

# ACE (Peer) Suicide Intervention Program



**“Shoulder-To-Shoulder:  
Finding Strength and Hope  
Together”**



**UNITED STATES ARMY PUBLIC HEALTH COMMAND**

# Complete the Pre Measurement

Send Questionnaires (Attachment 1):

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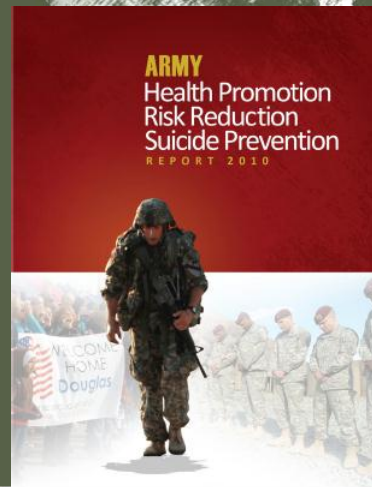
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# ACE Suicide Intervention Program

If your Soldiers are in trouble, ASK them if they are okay – are they thinking of suicide; demonstrate sincere CARE by actively listening to them; and, when necessary, ESCORT them to the appropriate helping agency or individual. Encourage your Soldiers to seek help. Recognize that seeking help is a sign of courage and that even the strongest turn to one another in a time of need. Shoulder to shoulder, we can all remain “Army Strong!”

*SMA Raymond F. Chandler III*



# “ACE”

“A” = “Ask”

“C” = “Care”

“E” = “Escort”



# What Does “ACE” Training Offer?

1. “ACE” teaches Soldiers how to recognize suicidal behavior in fellow Soldiers and the warning signs that accompany it.
2. “ACE” targets those Soldiers most at risk for suicide and the least likely to seek help due to stigma.
3. “ACE” increases a Soldier’s confidence and competence to ask if a battle buddy is thinking of suicide.



# What Does “ACE” Training Offer?

continued

4. “ACE” teaches Soldiers skills in active listening.
5. “ACE” encourages Soldiers to take a battle buddy directly to the Chain of Command, Chaplain or behavioral health provider, i.e., never leave a battle buddy alone!!!



# Bottom Line

- Soldiers know each other best.
- Soldiers can become a competent and confident force for preservation of life within the integrity of the unit.
- Enables Soldiers to become more effective at helping a battle buddy who may be at risk.
- Attitude Awareness, Protective factors/resiliency, ACE concepts, Role play exercise, Resource development.



# Attitude Awareness

Attitude is everything...

