

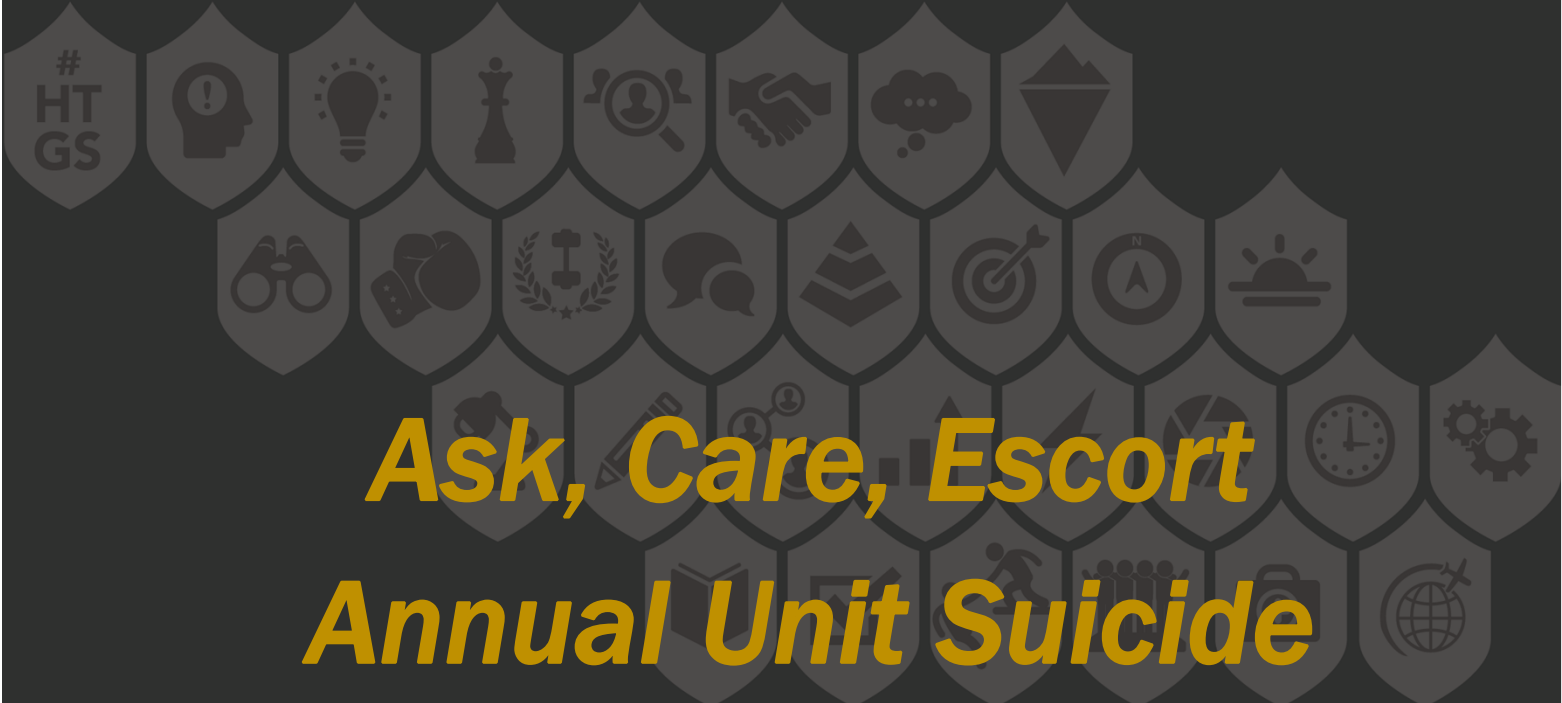


**U.S. ARMY**

# **INSTRUCTOR GUIDE**



**DIRECTORATE OF PREVENTION,  
RESILIENCE AND READINESS**



***Ask, Care, Escort***  
***Annual Unit Suicide***  
***Prevention Training***  
***Active Listening Module***  
***ACE Base +1***

September 2023

VERSION 1.3

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## Introduction

The Army Suicide Prevention Program was instituted by CSA General John A. Wickham in 1984. Since that time, suicide prevention and awareness has evolved. In 2009, Ask, Care, Escort (ACE) training was introduced to update existing suicide prevention training and to respond to a rise in suicide rates.

ACE training introduced suicide prevention and intervention concepts that had proven successful outside of the Army. Its primary goals were to increase suicide awareness and improve the ability of Soldiers to identify team members who may be suicidal and get them to help.

In 2018, ACE training was updated to highlight its use not only during a crisis, but also before one occurs by incorporating Army team building and unit cohesion concepts. This training is aligned with the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's strategic comprehensive public health approach to suicide prevention.

In 2022, the ACE suicide prevention and intervention material was updated yet again and coined ACE Base + 1. The training now consists of a base module along with a menu of "+1" modules that the unit's command team can choose from based upon the unit's needs. Together, the base module and the +1 module make up the mandatory one hour of annual suicide prevention and intervention training.

In addition to the tailored training approach, the training is now designed to be more interactive and conversational. In contrast to a traditional "annual briefing," ACE Base +1 is an "annual conversation" at platoon level where Soldiers in the platoon are able to discuss how they can take care of one another on a human level as it pertains to suicide prevention and intervention.

In 2023, the Army's suicide prevention and intervention training expanded to include a tailored curriculum for the Soldiers' Circle of Support members and DA Civilians. A Soldier's Circle of Support includes anyone whom the Soldier considers to be a priority within their support system, such as a spouse, significant other, parent, sibling, other family member, mentor, and friend. The intent is that offering Circle of Support members the same knowledge and skills while using the same language and strategies can enable conversation between the Circle of Support member(s) and the Soldier regarding suicide prevention and intervention. What's more, it can promote effective communication, bolster protective factors like increased cohesion and connection, and increase suicide prevention efforts within the whole Army Family.

