example for Marines that it's OK to be actively engaged but that it's also critical to take care of ourselves. What can we do to ensure that we aren't putting ourselves at risk by being 24/7 leaders?
2. When can focused and engaged leadership go too far? How can we avoid putting other Marines at risk while we focus on Marines who require extra attention? How do we practice focused and engaged leadership and still respect a Marine's privacy?
3. How do we maintain a professional relationship with our Marines while also developing a more personal relationship so that they trust and open up to us?
4. How can we make sure that our mentor program is effective? What can more senior leaders do to back up our young mentors?
5. Sometimes leaders find it necessary to put at-risk Marines on watch by moving them into the barracks or otherwise ensuring 24-hour supervision. Sometimes we need to ask a Marine if there are firearms in his or her place of residence, and if so, ask if he or she will allow someone to temporarily keep those firearms. How do such actions affect a unit? How can we take such actions in a way as not to embarrass troubled Marines?

Focused and Engaged Leadership:  
Beyond Knowing Our Marines



Discussion



13

## SLIDE 13

**FOCUSED AND ENGAGED LEADERSHIP:  
BEYOND KNOWING OUR MARINES**

### DISCUSSION OPTION 1

**Read the following discussion prompt:**

The burden of leadership means, in part, that we must be focused and engaged with the Marines we lead. This takes a lot of time and energy. It's important to set an example for Marines that it's OK to be actively engaged, but that it's also critical to take care of ourselves. What can we do to ensure that we aren't putting ourselves at risk by being 24/7 leaders?

## DISCUSSION GUIDANCE

The information to the right is provided so that you, as a discussion leader, can steer the discussion in a direction that is consistent with Marine Corps guidance. You should be familiar with these talking points but should not read them during discussions. There are multiple right answers, and the leaders in your class may have some good ideas that are not addressed here. Use your judgment about which of those ideas you should endorse.

### Effective leaders:

- Maintain a healthy lifestyle with adequate sleep, exercise, and proper nutrition.
- Talk openly with peers about our concerns for other Marines.
- Establish a safety net of Marines who are looking out for one another so the burden does not fall on a few.
- Seek counseling if the burden becomes too much.
- Take time for ourselves and our families but make sure that a support system remains in place for our Marines.
- Seek the understanding of family members regarding the challenges of being a leader 24/7.
- Work on the resilience of our Marines so they ultimately will be more self-sufficient.

### Effective leaders do not:

- Go too easy on our Marines.
- Neglect our Marines.
- Neglect ourselves or our families.

Focused and Engaged Leadership:  
Beyond Knowing Our Marines



Discussion



13

## SLIDE 13

**FOCUSED AND ENGAGED LEADERSHIP:  
BEYOND KNOWING OUR MARINES**

### DISCUSSION OPTION 2

**Read the following discussion prompt:**

When can focused and engaged leadership go too far?  
How can we avoid putting other Marines at risk while we focus on Marines who require extra attention? How do we practice focused and engaged leadership and still respect a Marine's privacy?

## DISCUSSION GUIDANCE

The information to the right is provided so that you, as a discussion leader, can steer the discussion in a direction that is consistent with Marine Corps guidance. You should be familiar with these talking points but should not read them during discussions. There are multiple right answers, and the leaders in your class may have some good ideas that are not addressed here. Use your judgment about which of those ideas you should endorse.

### Effective leaders:

- Realize that many young Marines have a close relationship with their parents and other adults and may be receptive to sincere questions about their well-being.
- Address Marines in an informal, non-confrontational manner.
- Let all of our Marines know we care about them and have an open-door policy.
- Are patient yet persistent if Marines don't want to open up at first.
- Recognize that it sometimes takes time to build trust.
- Respect Marines' privacy and only reveal information about concerns to a select few who may be in a position to help.

### Effective leaders do not:

- Single out and focus only on Marines who are perceived to be at-risk.
- Feign sincerity or emotions we do not feel because then we will lose credibility with our Marines.



Focused and Engaged Leadership:  
Beyond Knowing Our Marines



**Discussion**



13

## SLIDE 13

**FOCUSED AND ENGAGED LEADERSHIP:  
BEYOND KNOWING OUR MARINES**

### DISCUSSION OPTION 3

**Read the following discussion prompt:**

How do we maintain a professional relationship with our Marines while also developing a more personal relationship so that they trust and open up to us?

## DISCUSSION GUIDANCE

The information to the right is provided so that you, as a discussion leader, can steer the discussion in a direction that is consistent with Marine Corps guidance. You should be familiar with these talking points but should not read them during discussions. There are multiple right answers, and the leaders in your class may have some good ideas that are not addressed here. Use your judgment about which of those ideas you should endorse.