## Lesson One





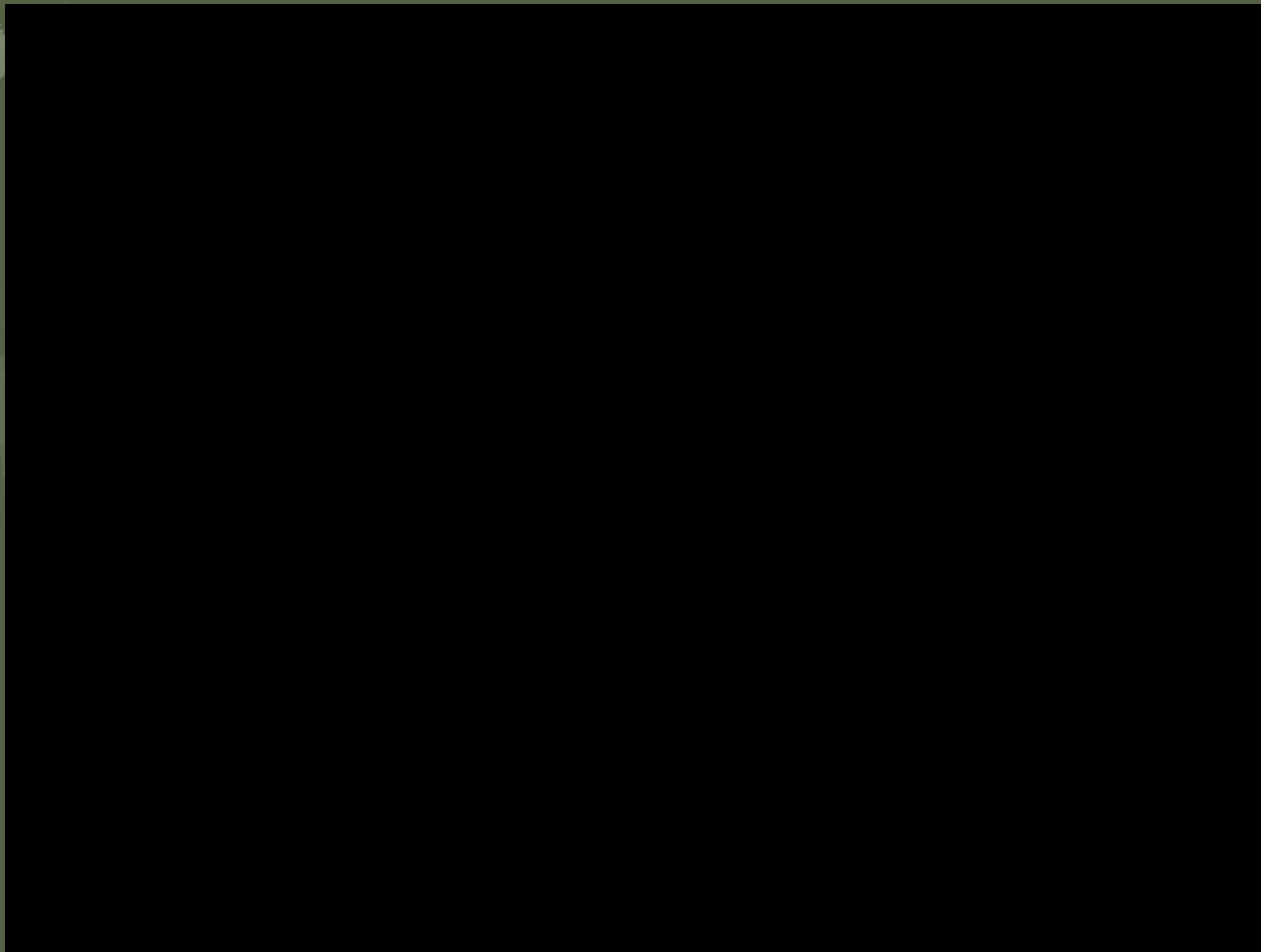
# Attitude Awareness

Attitude is everything...

1. How Soldiers and leaders think and feel about the subject of suicide will influence the way Soldiers deal with a suicidal buddy.
2. The intent of this lesson is to encourage participants to openly discuss a subject that is generally considered taboo.
3. Those who feel suicidal fully understand that talking about suicide is taboo.



# Kevin Hines Suicide Survivor



# Protective Factors/Resilience



**Lesson Two:** Protective factors “enhance resilience and may serve to counter balance risk factors”.

# Protective Factors

## Individual Protective Factors

1. Cultural and religious beliefs that discourage suicide and support self-preservation.
2. Coping/problem solving.
3. Support through ongoing health and behavioral health care relationships.



# Protective Factors

continued

## Individual Protective Factors (continued)

4. Resilience, self esteem, direction, mission, purpose, determination, dedication, optimism, empathy support through ongoing health and behavioral health care relationships.
5. Support through the Unit Chaplain or Unit Ministry Team.



# Protective Factors

continued

## Individual Protective Factors (continued)

6. Reasons for living.
7. Family supports (spouse & extended family).
8. Pride and patriotism.
9. Skills to recognize and respond to signs of risk.



# Protective Factors

continued

## Unit Protective Factors

1. Unit cohesion.
2. Sense of social support and belonging in the unit.
3. Staying connected with friends – Battle Buddy system.
4. Cultural values affirming life.
5. Caring Leadership.