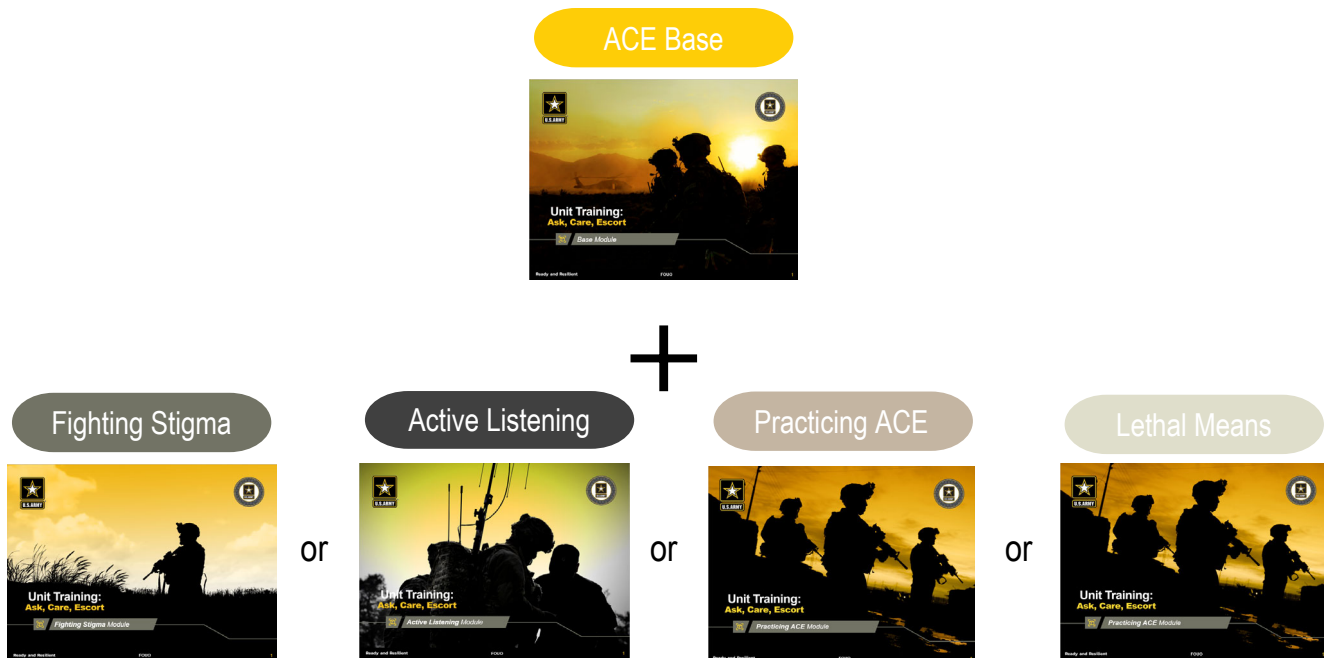
## Intent

**Facilitated discussion and engagement:** This training is designed to be facilitated by a single instructor and delivered in an interactive, discussion-based format (rather than conventional lecture or didactic format). Because this module utilizes group interaction, it is highly recommended that it be led by an instructor who is able and willing to elicit participant engagement through facilitating meaningful discussions and practical exercises. The practical exercises are essential in allowing participants the opportunity to try out the Ask, Care, Escort process strategies in a safe, non-threatening environment and develop competence and confidence to use the strategies in real-life scenarios.

**Delivered in-person to small groups:** The ACE training is intended to be delivered in-person and it is highly recommended that this training be conducted with small groups (fewer than 40). In-person training allows for optimal engagement and also fosters unit cohesion, thus building protective factors which is an aim of the training.

**Cohesive efforts:** It is strongly recommended that the ACE for Circle of Support training be offered around the same time frame that the Soldiers receive the ACE Unit Training. According to AR 600-63, ACE suicide prevention and intervention training must be offered to Circle of Support members on an annual basis. The ACE Active Listening for Circle of Support module resembles the content and format of the ACE Active Listening module for Soldiers but has been tailored for members of a Soldier's Circle of Support (e.g., spouse, significant other, parent(s), siblings, extended family, friends, mentors).

**Training Requirements:** The U.S. Army’s requirement for annual suicide prevention training is to complete one hour of training that includes the “ACE Base” module along with one of the “+1” modules.



*Note: Each module should be trained to standard and not to time, it is most effective when time is allowed for in-depth group discussion and participation. To maximize the benefits of this training, allow for extra time for dialogue and interaction.*

**Training Package Components:** The complete “ACE Base +1” training package consists of five PowerPoint® presentations (i.e., ACE Base, Fighting the Stigma, Active Listening, Practicing ACE, and Lethal Means) and a SmartGuide with key information to be discussed for each slide (see notes page iv for SmartGuide overview).

**Training Precautions:** The ACE suicide prevention and awareness training deals with sensitive information and may trigger painful memories or other issues for training participants. It is possible that someone attending the training may have experienced thoughts of suicide or may have experienced a loved one who has struggled with suicidal thoughts, ideation, or worse – died by suicide.

If you are not a chaplain or behavioral health provider, it is recommended that you have someone from the chaplain’s office or Behavioral Health Services on call during your training session. Be sure to coordinate before the training and obtain their name, title, and consent to act as an immediate resource if needed. Provide them with the date, time, and location of the training; on the day of the training, be sure to have the number(s) at which they can be reached or another plan for reaching them.

*The mention of any non-federal entity and/or its products is not to be construed or interpreted, in any manner, as federal endorsement of that non-federal entity or its products.*

## Training Preparation:

**Content:** This is the U.S. Army’s mandatory annual suicide prevention training (IAW AR 600-63). The material is based on the most current research and academic literature on suicide prevention and follows educational best practices. The training is designed to enable the instructor to successfully lead participants through suicide prevention concepts with interactive activities and discussions to prompt critical thinking. For the training to be most effective, it is advised that instructors review all content in advance.

When instructing, follow the content as written. Insert personal stories/examples as appropriate. Prompts are written into the SmartGuide to highlight times when personal stories/examples can be most valuable. There are many benefits of sharing a personal story or example. For instance, stories/examples can help a trainer to capture the audience’s attention, gain common ground with the audience, and engage the audience on a deeper level. Most importantly, effective use of personal stories or examples can help participants gain better contextual understanding of the material being taught.

The following guidelines can help ensure effective use of personal stories and examples. The story/example

- serves a clear purpose, specifically it reinforces the training objective/content
- helps participants to gain a better contextual understanding about the concepts
- does not distract participants from the focus of training (e.g., be mindful of using potentially triggering or traumatizing examples/stories)
- is simple, concise, and easy to follow/understand

Remember, sharing your personal stories/examples is to benefit the participant, not yourself. The story/example should highlight the content, not you as a person (e.g., avoid the mistake of making the training about yourself). Lastly, it is highly recommended that you practice your stories/examples before using them in a training session. Rehearsing the story/example can improve effective delivery, especially if the story/example is one that could be emotional for you to share.

**Flow:** This training module is comprised of four main sections.



**Training Preparation (continued):**

**Language:** Suicide can be an uncomfortable topic to discuss, and it can be difficult to find the words to talk about it. As researchers continue to learn more about suicide and those impacted by it, the language used continues to evolve. For example, the term “committed suicide” perpetuates the idea that suicide is a criminal act, which can be stigmatizing. Instead, consider the phrase “died by suicide” or “attempted suicide.”

Participants may unintentionally use stigmatizing language, as not everyone understands the harmful impact of these words. It is recommended that during the training, participants are allowed to use the words they feel comfortable with to promote open conversation; however, it is recommended that the instructor supports participant usage of destigmatized language and use those words themselves.

**Important concepts:** Although ACE Base +1 is an annual training requirement, the training does not have to be conducted or perceived as “just another mandatory briefing.” Instead, it is important that the trainer and participants see the ACE Base + 1 modules as an opportunity for an annual discussion amongst Soldiers and leadership about the way the unit uses these skills and concepts in their day-to-day life and operations.

When Soldiers collectively implement the ACE process, use Active Listening and intentionally Fight the Stigma, it creates culture of trust and cohesion. Consequently, a culture of trust and cohesion encourages help-seeking behavior; Soldiers know that when they need someone, the Soldiers in the unit will have their back. As the trainer, work to present the material as a facilitated discussion so the Soldiers are learning the material but also learning from and about one another and actively building trust and cohesion.

