



**Civil Air Patrol**

# RESILIENCE: October 2020 Wingman

National Task Force for Wellness and Resilience — October 2020 Wingman Support Day  
(For In-Person and Online Delivery to ALL unit members)

**Ideally, this lesson will be delivered to all unit members in-person. The best practice is to separate cadets and senior members to facilitate discussions appropriate to the ages of the audiences. If this lesson is presented on-line, all members should be aware that the topic and discussion of suicide may create “triggers” of stress in individuals who have already been exposed to the loss, grief, and/or traumas of this tragic end of life to someone near or close to them. Commanders and staff members should all be aware of the audience and the needs of their own personnel. The lesson also discusses “cyberbullying” which has been identified as a significant source of stress leading to emotional issues for youth. Modify the lesson as necessary to ensure that all members are “safe” during the presentation and discussions.**

## INTRODUCTION

In 2018, the national commander, Maj. Gen. Mark E. Smith, called for the creation of a Task Force for Wellness and Resilience to teach the skills that mitigate the stresses that are encountered as a national youth and emergency service organization. The CAP Five Pillars of Wellness and Resilience became the model that provides the language and focus areas to define living in excellence. It also articulates the sources of strength for dealing with stresses. Codified in CAP Pamphlet 80-4, every October units are asked to discuss a “resilience” plan which allows all members to live and thrive during times of stress. The goal is to create the “culture of wingman support” regardless of age, abilities, or interests in Civil Air Patrol.

## PRECLASS CHECKLIST

Prior preparation is essential to success. Please prepare the following well ahead of time:

- If meeting online, be familiar with and test the online software platform
- Review the material and ensure a “safe” space is available
- Ensure that handouts are available if meeting in-person.

## Review of CAP programs to support wellness, resilience and suicide prevention

**LARGE GROUP FACILITATED BY CHAPLAIN/ CDI/ COMMANDER/CISM/HSO**

**1. CAP FIVE PILLARS OF WELLNESS AND RESILIENCE** - In 2018, the national commander, Maj. Gen. Mark E. Smith, called for the creation of a Task Force for Wellness and Resilience to teach the skills that mitigate the stresses that are encountered as a national youth and emergency service organization.

a. The 5-Pillars of Wellness and Resilience is the CAP model that provides the “common language” which was the first step in building these skills in our members.

- i. From our Foundation as “One Civil Air Patrol” we lift up our twin goals to “excel in service to our nation and to our members.”
  - ii. The goals are carried by members who are living in wellness with resilience.
  - iii. Five focus areas provide our wellness and resilience: Mind, Body, Relationships, Spirit, and Family.
  - iv. CAP has identified four activities that support each of the pillars though more are available.
  - v. Wellness is defined for us as: “Wellness is living with good ‘habits’ so that we are equipped to achieve personal excellence, sustaining us during times of stress and making us resilient to the difficulties of life.”
  - vi. Stress is change. When changes accumulate or put “pressure on us” or when one of the pillars experiences a very radical change or disruption, CRISIS occurs. At this point we feel PAIN (mental or physical or emotional).
  - vii. When the “pain” seems unbearable, some people may want to take drastic measures to end it. They may want to end their life.
- b. Today’s Wingman Support Day is an annual event and we will be talking about Suicide Awareness and Prevention.
  - c. You are all important members of the team, and we want you to stay safe, and we want to help you keep your Wingman safe.
  - d. Is everyone here going to be OK to be a part of this presentation? (Wait for any participants that may have concerns, address as necessary)

**2. STATISTICS – The reason CAP is talking about suicide.**

- a. The first section we will talk about asks,
  - i. “How big is this problem?”
  - ii. Why are we concerned?”
  - iii. What are some groups that we think might be at higher risk for suicide?
  - iv. Which one of the Five Pillars is “under stress” in these individuals?  
(Allow Participants to answer before sharing.)

(There are no wrong answers, but some suggestions are included.)

- |   |                       |
|---|-----------------------|
| People with Mental illness (including PTSD)                                   | ●Mind Pillar          |
| Youth who are bullied by peers or adults                                      | ●Relationships Pillar |
| Marginalized group members (i.e. Alaska Native, Native American People, LGBT) | ●Relationships Pillar |
| People with Relationship Problems   | ●Relationships Pillar |
| People with Financial Problems  | ●Mind Pillar          |
| People with Substance Abuse Problems  | ●Body Pillar          |
| People with a serious illness   | ●Body Pillar          |
| Being Exposed to another person’s suicidal behavior                           | ●Mind Pillar          |

- b. Suicide rates increased in nearly every state from 1999 through 2018. 2019 was a bad year for military veterans and the trend continues at this high level.
- c. We often see mental health conditions as the only cause of suicide. But suicide is rarely caused by any single factor.

- d. Factors can include relationship problems, substance misuse, a recent crisis...
- e. Or job, financial or legal stress.
- f. More than half of people who died by suicide did not have a known mental health condition.
- g. Men are more likely to die by suicide than women, but women are more likely to attempt suicide. Men are more likely to use deadlier methods, such as firearms or suffocation. Women are more likely than men to attempt suicide by poisoning.
- h. American Indians and Alaska Natives tend to have the highest rate of suicides, followed by non-Hispanic Whites. African Americans tend to have the lowest suicide rate, while Hispanics tend to have the second lowest rate.
- i. Often, family and friends are the first to recognize the warning signs of suicide and can be the first step toward helping an at-risk individual find treatment with someone who specializes in diagnosing and treating mental health conditions.
- j. "Suicide does not discriminate. People of all genders, ages, and ethnicities can be at risk. Suicidal behavior is complex and there is no single cause." - <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/suicide-prevention/index.shtml>
- k. Suicide also is not about being unable to face your problems, or that your problems are too big, or not big enough. As we have heard, there are MANY factors that go into this issue.
- l. Are there any questions about how big a problem suicide is, before we move on?