# Protective Factors

continued

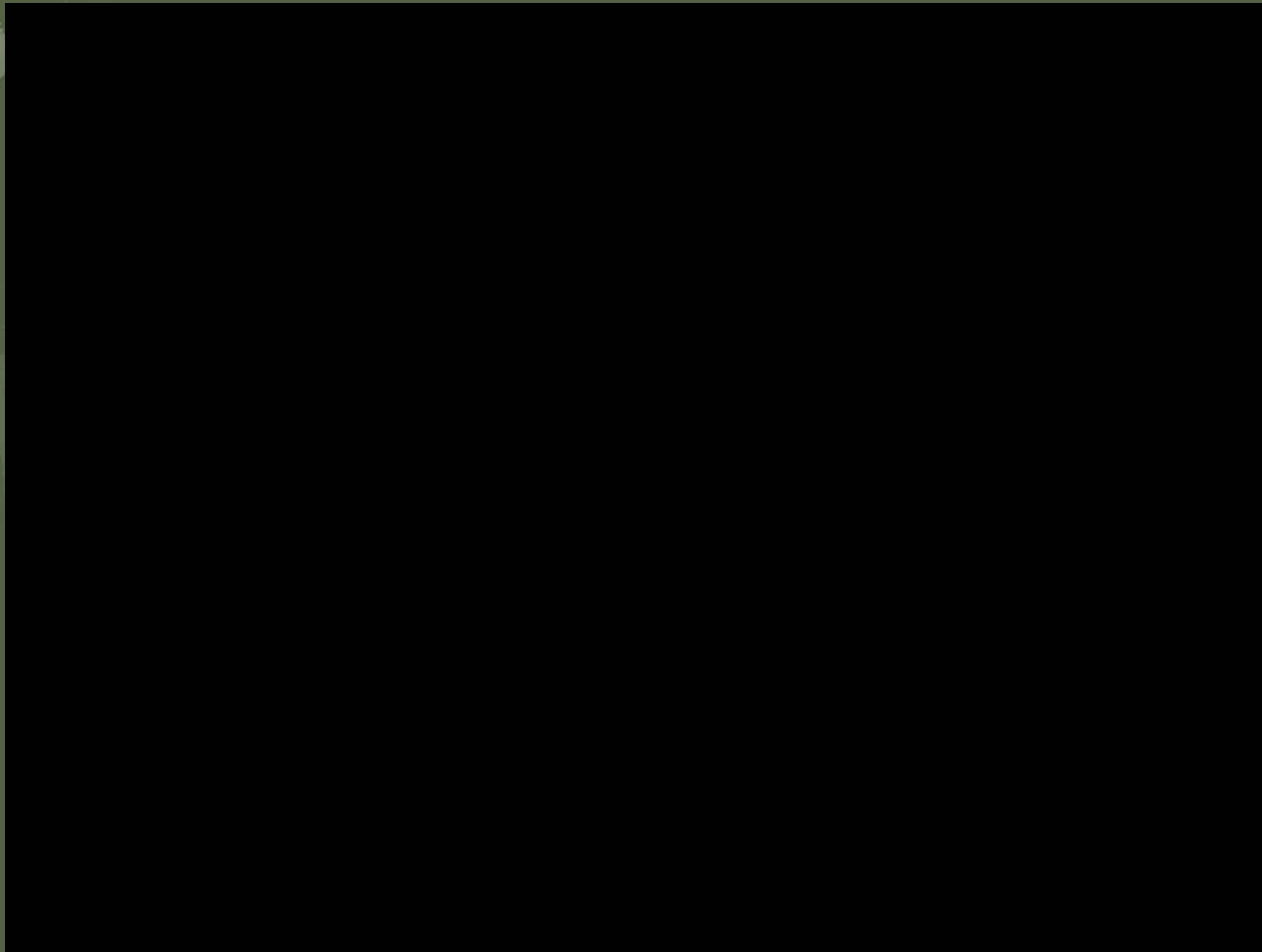
## Military Community Protective factors

1. Access to healthcare and behavioral health care.
2. Social support, close relationships, caring adults, participation and bond with school and church.
3. Respect for help-seeking behavior.





# Drew Carey Stays Positive



# Resilience

- Resilience is the ability to recover and adapt well from the face of adversity, trauma, illness, changes or misfortunes.
- Soldier resilience includes the following:
  - ✓ Sense of belonging in the unit.
  - ✓ Inner strength to face adversity and fears of combat.



# Resilience

continued

- ✓ Capacity to connect with buddies.
- ✓ Maintaining caring and supportive relationship within and outside the family.
- ✓ Positive view of self.
- ✓ Confidence in strengths and abilities to function as a Soldier.
- ✓ Capacity to manage strong feelings and impulses.



# Strategies for Building Resilience

- Building resilience is a personal journey.
- Meet the challenge of building resilience by:
  - ✓ Make connections and reach out to unit members.
  - ✓ Actively engage in developing good relationships with fellow Soldiers.



# Strategies for Building Resilience

continued

- ✓ Be active in unit activities.
- ✓ Join base social support groups, faith-based organizations, or other groups.
- ✓ Accept and face your fears.
- ✓ Nurture good relationships with family and close friends.



# Strategies for Building Resilience

continued

- ✓ Accept the help and support from them when you need someone who cares and willing to listen.
- ✓ Regulate your emotions and avoid impulsive behavior. Learn to stay calm under pressure.
- ✓ Maintain realistic optimism. Believe in your ability to survive and function as a good Soldier.