**ACE Training Facilitation Strategies:**

Review the SmartGuide prior to the training session. Take notes on when you may use different facilitation strategies to promote an effective learning experience for participants.

| Facilitation Strategies   | When/How to Use   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>Asking Quality Questions -</b> Asking quality questions is important for generating participation and group discussions, which is why scripted questions have been included within the material.</p>  | <p>Use closed-ended questions for a check on learning or to get a group consensus. Use open-ended questions when you want to generate discussion. Restate your question when it seems unclear. Poll the audience to get a show of hands, then ask participants to provide examples or explain their rationale. Let participants know, when appropriate, if there is “no right or wrong answer for this question,” which can ease the pressure on the group.</p> |
| <p><b>Efficient Instructions -</b> Efficient instructions for exercises are clear and concise directions resulting in participants' understanding of the intent of the exercise, what actions they need to take, and how long they have to complete the work.</p> | <p>Include timings in your instructions to help participants understand how in-depth their discussions should be. Provide time prompts such as “one minute left,” to keep the group on track during activities. Demonstrate lengthy instructions with another individual.</p>   |
| <p><b>Conducting Effective Discussions -</b> Discussions can sometimes get off track. It is important to be purposeful when leading a conversation about a particular topic or activity.</p>  | <p>Effective discussions are learner-centric, keep the conversation moving forward, and include a summary with key takeaway points. If restricted in your available time, consider having partners/small groups discuss then select a few representatives to share with the larger group.</p>   |
| <p><b>Handling Challenges Effectively -</b> There can be many challenges that occur when teaching a class. Having strategies for challenges that are likely to arise can help you be more prepared.</p>   | <p>Be prepared to handle difficult questions, manage emotionally charged contributions, and allow the participants time to process what you have just said or asked (be okay with silence). Utilize on-call resources (e.g., chaplain or Behavioral Health) if/when necessary.</p>  |
| <p><b>Be Aware of Timing -</b> Pace yourself to ensure there is sufficient time for practical exercises and group discussion.</p>   | <p>Leave ample time to review instructions, execute exercises, and hold discussion. If restricted in your available time, consider having volunteers demonstrate an activity for the whole group rather than working in pairs.</p>  |



## Instructor SmartGuide Format:

This SmartGuide has been designed to be user-friendly while containing as much information as possible to help you present this suicide prevention training module.

At the beginning of the module is a very short introduction for the trainer, which explains the intent of the material.

When notes pages are printed and the booklet is opened, you will see the format below. On Side A is an image of the slide, a statement of slide intent (i.e., the target), and then key points and sample talking points. Key points and sample talking points may continue on to Side B when necessary.

The key points are highlighted in yellow and they briefly describe what must be covered to meet the intent of the slide. These are followed by more details or instructions.






The key points tell you what you need to do, while the bulleted notes explain how to do it.

| ACE Unit Training- Base Module  | ACE Unit Training- Base Module   |
|---|--|
| <div data-bbox="240 1033 560 1270"> </div> <div data-bbox="240 1270 576 1323"> <p>Describe protective factors and explain the importance of intentionally strengthening them for oneself and others around them.</p> </div> <div data-bbox="240 1333 576 1365" style="background-color: yellow;"> <p><b>1. Define and describe protective factors.</b></p> </div> <div data-bbox="276 1375 576 1680"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protective factors are skills, strengths, or resources that help people deal more effectively with stressful events.</li> <li>Protective factors help offset or mitigate risk. Some examples of protective factors include               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using productive coping skills, like problem-solving, deep breathing, or considering another perspective on an issue</li> <li>Being willing to talk with others about the things going on in your life</li> <li>Cultivating strong personal relationships and contributing to a strong unit cohesion</li> <li>Utilizing professional resources when needing help and also when looking to be proactive with personal or professional development, and</li> <li>Connecting to a sense of purpose, like religious beliefs, your core values, or being in an influential role in another person's life.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </div> <div data-bbox="592 1033 779 1753"> <p>Record your own notes here:</p> </div> | <div data-bbox="836 1033 1177 1081" style="background-color: yellow;"> <p><b>2. State that it is important to consistently work to improve or strengthen the protective factors for oneself along with those of fellow Soldiers.</b></p> </div> <div data-bbox="876 1092 1177 1396"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protective factors can be enhanced. Many military trainings such as resilience training and the "plus one" modules of ACE like, active listening, aim to bolster protective factors of Army Soldiers.</li> <li>But it requires personal ownership, too. Just like routine physical training, it is important that you work to strengthen your protective factors and those of your fellow Soldiers on a regular basis.</li> <li>Take a look at the protective factors on the slide. Consider which one or ones you could benefit from enhancing.</li> </ul> <p><i>[NOTE: Pause for a brief moment (e.g., 5 seconds). For the sake of time, this is not meant to be a question with responses, but simply a quick internal reflection.]</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As a Soldier, you are part of a team. Your actions influence the protective factors of your fellow Soldiers. For example, being part of a unit that supports each other helps people feel connected. Healthy, strong connection to others is a core protective factor.</li> </ul> </div> <div data-bbox="836 1396 1177 1428" style="background-color: yellow;"> <p><b>3. Transition.</b></p> </div> <div data-bbox="876 1438 1177 1480"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Let's look at how you can use the ACE process to bolster protective factors.</li> </ul> </div> <div data-bbox="1193 1033 1380 1753"> <p>Record your own notes here:</p> </div> |
| 6-A   | 6-B  |

When you start preparing to train the module, you should read all of the detailed information. When you become more familiar with the material, the highlighted key points will be enough to remind you how to train each slide effectively.

**SmartGuide Symbols:**

The following symbols are used throughout the ACE Base + 1 material.

| Training Module Symbol Guide  |                        |   |
|---|------------------------|---|
| Symbol  | Represents             | Explanation   |
|    | Timing                 | This symbol indicates the amount of time allotted for a given section of the material.  |
|    | Target / Intent        | This symbol indicates the main function or rationale for a given slide.   |
| <b>1.</b>   | Key Point              | Numbers are used to indicate the main points that must be addressed in order to meet a given slide's target / intent.   |
| •   | Sample Talking Point   | Bullets are potential talking points that a trainer can choose to use to elaborate on key points or to review as context to the key points.   |
| [NOTE]  | Note to Trainer        | Bracketed text indicates a note to the trainer which is not intended to be read aloud. These provide hints on how to present the material and tips to avoid potential issues that may arise within a given topic. |
|  | Exercise               | This symbol indicates the start of an exercise or activity. To avoid down-time, keep an eye out for these and plan accordingly.   |
| [?]   | Discussion Question(s) | This symbol identifies when there is a non-rhetorical discussion question(s) in the instructional content that follows.   |
|  | Continue               | This symbol indicates that the training material for a given slide continues onto the next page.  |
|  | Stop                   | This symbol indicates that the training material for a given slide ends on this page.   |

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Record your own notes here:



**Introduce the module (and yourself, if necessary) and state the value of effective communication skills.**

**1. Introduce the module (and yourself, if necessary).**

- Welcome to the second part of your annual ACE suicide prevention training, specifically the *Active Listening* module.


**2. State the value of effective communication skills and how active listening contributes to it.**


- Good communication is essential. To lead effectively, leaders must be proficient communicators; likewise, Soldiers must possess competent communication skills to ensure unit cohesion and success.
- Listening is essential for effective communication. Active listening helps both the listener and speaker gain a shared understanding of events, circumstances, and emotions involved in the conversation and allows the speaker to feel heard and connected.

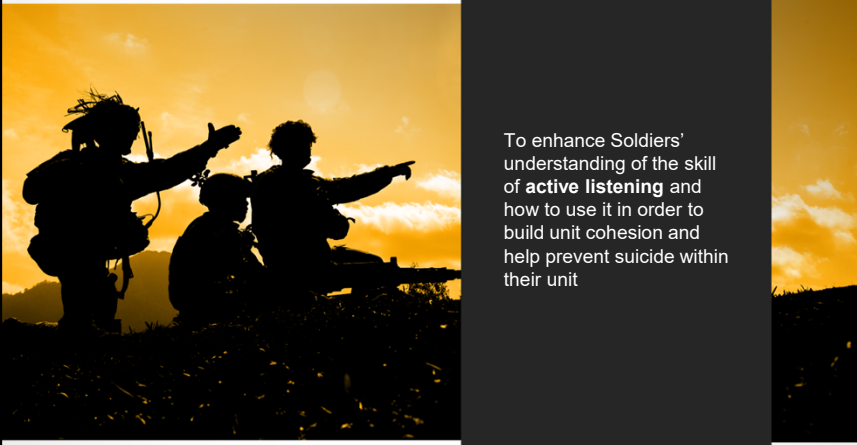
**[NOTE: This is a natural transition to the next slide.]**



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 **Training Purpose**

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RESILIENCE AND READINESS



To enhance Soldiers' understanding of the skill of **active listening** and how to use it in order to build unit cohesion and help prevent suicide within their unit

DPRR 2



**State the training purpose and provide a brief overview of what the module entails.**

**1. State the training purpose.**

- The purpose of this module is to enhance Soldiers' understanding of the skill of active listening and how to use it in order to build unit cohesion and help prevent suicide within their unit.

