



## Thriving Military and Civilian Airmen and Families

Multiple Air Force initiatives are working towards a common goal: **Empowering Leaders and their personnel to increase morale, cohesion, and readiness by recognizing when someone needs help, decreasing barriers to help-seeking, and creating a culture in which Military and Civilian Airmen and their families thrive.** Here are actionable steps you can take today to advance this common goal.

- **Create spaces** that are inclusive and within which people feel a sense of belonging
- **Communicate** in ways in which people feel valued and their contributions are meaningful
- **Set norms** that convey intolerance of any form of harassment or interpersonal violence
- **Establish the expectation** that everyone is responsible for preventing negative outcomes and everyone is expected to do their part

The small choices that foster a culture of help-seeking and connectedness can seem disconnected from stopping an assault or suicide; but, cultural norms will only be established by a lot of people making these choices every day.

Here are some small things you can do today to establish norms that contribute to a culture in which everyone thrives:

- **Talk** about times you struggled and the help – mental, physical, spiritual, social – that helped you get through it
- **Encourage all Military and Civilian Airmen** to seek help early
- **Dispel** the myth that seeking help – especially seeking help early – will have a negative career impact. Make it personal and lead by example sharing vulnerability to issues that require professional help

Identify the specific opportunities you have to shape norms across your sphere of influence and leverage them:

- **Meetings:** Start a meeting by asking attendees to share what they are doing on a daily basis to let people know they are valued and they belong
- **Speaking Engagements:** Use these opportunities to underscore the importance of Comprehensive Airman Fitness, use Resilience Skills (kneeboard) as reminders to self-care, balance, and help-seeking
- **Informal Mentoring:** Check in regularly with coworkers and family members who may be experiencing personal or professional stress and ensure they are connected to helping resources
  
- Distress may result from:
  - Financial problems
  - Legal problems, especially related to crimes of a sexual nature and divorce
  - Perceived dissolution of relationship, including family relationships and especially romantic relationships
  - Occupational problems, especially related to a high-stress job and lack of perceived social support



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- Mental health diagnoses, history of suicidality/extreme anger, and impulsive behavior
- Alcohol and substance use-related problems
- **Remember:** Multiple and compounding problems place someone at highest risk

**Self-care is essential to leading effectively and to our ability to create a culture in which every Military and Civilian Airmen and families thrive.** Balance is often elusive in the face of the demands of personal and professional commitments and responsibilities. However, research is clear that as stress increases, our ability to cope with stressors decreases, and often maladaptive behaviors increase. When we don't take care of ourselves, we place ourselves as Leaders in jeopardy of making poor decisions and leading less effectively. Here are some actionable steps you can take to practice and model self-care:

**2-10-5-7:** Aim to balance each day with 2 hours of "me time", 10 hours of work, 5 hours unplugged, and 7 hours of sleep. While this may not be achievable every day, this formula helps guide an allocation of time that maintains balance.

**Self-Assessment:** Take an honest assessment of your physical, mental, spiritual, and social health, and seek help when needed. Healthy social relationships in your private life help you maintain healthy boundaries at work. Choose a mentor that exhibits strong well-being and be a well-being mentor for others. As a Leader, your willingness to engage in help-seeking behaviors sends a strong message to others to do the same. Your self-care is contagious and will motivate and inspire others' self-care.

Visit [www.resilience.af.mil](http://www.resilience.af.mil)... A single source for prevention, intervention, and postvention leadership tools.