# Strategies for Building Resilience

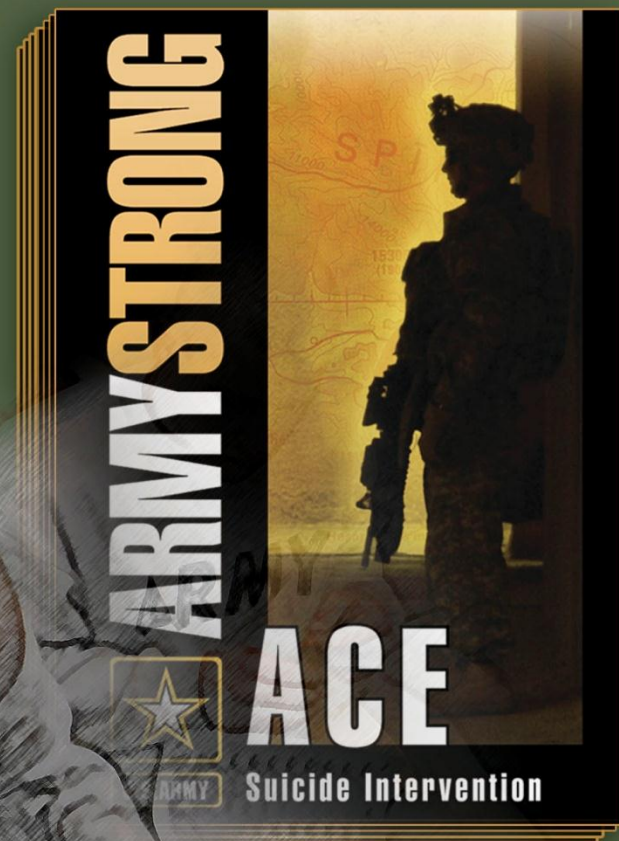
continued

- ✓ Problem solve and work toward seeking out positive solutions.
- ✓ Commitment to physical, spiritual, family, social, emotional health.
- ✓ Faith/hope in the future – being connected.



# ACE Skill Development

## Lesson Three



### Ask your buddy

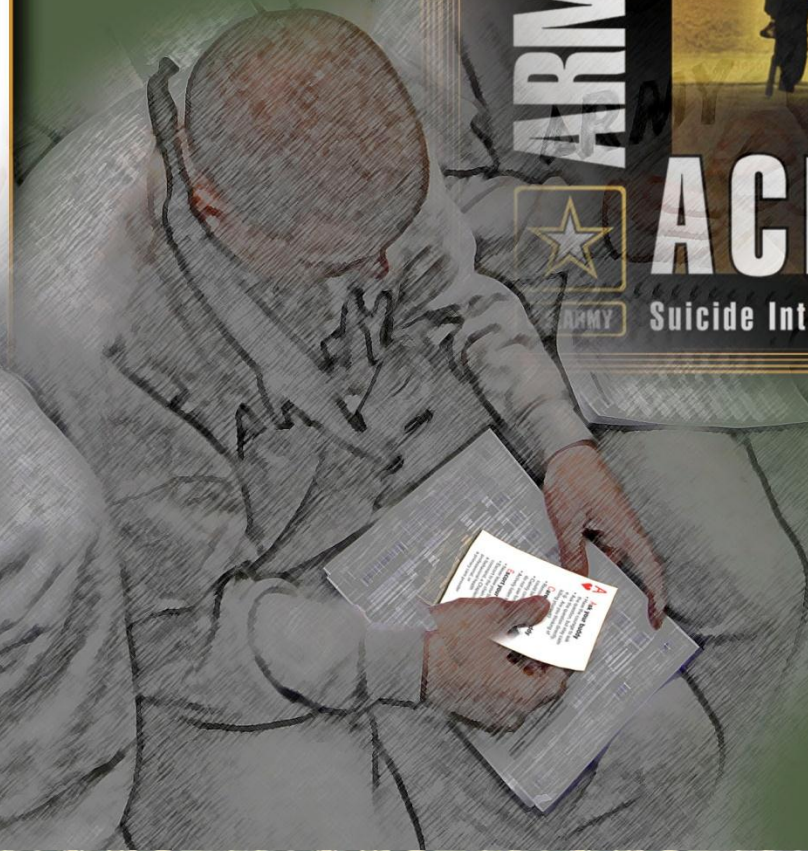
- Have the courage to ask the question, but stay calm
- Ask the question directly, e.g. Are you thinking of killing yourself?

### Care for your buddy

- Remove any means that could be used for self-injury
- Calmly control the situation; do not use force
- Actively listen to produce relief