**2. Provide a brief overview of what the module entails.**

- We will begin by discussing what active listening is, to include four fundamentals that contribute to its effectiveness.
- Then, each of you will have the opportunity to practice active listening and build on your current skill set.
- Lastly, we will discuss the application of active listening to suicide prevention and how you can leverage the Army Values in the process.

**3. Transition.**

- Let's get started.

Record your own notes here:

*[NOTE: The Terminal Learning Objective (TLO) is as follows:*

*Action: Understand how active listening supports a climate of trust and suicide prevention*


*Condition: In a classroom environment, given training materials*

*Standard: Participants will, with 100% accuracy as assessed by the instructor*

- *list the steps of active listening (RASA)*
- *demonstrate active listening skills*


*There will be checks on learning throughout the training to ensure the objective and standards are being met.]*

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### What is Active Listening?


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**Active listening** is a tool that can aid the ACE process.

Recall a time when you felt you were really listened to:



- What were some behaviors that led you to feel that they were actively listening to you?
- What impact did that have on you or your relationship?

Active listening encourages open communication that can build trust, connection, and unit cohesion.

DPRR
3

Record your own notes here:



**Facilitate a group discussion about behaviors that demonstrate active listening and explain why active listening matters.**

[?]

*[SLIDE BUILDS]*

**1. Connect active listening and ACE, specifically that active listening shows that you CARE.**

- The ACE Base module covered the basics of suicide awareness and prevention, and the Ask, Care, Escort process.
- Active listening is a tool that can aid the ACE process, especially in showing your fellow Soldiers that you CARE.

**2. Discuss behaviors that contribute to active listening and the impact that it has on relationships.**

- You likely have an idea of what active listening is. In fact, you likely have first-hand experience. So let's pull on that experience to tease out the fundamentals of active listening.
- Think about a time when you were having a conversation with someone about a topic that was important to you and you felt like the person you were talking to was truly paying attention to what you were saying.
- **[ASK]** What were some of the other person's behaviors that led you to feel that they were actively listening to you?





**[NOTE:** Allow for responses. Listen attentively and take note of Soldier responses that you can tie in when reviewing RASA steps in just a few moments. Examples might include

- making eye contact
  - removing distractions (e.g., putting away cell phone)
  - asking thoughtful questions
  - acknowledging what I'm saying by nodding
  - reflecting similar emotions to what I am feeling.]
- **[ASK]** What impact did that have on you or your relationship with that person?

**[NOTE:** Allow for responses. Examples might include

- felt like they cared and what I said mattered
- felt like they understood
- increased my willingness to continue to share things with them
- strengthened my trust in them.]

### 3. Explain that active listening encourages open communication that can build trust, connection, and unit cohesion.

**[CLICK TO ADVANCE]**

- The value of active listening is that it encourages open communication and the speaker feels respected and cared for.
- In turn, this type of communication builds rapport and demonstrates your concern about the Soldiers in your unit and fosters trust, connection, and unit cohesion.
- Therefore, using active listening with others provides opportunities to get ahead of crisis events by building strong relationships, which is an important part of a good suicide prevention program.

**[NOTE:** Sharing a personal example of how your use of active listening helped build rapport, trust, connection or cohesion can be beneficial here.]

### 4. Transition.

- Next, we will review how you can be more deliberate in using active listening.

Record your own notes here:





Record your own notes here:



**Introduce the fundamentals of active listening using the RASA acronym.**

**1. Introduce the fundamentals of active listening using the RASA acronym.**

*[NOTE: This is meant to be an overview and introduction to the RASA components. DO NOT spend time explaining each component here; each one is discussed in greater detail in the slides to follow.]*

- There are four basic fundamentals for effective active listening, which can be remembered by the acronym RASA. This stands for Receive, Acknowledge, Summarize, and Ask.

**2. Explain the importance of reflecting understanding throughout the process.**

- Throughout the active listening process, it is important to provide intentional feedback to the speaker that assures them that you are understanding the meaning of what has been said.
- This can be done by mirroring the content and the emotion of what was said through both verbal and non-verbal cues. For example, when you summarize, you not only summarize the content but also restate the speaker's tone of emotion while doing so with respect.



### 3. Explain the value of having a process to rely upon and intentionally train.

- There are parts of active listening that may be intuitive or may come naturally for you or others. Sometimes when stress increases, however, it is helpful to have a process to rely upon. With more deliberate awareness of the fundamentals, you can be more intentional in training your effectiveness at using them.
- Although we use the acronym RASA to remember the fundamentals of the skill, you do not have to use them in any specific order.

### 4. Set up the Soldiers for an active review of the RASA fundamentals and for the practical exercise ahead.

- A few moments ago, I asked you to share about a personal experience of being actively listened to. You will likely find that many of your responses align with the RASA fundamentals.
- As we work through each fundamental, you'll have the opportunity to connect your earlier responses to the respective fundamental you believe it best aligns with.
- Following the review, you will practice the RASA fundamentals with one another in a practical exercise.

**[NOTE: This is a natural transition to the next slide.]**

**[NOTE: The four RASA fundamental slides follow a general battle rhythm**

1. Describe the fundamental.
2. Pose a question for quick engagement.
3. Get a couple of responses (most responses were generated in the discussion of 'What is active listening?' Here you are helping Soldiers to match those behaviors with the respective RASA fundamental).
4. Build the slide [click to advance] to show additional examples to supplement Soldier responses if/when necessary.
5. Move on to the next slide.]

Record your own notes here:



 **RASA: Receive**   
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RESILIENCE AND READINESS

**R** **RECEIVE: Give full attention and defer judgment**

 **How can you show the speaker that you are effectively receiving the message?**

- Squaring up body position and making good eye contact
- Resisting mentally preparing what you will say in response
- Allowing the speaker to finish before asking any questions or offering your perspective
- Trying to empathize with the speaker and putting yourself into their shoes
- Resisting interrupting with counter arguments or offering quick solutions

DPRR 5

Record your own notes here:



**Review the “Receive” fundamental of active listening. [?]**

**[SLIDE BUILDS]**

1.

**Describe the “Receive” fundamental of active listening.**

- R stands for Receive. You receive information by giving your full attention to the person and to what they are saying while also deferring judgment.
- Showing the speaker that the intended message is received helps to ensure a shared understanding and concern for what is being said.

2.

**Ask for example behaviors that demonstrate a person is effectively receiving the message being sent.**

- **[ASK]** How can you show the speaker that you are effectively receiving the message?