3. **Cyberbullying** is a significant source of stress leading to suicide in youth. (ALL MATERIAL HERE COMES FROM THE 2016 "SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDE FOR USAFA CADETS")

- a. Being a victim of cyberbullying can be a common and painful experience.
- b. ONLINE we are also held to our standards of conduct, which requires us to respect others and do what is right even when no one is looking.
- c. People who cyberbully might:
  - Pretend they are other people online to trick others
  - Spread lies and rumors about victims
  - Trick people into revealing personal information
  - Send or forward mean text messages
  - Post pictures of victims without their consent
- d. The goal of a cyberbully is to exert power, create stress, or hold influence over another without their consent.
- e. Some people do not think cyberbullying is a big deal, don't consider the consequences, are encouraged by friends or think they won't get caught.
- f. Contrary to what cyberbullies may believe, cyberbullying is a big deal and can cause a variety of reactions in people such as revenge seeking, anger or depression. It is a significant cause of suicide among young Americans which is why we are discussing it now.
- g. If you are being cyberbullied you can:
  - i. Block communication with the cyberbully
  - ii. Delete messages without reading them

- iii. Talking to a friend about the bullying
  - iv. Report the problem to your chain of command
- h. Do the following to prevent others from cyberbullying:
- i. Refuse to pass along cyberbullying messages
  - ii. Tell friends to stop cyberbullying
  - iii. Block communication with cyberbullies
  - iv. Report cyberbullying to your chain of command

If you would not say it in person, don't say it online. Delete cyberbullying. Don't write it. Don't forward it.

4. **WARNING SIGNS** - Now that we understand that suicide is a problem that affects many different people, let us talk about the warning signs that we can look for in ourselves and our Wingman.

- a. Talking about wanting to die or wanting to kill themselves
- b. Talking about feeling empty, hopeless, or having no reason to live
- c. Making a plan or looking for a way to kill themselves, such as searching online, stockpiling pills, or buying a gun
- d. Talking about great guilt or shame; extreme self-hating thoughts
- e. Talking about feeling trapped or feeling that there are no solutions
- f. Feeling unbearable pain (emotional pain or physical pain)
- g. Talking about being a burden to others
- h. Using alcohol or drugs more often
- i. Acting anxious or agitated
- j. Isolation from friends and loved ones
- k. Changing eating and/or disrupted sleep patterns
- l. Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge
- m. Taking great risks that could lead to death, such as driving extremely fast
- n. Talking or thinking about death often
- o. Displaying extreme mood swings, suddenly changing from very sad to very calm or happy
- p. Giving away important possessions
- q. Saying goodbye to friends and family
- r. Putting affairs in order, making a will
- s. Does anyone have any thoughts about Warning Signs that they would like to share? (Allow Participants to answer)

5. **INTERVENTION - WE CAN HELP.** We have talked about how big this problem is, and what signs we can look out for. Now we will talk about what to do if we see someone showing signs.

- a. So, your friend's been showing some of the warning signs of suicide, and you are worried. Follow the **Three Steps of "ACE"** to help your friend and save a life.
- b. **Step 1: ASK.** Ask your friend, "Are you thinking of killing yourself?" It's a tough question, but you need to ask it.
- c. **Step 2: CARE.** Show your friend you care by taking them to a safe place, and listening to whatever it is they have to say. Don't be judgmental, or too quick to give advice. Most of the time, people just need to say what they are thinking and feeling out loud.
- d. **Step 3: ESCORT.** If your friend gave any hint that they are thinking of killing themselves, call 911 or take them to the Emergency Room. For counseling or guidance, bring them to a chaplain, mental health professional, or a supervisor. **NO MATTER WHAT**, escort your friend to some sort of help. Do not leave your Wingman alone.

e. Being a Wingman is extremely important. Memorize ACE: "Ask, Care, Escort," so you'll be prepared to intervene, and save a life. Hand out the ACE cards to participants, point out the Lifeline and Text Line numbers on one side, and ACE steps on the other.

6. **TOOLS:** Here are some tools that you can put in your toolkit if you ever have to face a situation dealing with suicide.

a. The **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline** provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals. Their phone number is **1-800-273-8255** or **1-800-273-TALK**.

i. The Spanish Language Lifeline phone number is 1-888-628-9454.

ii. You can also go to <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/> to see more about this resource.

b. If someone is in crisis, and cannot make a phone call for support, there is also the **Crisis Text Line**.

i. Every texter is connected with a Crisis Counselor, a real-life human being trained to bring texters from a hot moment to a cool calm through active listening and collaborative problem solving. All of Crisis Text Line's Crisis Counselors are volunteers, donating their time to helping people in crisis.

ii. The number to Text is **741741**.

c. Being able to withstand the stress in our lives is important, and we can do things beforehand to help prevent feeling overwhelmed when stress happens.

i. The CAP Wellness Pamphlet is a customizable plan for how YOU want to keep your "5 Pillars of Wellness and Resilience" strong.

ii. Please take a few minutes to review this pamphlet and think about which options work best for you.

d. Local Resources: are available to us as CAP members and members of our local community.

i. Let us brainstorm who we can talk to when we need help and share those ideas with each other.

ii. Take recommendations from the participants and write them down. A whiteboard/chalkboard would be ideal.

iii. Ensure that a photo is taken before these recommendations are erased/removed, so they can be shared later.

## 7. **END OF LECTURE**

**For questions and support on any aspect of the 2020 October Wingman Support Day, please contact the National Task Force at: [resilience@hc.cap.gov](mailto:resilience@hc.cap.gov).**