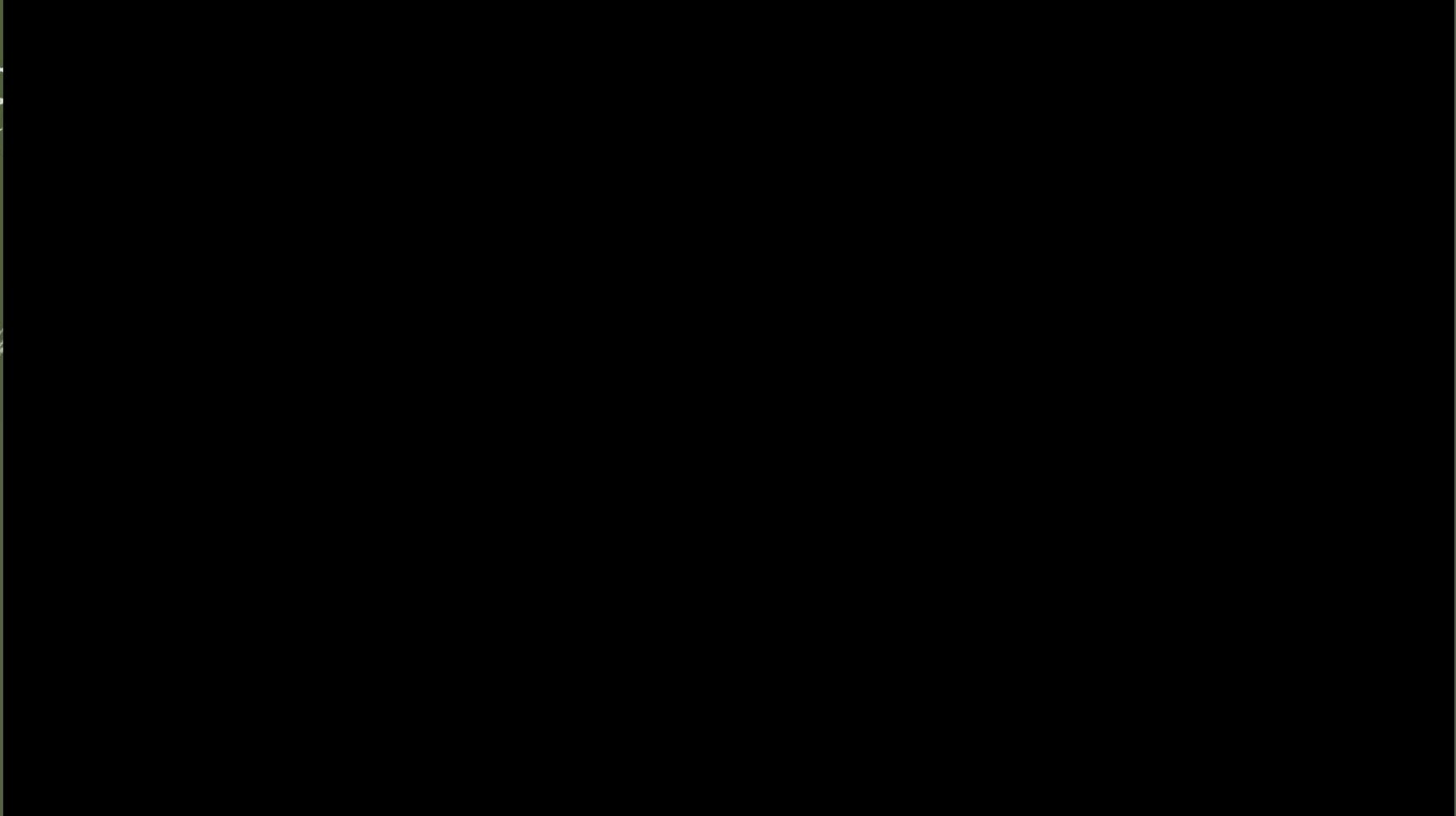
### Escort your buddy

- Never leave your buddy alone
- Escort to the chain of command, a Chaplain, a behavioral health professional, or a primary care provider