**[NOTE: Allow for responses. Help Soldiers recall some examples that were given during the initial group discussion that relate to “receiving.”]**



**[CLICK TO ADVANCE]**

- Here are some additional examples of behaviors that demonstrates you are in receive mode:



**[NOTE: Only review examples here that supplement the responses already given by Soldiers, no need to belabor the point if initial discussion covered it adequately.]**

- squaring up body position and making good eye contact
- resisting mentally preparing what you will say in response
- allowing the speaker to finish before asking any questions or offering your perspective
- trying to empathize with the speaker and putting yourself into their shoes
- resisting interrupting with counter arguments or offering quick solutions


**[NOTE: This is a natural transition to the next slide.]**

Record your own notes here:



 **RASA: Acknowledge**   
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**A** **ACKNOWLEDGE:** Demonstrate you are listening by using verbal and nonverbal cues

 **What are some behaviors that demonstrate you acknowledge what is being said?**

- Be sure to nod occasionally and/or provide a thumbs up
- Use facial expressions to show interest and or concern
- Be sure your posture is open and attentive
- Occasionally say "I see" or "go on" to encourage conversation

DPRR 6



**Review the "Acknowledge" fundamental of active listening.**

**[?]**

**[SLIDE BUILDS]**

**1.**

**Describe the "Acknowledge" fundamental of active listening.**

- A stands for Acknowledge. Acknowledging what is being said includes using both verbal and nonverbal responses to confirm delivery of the information.
- There are many ways in which you can demonstrate that you are listening.

**2.**

**Ask for example behaviors that demonstrate a person is acknowledging what is being said.**

- **[ASK]** What are some behaviors that demonstrate you acknowledge what is being said?

**[NOTE:** Allow for responses. Help Soldiers recall some examples that were given during the initial group discussion that relate to "acknowledging."**]**

Record your own notes here:



**[CLICK TO ADVANCE]**

- Here are some additional examples of behaviors that demonstrate you are acknowledging the person and what is being communicated:

**[NOTE: Only review examples here that supplement the responses already given by Soldiers, no need to belabor the point if initial discussion covered it adequately.]**

- nodding occasionally and/or providing a thumbs up
- using facial expressions to show interest and/or concern
- ensuring your posture is open and attentive rather than closed off (e.g., crossed arms, shoulders turned another direction, looking down at your phone or papers)
- occasionally provide affirming responses such as “I see” or “go on” to encourage conversation

**[NOTE: This is a natural transition to the next slide.]**

Record your own notes here:



**RASA: Summarize**

**S** **SUMMARIZE:** Taking a moment to pause and summarize what has been said by the speaker

**Paraphrase concisely what has been said:**

- Periodically summarize the speaker's comments to show you are listening
- Focus on what is being said by making mental or written notes

**Confirm your understanding of what has been said by repeating it back in your own words**

- "What I'm hearing you say is..."
- "Sounds like you are saying..."
- "To clarify, I heard you say... is that correct?"

**What is the purpose of a back brief?**

DPRR 7

Record your own notes here:



**Review the "Summarize" fundamental of active listening.**

[?]

**[SLIDE BUILDS]**

**1. Describe the "Summarize" fundamental of active listening.**

- S stands for Summarize. Throughout the conversation, taking a moment to pause and summarize what has been said by the speaker can help check for understanding.
- Summarizing intermittently also provides an opportunity for the speaker to correct any misunderstandings along the way.

**2. Review two ways that a Soldier might summarize: (1) paraphrasing and (2) repeating the message back in one's own words.**

- One way to summarize is to paraphrase concisely what has been said:
  - periodically summarize the speaker's comments to show you are listening
  - focus on what is being said by making mental or written notes





- Another way to summarize is to confirm your understanding of what has been said by repeating it back in your own words:
  - “What I'm hearing you say is...”
  - “Sounds like you are saying...”
  - “To clarify, I heard you say... is that correct?”

Record your own notes here:

### 3. Use a metaphor of an Army backbrief to encourage closing a conversation with a summative reflection.

#### **[CLICK TO ADVANCE]**

- Remember, there is no specific order of using the RASA fundamentals.
- At the conclusion of the conversation, it can be helpful to mirror back what you've just heard. This is known as a summative reflection.
- A summative reflection is similar to when you are asked to backbrief a leader after receiving a complex order.
- **[ASK]** What is the purpose of a backbrief?

**[NOTE:** Allow for responses. Examples include

- reduce miscommunication
- determine if instructions were received accurately
- check for understanding and retention.]

- With regard to active listening, summarizing periodically and at the conclusion of the conversation helps to reduce miscommunication of content or meaning of what was said and confirms a shared understanding.

**[NOTE:** This is a natural transition to the next slide.]



**RASA: Ask**

**A** *ASK: Ask clarifying questions to check for understanding*

**What are some advantages of asking open-ended questions rather than closed-ended questions?**

**Ask questions to clarify the meaning of what is being said:**

- "What do you mean when you say...?"
- "Help me better understand what you are saying."
- "I don't want to misunderstand, can you restate what you just said?"

**Ask for more information:**

- "I am not sure I fully understand, can you give me more information?"
- "I believe I understand what you are saying, but I need a little more information."

DPRR 8

Record your own notes here:



**Review the "Ask" fundamental of active listening.**

**[?]**

**[SLIDE BUILDS]**

**1. Describe the "Ask" fundamental of active listening.**

- A stands for Ask. It is a natural human desire to be heard and understood. Asking intentional questions shows that you, the listener, care to fully understand what is being said and what more the person has to say about the topic.
- The type of questions you ask will determine the type and quality of responses you get.

**2. Ask Soldiers what the advantage might be in asking open-ended questions rather than closed-ended questions.**

- **[ASK]** What are some advantages of asking open-ended questions rather than closed-ended questions?

**[NOTE:** Allow for responses. If necessary, explain that closed-ended questions are satisfied with a simple yes/no or other quick answer whereas open-ended questions require more explanation and detail.]

- Open-ended questions help to deepen understanding, encourage further discussion, and create a constructive conversation. Ideally, better conversations will foster stronger connections.



**3. Review some examples of open-ended questions that can be used to clarify the meaning of what is said or to gain more information.**

- Let's review some examples of open-ended questions.

**[CLICK TO ADVANCE]**

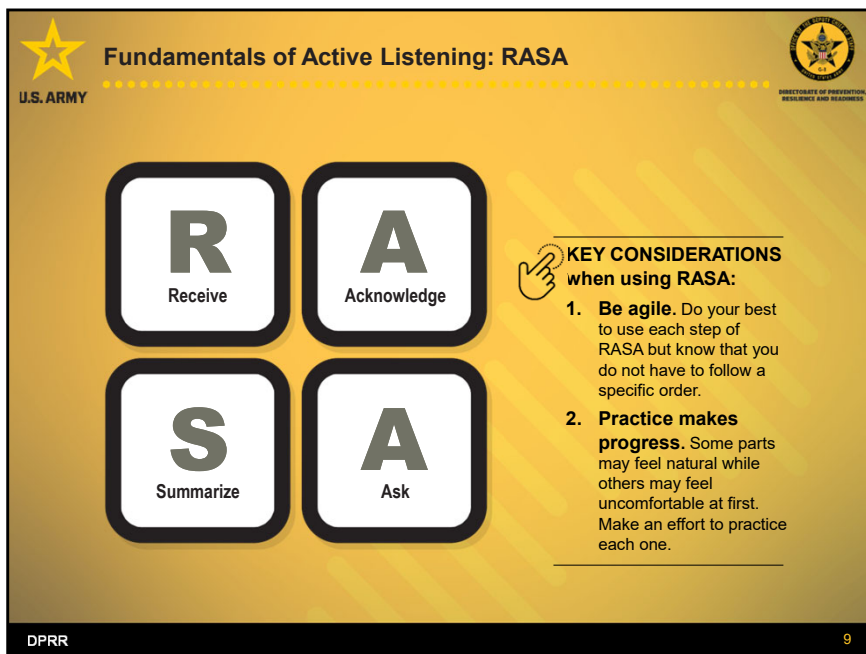
- To clarify the meaning of what is being said, you might choose to ask questions like
  - "What do you mean when you say...?"
  - "Help me better understand what you are saying."
  - "I don't want to misunderstand, can you restate what you just said?"
- You can also ask questions in order to get more information. Those questions might sound like
  - "I am not sure I fully understand, can you give me more information?"
  - "I believe I understand what you are saying, but I need a little more information."