### **Effective leaders:**

- Treat all Marines fairly and equally.
- Engage with all of our Marines on a daily basis.
- Show Marines we care by asking about their personal lives.
- Provide information on resources for family, financial, behavioral or other counseling.
- Continue to hold all Marines to a high standard and maintain good order and discipline in our units.
- Respect Marines' privacy and do not share their personal issues with those who do not have a need to know.
- End on a positive note when issuing non-judicial punishment.
- Assure Marines that they can move on after punishment.
- Share personal experiences; don't just ask questions.

### **Effective leaders do not:**

- Go too easy on our Marines.
- Neglect our Marines.
- Ostracize Marines in front of their peers.
- Ignore fraternization policies.

Focused and Engaged Leadership:  
Beyond Knowing Our Marines



## SLIDE 13

**FOCUSED AND ENGAGED LEADERSHIP:  
BEYOND KNOWING OUR MARINES**

**Discussion**



13

### **DISCUSSION OPTION 4**

**Read the following discussion prompt:**

How can we make sure that our mentor program is effective? What can more senior leaders do to back up our young mentors?

## DISCUSSION GUIDANCE

The information to the right is provided so that you, as a discussion leader, can steer the discussion in a direction that is consistent with Marine Corps guidance. You should be familiar with these talking points but should not read them during discussions. There are multiple right answers, and the leaders in your class may have some good ideas that are not addressed here. Use your judgment about which of those ideas you should endorse.

### Effective leaders:

- Are selective in assigning mentors, generally looking for mentors who have something in common or have some kind of relationship.
- Let Marines pick their own mentors when appropriate.
- Ask Marines what they think of their mentors.
- Change mentors if the relationships don't seem to gel in a short time.
- Clearly define the expectations of mentors.
- Provide back-up support for mentors.
- Mentor the mentors.
- Recognize that mentors are just part of the safety net and the mentor program does not relieve leaders of their obligation to be involved with their Marines.

### Effective leaders do not:

- Assign mentors just to check a box.
- Place too much burden on the shoulders of young mentors.

Focused and Engaged Leadership:  
Beyond Knowing Our Marines



## Discussion



13

# SLIDE 13

## FOCUSED AND ENGAGED LEADERSHIP: BEYOND KNOWING OUR MARINES

### DISCUSSION OPTION 5

#### Read the following discussion prompt:

Sometimes leaders find it necessary to put at-risk Marines on watch by moving them into the barracks or otherwise ensuring 24-hour supervision. Sometimes we need to ask a Marine if there are firearms in his or her place of residence, and if so, ask if he or she will allow someone to temporarily keep those firearms. How do such actions affect a unit? How can we take such actions in such a way as not to embarrass troubled Marines?

## DISCUSSION GUIDANCE

The information to the right is provided so that you, as a discussion leader, can steer the discussion in a direction that is consistent with Marine Corps guidance. You should be familiar with these talking points but should not read them during discussions. There are multiple right answers, and the leaders in your class may have some good ideas that are not addressed here. Use your judgment about which of those ideas you should endorse.

### Effective leaders:

- Exercise discretion when placing a Marine on some kind of watch, ensuring that only the mentor and a limited number of leaders are aware of the situation.
- Remind Marines who are placed on watch that we have their best interests in mind.
- Reassure Marines who are placed on watch that this is a temporary situation until they get over a hump.
- Are judicious in determining who provides 24/7 supervision, considering that it should be someone the Marine trusts.
- Consider the impact on the Marines who are providing supervision. Are they losing their weekends or somehow inadvertently being punished?
- Ensure that those providing supervision create a supportive environment.
- Consult behavioral health to determine if a watch is necessary.
- Make sure Marines know you care.

### Effective leaders do not:

- Publicly ostracize the Marine.
- Let the whole unit know that the Marine is under supervision.

# SLIDE 14

## THE RESILIENT MARINE

### The Resilient Marine



14

### TALKING POINTS

- Being a Marine is stressful.
- Some Marines handle stress better than others.
- The ability to recover easily from stress is resilience.
- All Marines need resilience, but not everyone has it.
- There are ways to be more resilient.

[\[Play Video\]](#)

**SCRIPT**

- Being a Marine is stressful.
- Some Marines handle stress better than others.
- One definition of resilience is the ability to recover, or bounce back, from stress or adversity, to maintain a hopeful outlook in the face of extreme circumstances, and to view challenges as opportunities to grow and learn.
- Resilience is something that all Marines need.
- Not everyone has it.
- Young Marines may not have enough life experience to have developed resilience.
- Let's look at some ways to be more resilient.