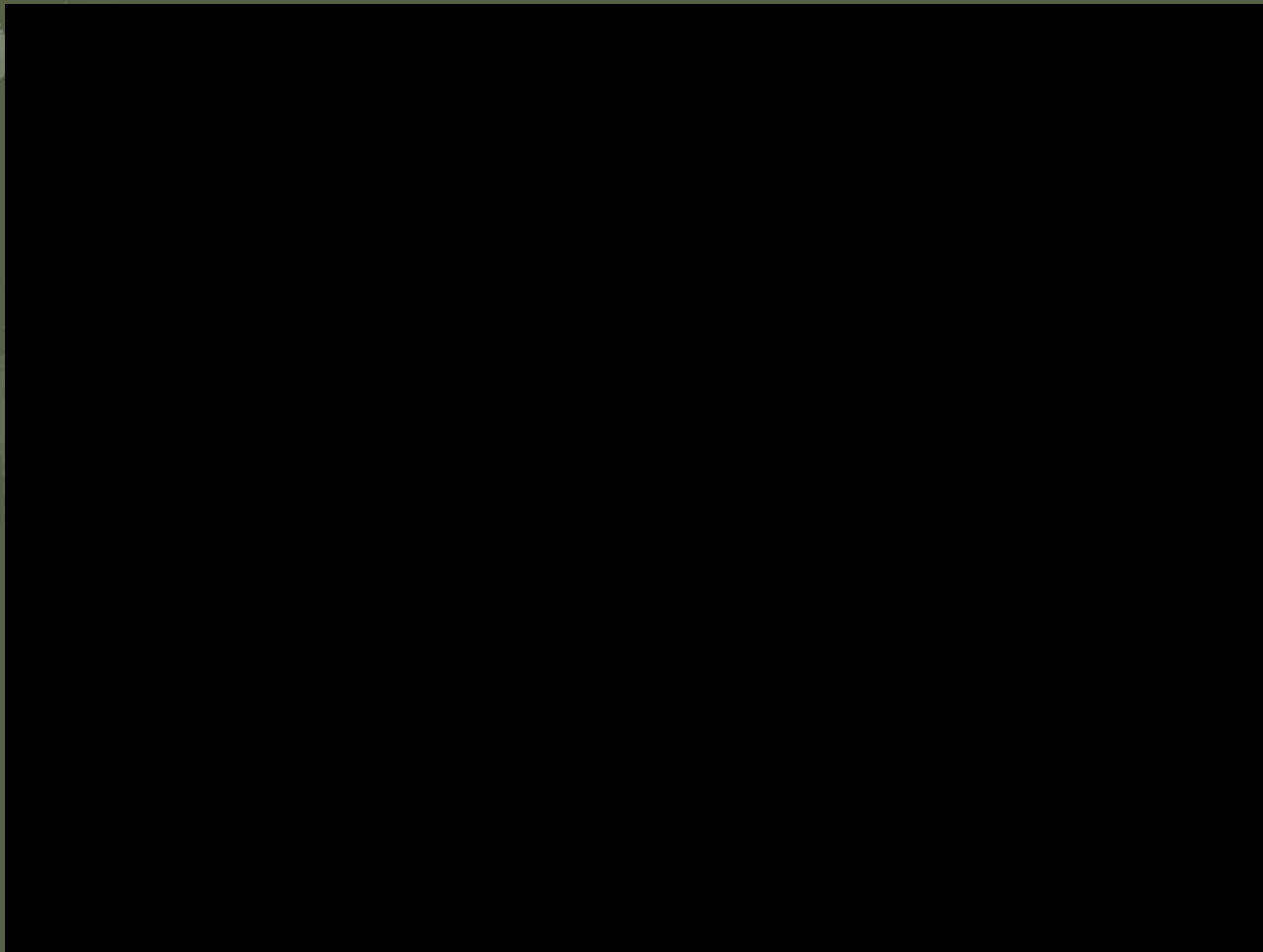




# SMA Public Service Announcement



# Eric Hipple on Getting Help



# ACE for Soldiers: “Ask”

- **Ask** your battle buddy directly about his or her suicidal thoughts.
- Know risk factors and warning signs you might see in yourself or battle buddy if he or she is suicidal. Look for any outward sign that shows a deviation from your battle buddy’s usual self.
- When the warning signs are present, it is imperative to ask your battle buddy directly; “Are you thinking about killing yourself?”



# ACE for Soldiers: “Ask”

(continued)

**Ask** your battle buddy directly about thoughts or plans for suicide.

1. Say something like, “I can see that you feel distressed.” “Have you thought of killing yourself or someone else?” or, “Do you wish you were dead?”
2. Then “Have you thought of how you could kill yourself?”



# ACE for Soldiers: “Ask”

(continued)

**Ask** your battle buddy directly about thoughts or plans for suicide.

3. Talk openly about suicide. Be willing to listen and allow your battle buddy to express his or her feelings.



# ACE for Soldiers: “Care”

- **Care** for your battle buddy by understanding that your battle buddy may be in pain. Active listening may produce relief. Calmly control the situation: do not use force. Take action by removing any lethal means, such as weapons or pills.
- Important to understand with what, where, and when the battle buddy plans to kill himself or herself. The fact your battle buddy acknowledges his or her plans generally suggests that they are accepting help.



# ACE for Soldiers: “Care”

(continued)

- If your battle buddy tells you his or her plan, try to determine what steps he or she planned to take in order to carry out the event.
- What were his or her preparations for dying (e.g., giving away personal possessions, updating a will)?
- Find out the timing and location of the suicidal plan and the lethality of method.
- Ask about rehearsal behaviors (e.g., tying noose, loading gun).



# ACE for Soldiers: “Care”

(continued)

- Explore ambivalence; ask your battle buddy, specifically, about his or her reasons to die versus the reasons to live.
- Determine your battle buddy’s access to lethal methods, including firearms.
- Disarm your battle buddy (lethal means). If your battle buddy is armed, say, “Let me unload your weapon and keep it safe for you while we talk.”





# ACE for Soldiers: “Care”

(continued)

Now it is time to take your battle buddy for help.