**4. Transition.**

- Asking intentional and well-posed questions is a skill and the more you practice, the better you get.
- In fact, let's get in some practice right now. Next, we will do a practical exercise where each of you will get to practice the RASA fundamentals and strengthen your active listening skills.

Record your own notes here:





The slide features a yellow background with a star logo in the top left corner and the U.S. Army logo in the top right corner. The title "Fundamentals of Active Listening: RASA" is centered at the top. Below the title, there are four white rounded squares arranged in a 2x2 grid. The top-left square contains the letter "R" and the word "Receive". The top-right square contains the letter "A" and the word "Acknowledge". The bottom-left square contains the letter "S" and the word "Summarize". The bottom-right square contains the letter "A" and the word "Ask". To the right of these squares, there is a hand icon pointing to the text "KEY CONSIDERATIONS when using RASA:". Below this text are two numbered points: "1. Be agile. Do your best to use each step of RASA but know that you do not have to follow a specific order." and "2. Practice makes progress. Some parts may feel natural while others may feel uncomfortable at first. Make an effort to practice each one." At the bottom left of the slide, it says "DPRR" and at the bottom right, it says "9".

Record your own notes here:



**Prepare Soldiers for the practical exercise by sharing key considerations to keep in mind when practicing active listening using the RASA fundamentals.**

**1. Share key considerations to keep in mind for effectively using RASA in the practical exercise.**

- Before we begin the practical exercise, there are a few considerations to keep in mind when aiming to use the RASA fundamentals to support your active listening ability.
- When having an organic conversation, the RASA fundamentals may not always occur in their respective order. You may find yourself moving back and forth; that is part of authentic conversation. Just do your best to practice each component.
- Also, some components may come naturally and feel comfortable while other components may take more concentrated effort and feel awkward at first.
- I encourage you to take advantage of this safe training environment and the opportunity to practice a skill that can support you in building strong connections and support your role in suicide prevention. Be comfortable being uncomfortable for the sake of improving your skills.

**[NOTE: This is a natural transition to the next slide.]**



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Set up and execute Round 1 of the practical exercise.



**1. Instruct the Soldiers to partner up and determine roles for Round 1.**

*[NOTE: To effectively meet the purpose and standards set for this module, it is important that you conduct this practical exercise in pairs so that each and every Soldier is given the opportunity to practice active listening within the training time.]*

- For this practical exercise, you will work with a partner. There will be two rounds so each person has an opportunity to be in the Active Listener role.
- After Round 1 is complete, I will guide you to switch roles for Round 2.
- Right now, please take a moment to pair off with someone sitting close to you and determine your roles for Round 1. Decide who will start in the Speaker role and who will start in the Active Listener role.

Record your own notes here:

*[NOTE: If the training has an odd number of participants, then a group of three will be necessary. In this case, give clear direction for the third person to assume the role as Observer and take notes of sustains and improves to offer valuable feedback to the group.]*



## 2. Explain the roles and responsibilities of the Speaker and of the Active Listener.

- This exercise will mimic the ASK and CARE steps in using ACE to bolster protective factors.
- The Active Listener will start off the conversation by ASKing the Speaker, “What is a ‘fun fact’ about you that I might not already know?”
- As the Speaker, you will respond with your answer.

*[NOTE: You might need to describe what a “fun fact” means. For example, a ‘fun fact’ can be something seemingly simple like your favorite food or favorite duty station or it could be something more grandiose like having ridden a camel in the Egyptian desert. The disclaimer is that whatever a Soldier chooses to share, it needs to be appropriate in the professional training environment (i.e., rated PG).]*

- Then, continue in conversation to allow the Active Listener to practice using the 4 fundamentals of active listening: Receive, Acknowledge, Summarize, and Ask.

## 3. Execute the practical exercise, Round 1.

*[NOTE: Ask if there are any questions. Then, begin the exercise.]*

*Allow and encourage conversations to flow.*

*After discussions have finished, ask Soldiers to close out their conversations to complete Round 1.*

*You might choose to allow Soldiers to share initial reactions or thoughts about the exercise, but save deeper discussion for the debrief after Round 2.]*

## 4. Execute the practical exercise, Round 2.

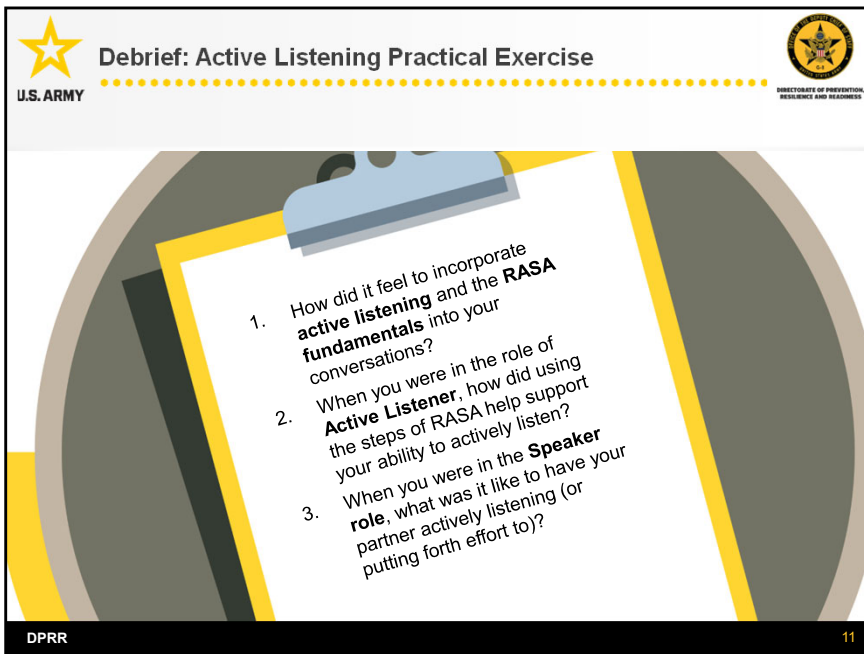
*[NOTE: Instruct Soldiers to switch roles and begin Round 2 of the practical exercise.]*

*After discussions have finished, ask Soldiers to close out their conversations to complete Round 2.*

*Then, transition to the debrief on the next slide.]*

Record your own notes here:





Record your own notes here:



Debrief the practical exercise (Rounds 1 and 2).

[?]



1. Debrief the practical exercise.

- **[ASK]** How did it feel to use active listening and the RASA fundamentals in your conversations?

**[NOTE:** This question serves to get discussion flowing by asking for initial impressions. Allow simple responses, such as 'awkward,' 'scripted,' 'helpful,' and then move onto the next debrief question.]

- If some of the steps felt awkward or the conversation felt scripted, that is okay. Whenever we are learning a new skill or perfecting the fundamentals, it can feel mechanical or awkward at first. The more you practice, however, the more comfortable you become.
- **[ASK]** When you were in the role of Active Listener, how did using the RASA fundamentals help support your ability to actively listen?