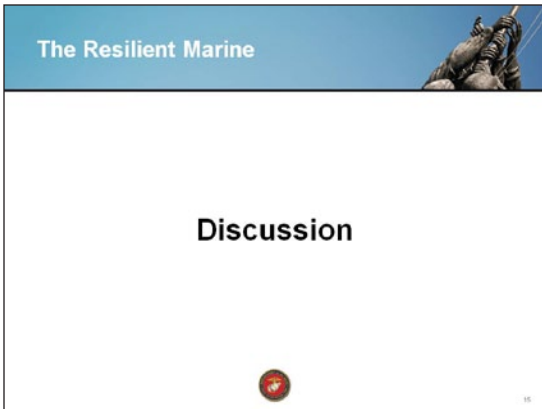
**[Play Video]**

Instructions: Facilitators should select ONE discussion from the options below and read it to the group. The discussion should be selected in advance so the facilitator can be prepared to lead a positive and productive discussion. The following pages provide guidelines for each discussion. Please study the guidelines for the selected discussion. Allow 8–10 minutes for discussion.

**DISCUSSION  
OPTIONS**

1. Being a Marine is inherently stressful, and the challenges of the 21st century have increased the burden on our force. As leaders, it is our job to help our Marines maintain the resilience required to cope with life as a Marine. Resilience seems to come naturally for some people, but not for others. What can we do to help our Marines develop resilience?
2. In the earlier videos, leaders talked about what they learned in the wake of suicides. Learning from life's challenges is an essential component of resilience. How can leaders help Marines view challenges as opportunities to grow and learn?





# SLIDE 15

## THE RESILIENT MARINE

### DISCUSSION OPTION 1

**Read the following discussion prompt:**

Being a Marine is inherently stressful, and the challenges of the 21st century have increased the burden on our force. As leaders, it is our job to help our Marines maintain the resilience required to cope with life as a Marine. Resilience seems to come naturally for some people, but not for others. What can we do to help our Marines develop resilience?

## DISCUSSION GUIDANCE

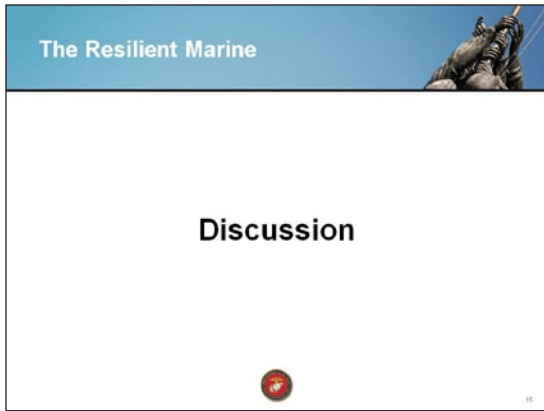
The information to the right is provided so that you, as a discussion leader, can steer the discussion in a direction that is consistent with Marine Corps guidance. You should be familiar with these talking points but should not read them during discussions. There are multiple right answers, and the leaders in your class may have some good ideas that are not addressed here. Use your judgment about which of those ideas you should endorse.

### Effective leaders:

- Acknowledge that being a Marine is stressful.
- Understand that upbringing, culture, religion, and other factors have an impact on a person's resilience.
- Understand that stress builds resilience.
- Recognize that many young Marines have not experienced significant stress before entering the Marine Corps.
- Believe that resilience is a quality that can be developed.
- Talk to their Marines about facing challenges and learning from them.
- Speak of challenges and obstacles as opportunities for growth.
- Display optimism in the face of challenges.
- Help Marines look at the big picture.
- Give Marines responsibilities.
- Acknowledge that a Marine's situation may be bad, but reassure him that he will more than likely get past it.
- Put Marines through progressively more challenging circumstances or exercises to build resilience.
- Acknowledge that multiple stressors such as loss of a fellow Marine or a family member can wear down resilience.
- Acknowledge that multiple losses may make Marines reluctant to establish bonds with others and that increased isolation puts Marines at risk.
- Encourage team-building activities in units so Marines feel connected to each other.
- Help Marines learn to set clear goals.
- Praise Marines for success in achieving those goals.

### Effective leaders do not:

- Focus on the negative.
- Try to force our personal belief system on our Marines.
- Assume that Marines who struggle with stress are weak.
- Complain about duties or otherwise focus on the negative.
- Pretend that being a Marine isn't stressful.
- Allow Marines to think they are the only ones who are experiencing the ill-effects of stress.
- Isolate troubled Marines because it increases the feeling of not belonging.