1. Talking to your battle buddy.
2. Encouraging your battle buddy to see a helping professional, now.
3. Identifying support systems that can help your battle buddy.



# ACE for Soldiers: “Escort”

- **Escort** your battle buddy immediately to your chain of command, Chaplain, or behavioral health professional.
- Don't keep your battle buddy's suicidal behavior a secret. Adopting an attitude that you are going to help your battle buddy will save his or her life.
- Stay with your buddy until he or she receives appropriate help. Don't leave your battle buddy alone.
- Being there for your battle buddy will make the difference.



# ACE for Soldiers: “Escort”

(continued)

- Be available and supportive.
- Reassure your battle buddy that you will be by his or her side no matter what.
- Locate help for your battle buddy. Know where to get professional help from resources in the military and civilian community.
- **Whatever you do, be sure to secure help and support for your battle buddy.**



# Active Listening

- Look your battle buddy in the eyes; suspend other things you are doing.
- Listen not merely to the words, but the feeling content.
- Be sincerely interested in what your battle buddy is talking about.
- Talk to your battle buddy alone in a private setting.



# Active Listening

(continued)

- Allow your battle buddy to talk freely.
- Restate what your battle buddy said.
- Ask clarification questions once in a while.
- Be aware of your own feelings and strong opinion.
- Don't feel compelled to fill in the silence.



# Active Listening

(continued)

- When talking to your battle buddy, give him or her and yourself plenty of time.
- Stay calm and objective.
- Don't criticize or argue with your battle buddy's thoughts and feelings, but listen and allow time for him/her to find words.
- Have your resources handy (i.e., know how to locate your chain of command, Chaplain, or behavioral health).



# Role Play

Don't feel bad! Role play is sometimes uncomfortable. This is a normal reaction.

## Lesson Four



# Role Play

It is every Soldier's responsibility to look out for his or her battle buddy which includes helping a battle buddy during times of trouble. For the **next hour**, you will have the opportunity to practice what you have been taught thus far about the **"ACE"** intervention. Don't feel bad if role-playing feels uncomfortable. This is a common reaction.





# Role Play

continued

Remember, you are “Army Strong” and your ability to face your fears of being embarrassed during the role play will require you to use your inner strength and moral courage to help get through the process .



# Role Play Ground Rules

- No fault.
- Learn by watching and doing.
- Feel free to use the ACE and Training Tip cards.
- Everyone will get a chance to play one role or other.
- Break into groups of three and take a few minutes to decide who plays what.
- Don't do worst case scenarios; don't play something too personal.
- Make it doable.



# Role Play Activities

## The Person at Risk Role:

- Follow one of the scripts provided (think about the Soldier/ battle buddy situations).
- Brief your helper initially by providing background information about your role, remember this person already knows you.
- Don't do worst case scenarios; assist your helper through the ACE process.
- Time-out when necessary to assist the helper.

## The Helper's Role:

- Identify who you will be i.e., buddy, First Sgt, colleague, commander, etc.
- Try using the ACE model to help the person at risk or examine the match with the model afterwards.
- Feel free to use your prompter cards (ACE card and Warning tip card).
- Time -out when necessary to get help from others.

## The Observer's Role:

- Observe the interaction.
- Provide assistance to the helper as needed.
- Be prepared to provide observations and feedback.



# Resource Development Exercise

## Lesson Five

Chill - Out



Stress Management



# Resources

The following are generally available either in garrison/command or in all tactical environments:

## A. In Garrison/Command:

1. Unit Chaplain; Unit Ministry Teams: 287-CHAP (2427).
2. Resilience & Restoration Center: 553-2288, Bldg. 36003.
3. Army Community Services: 287-4ACS, Bldg 121.
4. Medical Services (Behavioral Health or Primary Care); CRDAMC Emergency Room: 288-8338.
5. Military Family Life Consultants: 254-383-2571, Bldg 12020.
6. Soldier & Family Assistance Center 286-5768, Bldg. 36051.



# Resources

(continued)

The following are generally available either in garrison/command or in all tactical environments:

## B. During Deployment:

1. Combat Stress Control Teams; Warrior Combat Stress Reset: 288-4746, Bldg. 36043.
2. Medics.
3. Family Care Clinics (Primary Care Clinics):

Bennett Health Clinic 254-618-8039

Thomas Moore Health Clinic 254-285-6270

Collier Health Clinic 254-553-3147

Monroe Health Clinic 254-618-8768

Hood Army Airfield TMC 254-285-6803

North Fort Hood TMC 254-287-5307

Weekend Acute Care 254-285-6269

4. Chaplain & Unit Ministry Teams:

1BCT 287-5145

2BCT 287-0468

3BCT 288-6857

1 AIR CAV 285-5132

479 FA 553-9378

13 ESC 287-1391

3CR 288-7494

36 ENG 287-2723

41 FIRES 288-3397

69 ADA 553-4476

89 MP 289-6560

WTB 553-4789



# Resources

(continued)