**[NOTE:** Allow for responses. Possible responses include: using the steps kept me focused on learning more and kept me out of problem-solving mode; helped me be more aware of the emotions and tone I was reflecting back.]





- **[ASK]** When you were in the Speaker role, what was it like to have your partner actively listening (or putting forth effort to)?

*[NOTE: Allow for responses. Possible responses include: felt respected, felt like I mattered, it made me comfortable to open up and want to share more.]*


Record your own notes here:

**2. Acknowledge that when “practicing” active listening, it not only improves the skill but also positively impacts the relationship with the other person.**


- The good news is that when you “practice” active listening, it is not only helping you improve your skill but it is simultaneously impacting the relationship and strength of connection with the other person in the conversation.
- Now that you have a feel for what it is like to use active listening to bolster protective factors, let’s consider how active listening, specifically the RASA fundamentals, apply to conversations when you detect yellow light risk factors.

*[NOTE: This is a natural transition to the next slide.]*







Active Listening to Show you CARE: Mitigate Risk



U.S. ARMY

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RESILIENCE AND READINESS

**RISK FACTORS**

**Scenario** You notice SGT Jones has been kind of testy lately. He seems to get easily frustrated and will sometimes fly off the handle. You also heard him sharing with someone that he hasn't been sleeping well lately.

|                       |                         |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>R</b><br>Receive   | <b>A</b><br>Acknowledge |
| <b>S</b><br>Summarize | <b>A</b><br>Ask         |

DPRR 12



**Set up the vignette to demonstrate using the RASA fundamentals in a conversation to help mitigate risk.**

**1. Share a scenario where a Soldier identifies yellow light risk factors in a fellow Soldier and initiates the ACE process.**

- Let's walk through a possible scenario. You notice SGT Jones has been kind of testy lately. He seems to get easily frustrated and will sometimes fly off the handle. You also heard him sharing with someone that he hasn't been sleeping well lately.
- From your observations, you have identified yellow light risk factors so you decide to act on your responsibility of using ACE.
- You initiate conversation by *asking* SGT Jones, "How are things going?"
- SGT Jones responds, "I don't know. I've just been really stressed."
- Some Soldiers might stop there while others may offer information more freely. Sometimes it may require you to ASK another question right off the bat, like "Ah, I'm sorry to hear that. What's been causing you stress?"

Record your own notes here:




**2. Describe how a Soldier might demonstrate active listening in conversation with SGT Jones, specifically Receiving and Acknowledging.**

- You are committed to actively listening to SGT Jones as he is talking.
- You demonstrate you are *receiving* what is said by putting your phone away, making eye contact, and resisting the urge to offer quick solutions.
- You *acknowledge* what he is saying by nodding along and letting your facial expressions mirror the emotions and tone that SGT Jones is expressing.

**[NOTE: This is a natural transition to the next slide.]**

Record your own notes here:





**Active Listening to Show you CARE: Mitigate Risk**

U.S. ARMY DIRECTORATE OF PREVENTION, RESILIENCE AND RECOVERY

"I'm really not sure how this Army thing is going to work out. I've got a family now and it's making everything a lot harder."

What is an example of an open-ended question that you might ask to get more information?

"Are there specific things about having a family or being unsure about the Army that are making things harder?"

"We just had a baby last month and she's not sleeping well at night, so neither am I. Because I want to set us up for the future, I decided to take college classes and enrolled in one. It's a lot more work than I thought it was going to be. It's really hard to concentrate at work, on my homework, and on anything. I'm sucking at everything. Little things are causing me to snap that never used to and I'm just pissed off all the time."

R  
Receive

A  
Acknowledge

S  
Summarize

A  
Ask

DPRR 13

Record your own notes here:



**Work through the vignette as a group to discuss how a Soldier could use Active Listening (RASA) to mitigate risk.**

[?]

**[SLIDE BUILDS]**

**1. Reveal the transcript that SGT Jones has said.**

- Here is what SGT Jones continues to share with you.
- "I'm really not sure how this Army thing is going to work out. I've got a family now and it's making everything a lot harder."

**2. Ask the Soldiers to practice their skill of asking open-ended questions to clarify your understanding or get more information.**

- **[ASK]** What is an example of an open-ended question that you might ask to clarify your understanding or to get more information?

**[NOTE: Allow for responses.]**

**[CLICK TO ADVANCE]**

- A possible question you might ask is, "Are there specific things about having a family or being unsure about the Army that are making things harder?"



- SGT Jones responds: “We just had a baby last month and she’s not sleeping well at night, so neither am I. Because I want to set us up for the future, I decided to take college classes and enrolled in one. It’s a lot more work than I thought it was going to be. It’s really hard to concentrate at work, on my homework, and on anything. I’m sucking at everything. Little things are causing me to snap that never used to and I’m just pissed off all the time.”

Record your own notes here:

### 3. Ask the Soldiers to practice their skill of summarizing.

- **[ASK]** How might you summarize what has just been shared with you?

*[NOTE: Allow for responses. Possible examples include:*

- *“So the increased responsibilities at home and the class you’re taking has added a lot of stress.”*
- *“What I hear you saying is that you really do have a lot of things going on right now with the baby, not sleeping, and having an extra workload.”]*

### 4. Explain how a Soldier might continue the ACE process by transitioning to the Escort step.

- Based on the information you receive during the conversation, you might move to the Escort step of the ACE process.
- For example, you might transition from actively listening to having a discussion about possible solutions, such as trying out specific strategies or resources. It is important that you give SGT Jones the opportunity to share fully before offering solutions (e.g., helping resources).

### 5. Transition.

- Now that you have had the opportunity to practice actively listening with a partner and as a group, the goal is to put it into practice in real life.
- Active listening is something that seems simple and easy, but it takes effort.
- Because it is an active process, it also requires you to have the motivation.



**The Army Values and Active Listening**

U.S. ARMY

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
RESILIENCE AND READINESS

**Army Values**

- ★ **LOYALTY**  
Bear true faith and allegiance to the U.S. Constitution, the Army, your unit, and other Soldiers.
- ★ **DUTY**  
Fulfill your obligations.
- ★ **RESPECT**  
Treat people as they should be treated.
- ★ **PERSONAL COURAGE**  
Face fear, danger, or adversity (physical or moral).
- ★ **HONOR**  
Live up to the Army Values.
- ★ **SELFLESS SERVICE**  
Put the welfare of the Nation, the Army, and subordinates before your own.
- ★ **INTEGRITY**  
Do what's right, legally and morally.

**RASA**

- R** Receive
- A** Acknowledge
- S** Summarize
- A** Ask

How could the **Army Values** help motivate you to engage in active listening and the **RASA** fundamentals as it pertains to suicide prevention and intervention?

DPRR 14

Record your own notes here:



**Encourage Soldiers to draw on the Army Values to direct active listening behavior especially in more challenging situations.**

[?]

**1. Ask Soldiers how they could draw on the Army Values to motivate them to engage in active listening as it pertains to suicide prevention.**

- In the ACE Base module, we established that our values drive our behavior.
- **[ASK]** How could the Army Values help motivate you to engage in active listening and the RASA fundamentals as it pertains to suicide prevention and intervention?

**[NOTE:** Allow for responses. Possible examples may include

- *Respect: Making eye contact, giving someone full attention, acknowledging what is said (Receive & Acknowledge)*
- *Personal Courage: Sometimes summarizing what was said or asking questions to get more information can feel awkward or uncomfortable (Ask & Summarize)*
- *Loyalty & Duty: Putting forth the effort and energy even when you don't feel like it or don't like the person (Receive & Acknowledge).]*



**2. Encourage Soldiers to draw on the Army Values to direct active listening behavior especially in more challenging situations.**

- Listening and responding to a fun fact in a low-stress environment like this training session was likely easy and fun.
- There will be times when the situation seems difficult or uncomfortable, when stress is higher, and when the stakes are greater.
- During these more challenging times, you have the Army Values to draw upon for motivation to engage in active listening and in the ACE process.