# SLIDE 15

## THE RESILIENT MARINE

### DISCUSSION OPTION 2

#### Read the following discussion prompt:

In the earlier videos, leaders talked about what they learned in the wake of suicides. Learning from life's challenges is an essential component of resilience. How can leaders help Marines view challenges as opportunities to grow and learn?

## DISCUSSION GUIDANCE

The information to the right is provided so that you, as a discussion leader, can steer the discussion in a direction that is consistent with Marine Corps guidance. You should be familiar with these talking points but should not read them during discussions. There are multiple right answers, and the leaders in your class may have some good ideas that are not addressed below. Use your judgment about which of those ideas you should endorse.

### Effective leaders:

- Acknowledge our own pain associated with a suicide or other difficulties.
- Allow Marines to express their emotions.
- Encourage Marines to talk about what they have learned from the loss.
- Reinforce the concept that looking out for each other does not just apply to combat.
- Are available and approachable during downtime, and are willing to share introspective thoughts on how to address and overcome adversity.
- Share personal experiences.
- Remember where we came from.
- Prepare Marines ahead of time for hardships.

### Effective Leaders do not:

- Suggest that Marines should suck it up and move on immediately after a death.
- Allow Marines to dwell on their grief for extended periods of time.
- Assume that Marines who struggle with stress are weak.

# SLIDE 16

## WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED

### What We Have Learned



- Effective intervention (the RACE method) includes **recognizing** risk factors and warning signs, **asking** Marines about suicidal thoughts, **caring** for Marines in crisis, and **escorting** those Marines to professionals.
- Marines who seek help when they are experiencing the normal and expected effects of stress help maintain individual and unit readiness.
- Treating all Marines with respect, dignity, and compassion while maintaining standards, discipline, and unit cohesion builds resilience.
- Fostering resilience and encouraging healthy activities and behaviors strengthen individual Marines and units.



16

### TALKING POINTS

- We must understand the RACE method of intervention: Recognize, Ask, Care, and Escort.
- We have to make sure Marines get help when they need it.
- We have to strike a balance between compassion and discipline.
- We have to help our Marines be more resilient.

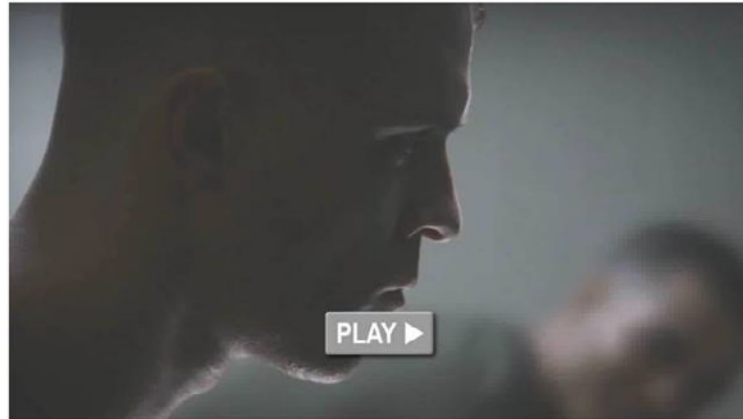
**SCRIPT**

- I showed you the main objective of this course.
- Now we can break that down and look at what we have talked about today.
- First, we must understand the RACE method: Recognize, Ask, Care, and Escort.
- Another one of our main goals is to make sure that Marines seek help when they need it.
- Our job as leaders is tough because we always have to strike a balance between compassion and discipline.
- We talk a lot about resilience today; that's because it's an essential quality for all Marines.
- As leaders, we have to help build that resilience in our Marines.

# SLIDE 17

SUICIDE  
PREVENTION  
IS EVERY  
MARINE'S  
RESPONSIBILITY

## Suicide Prevention Is Every Marine's Responsibility



17

### TALKING POINTS

- Lastly, I am going to show you a movie from the training for Junior Marines and NCOs.
- It's really two versions of the same movie.
- One is from a sergeant's perspective.
- One is from a lance corporal's perspective.

### [Play Video]

- Thank you for participating today.
- Like Col Smith said, we all have a responsibility in suicide prevention.

## SCRIPT

- Lastly, I am going to show you a brief synopsis of the movies we are showing our Junior Marines and NCOs to raise their awareness about suicide.
- It's actually two versions of the same movie about a Marine who was experiencing the negative effects of stress and the Marines who intervened to save his life.
- One version is told from a sergeant's perspective.
- And one is told from a lance corporal's perspective.
- You can get more information on the NCO and Junior Marine courses on the Marine Corps Suicide Prevention Program website.

### [Play Video]

- Thank you for participating in this training today.
- Like Col Smith said, we all have a responsibility in suicide prevention.