All Soldiers, Family members and DA Civilians can contact :

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:

@ [www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org), 1-800-273-8255 (TALK)

- Military One Source:

@ <https://www.militaryonesource.com>, 1-800-342-9647

- Real Warriors:

@ [www.realwarriors.net](http://www.realwarriors.net), 1-866-966-1020

- Army Public Health Command AKO Suicide Prevention

Website: <https://www.us.army.mil/suite/page/334798>



# Summary

1. The Goals of “ACE” Training.
2. Army Suicide Prevention Program (ASPP).
3. Key Elements of This Training.
4. What is “ACE”?
5. “ACE” For Soldiers: “Ask”



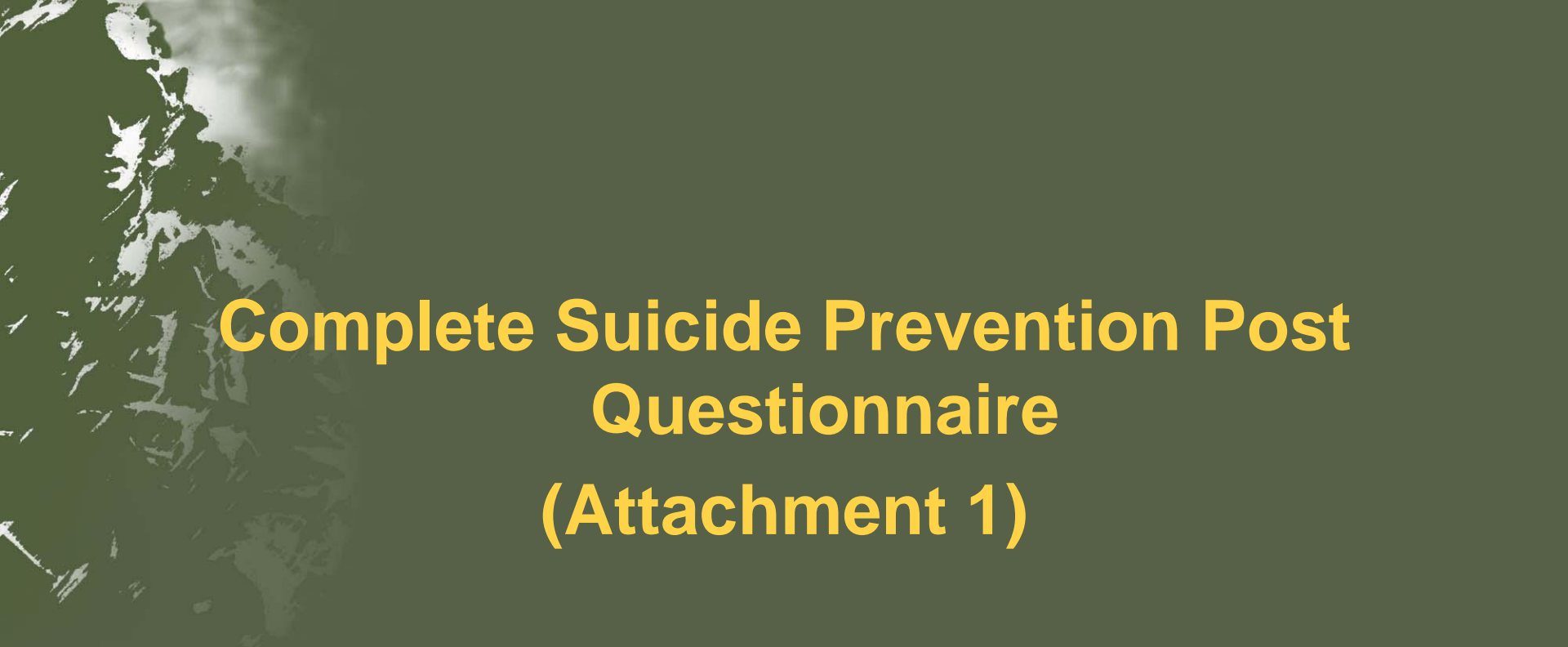


# Summary

continued

6. “ACE” For Soldiers: “Care”
7. “ACE” For Soldiers: “Escort”
8. Role Play.
9. Resources .





**Complete Suicide Prevention Post  
Questionnaire  
(Attachment 1)**

**Complete Army's Ace Suicide  
intervention Training Feedback  
(Attachment 10)**



# Questions?

Thank You  
for  
Getting involved!