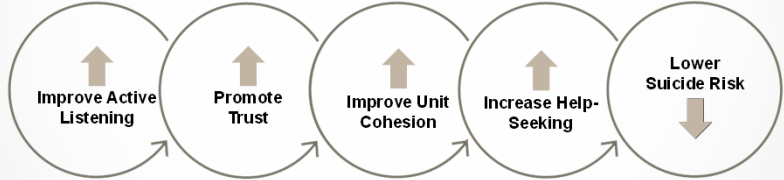
*[NOTE: This is a natural transition to the next slide.]*

Record your own notes here:



 **Active Listening and Suicide Prevention**   
U.S. ARMY DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
RESILIENCE AND READINESS


**?** How can **active listening** be an effective tool to lower the risk of suicide?



```
graph LR; A[Improve Active Listening] --> B[Promote Trust]; B --> C[Improve Unit Cohesion]; C --> D[Increase Help-Seeking]; D --> E[Lower Suicide Risk]
```

DPRR 15

Record your own notes here:

 **Discuss the connection between active listening and suicide prevention.** **[?]**

**[SLIDE BUILDS]**

**1. Discuss the connection between active listening and suicide prevention.**

- Now that we have spent considerable time deepening our understanding of suicide prevention and active listening, it is worth the time to put it all together and clearly connect the dots.
- **[ASK]** How can active listening be an effective tool to lower the risk of suicide?

**[NOTE: Allow for responses.]**

- Active listening is a tool to effectively engage in the ACE process. The skill involves ASKing critical questions, showing you CARE, and gather information that is important to ESCORT the Soldier to the best resources.
- Furthermore, active listening helps to build relationships, allowing team members to detect problems earlier, reducing the risk for adverse outcomes, thereby contributing to suicide prevention.





**2. Use the image to demonstrate the logical connection between active listening and suicide prevention.**

***[CLICK TO ADVANCE]***



- Throughout this module, we have demonstrated that engaging in active listening can promote trust.
- A unit with members that can trust one another will naturally help to improve unit cohesion.
- Studies have shown that cohesion within a unit relates to an increase in help-seeking behavior in the unit.
- Furthermore, a unit that has strong relationships, trust, and cohesion enhances the ability of team members to successfully Ask, Care, Escort and take action, all crucial steps in the ACE process.
- By increasing your active listening abilities, you are increasing your ability to positively affect the suicide prevention efforts within your unit and within the Army as a whole, and help to lower the risk of suicide.

**3. Transition.**

- Now that we've covered ACE and active listening, let's talk about your next steps.


Record your own notes here:



 **Next Steps: Plan to Implement** 

U.S. ARMY DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
RESILIENCE AND READINESS

 What is **one thing** you plan to do within the next week or two **that can help lower the risk of suicide** within your unit or among your friends and family members?



Preventing suicide requires taking **proactive steps**

DPRR 16

Record your own notes here:



**Ask Soldiers to consider their next steps in implementing what they've gained from today's training and encourage them to talk about suicide prevention with others. [?]**

**1. Ask Soldiers to identify one thing to implement from today's training in the next week or two that can help lower the risk of suicide.**

- Throughout a typical day or week, you have many opportunities to apply what you've learned today in the ACE Base module and this +1 module.
- **[ASK]** Based on what we've covered today, what is one thing you plan to do within the next week or two that can help lower the risk of suicide within your unit or your friends and family members?

**[NOTE:** Allow for responses. Encourage Soldiers to consider specific, tangible actions. Examples may include

- identify a specific person in my unit or Circle of Support and check in to see how they are doing
- draw on one of the Army Values when tempted to avoid uncomfortable conversations
- invite a fellow Soldier over for a weekend BBQ
- make an effort to ask more open-ended questions to improve active listening skills
- remind myself to just listen (receive and acknowledge) when others are sharing their problems with me rather than being quick to offer solutions or ways to fix the situation.]



**2. Encourage Soldiers to talk to one another and to members of their Circle of Support about effective strategies to prevent suicide.**

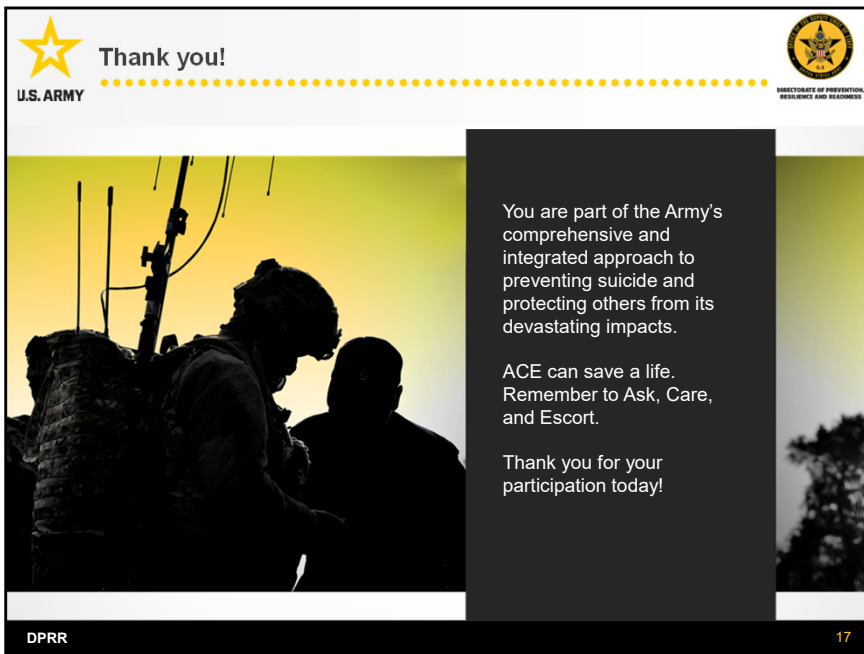
***[CLICK TO ADVANCE]***

- Preventing suicide requires taking proactive steps.
- In addition to the plans you all have just shared, here are some proactive steps you might consider taking with your fellow Soldiers and others within your Circle of Support:
  - look for opportunities to use active listening to enhance communication and connection and to build trust
  - ask who they feel most comfortable talking with if there is ever a concern or moment of crisis, and share that same information with them about you
  - talk about which resources you and they might find most helpful and put the contact information in your phones
  - when they are facing a challenge, encourage them to use resources proactively such as when there is even a hint of concern rather than waiting until it's a crisis situation, and you yourself seek help early and proactively to role model this proactive and preventative behavior

***[NOTE: This is a natural transition to the next slide.]***

Record your own notes here:





Record your own notes here:



**Thank Soldiers for their participation, and empower them to take an active role in the Army's integrated and comprehensive approach to prevent suicide.**

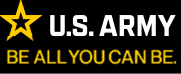
1.

**Empower Soldiers to take an active role in the Army's integrated and comprehensive approach to prevent suicide, and thank Soldiers for their participation.**


- Remember, you are part of the Army's comprehensive and integrated approach to preventing suicide and protecting others from its devastating impacts.
- The Army and its people need you to concentrate your efforts in the prevention strategies within your control and influence, which you have gained from today's training.
- ACE can save a life. So remember to Ask, Care, and Escort.
- Thank you for your participation today and for demonstrating your selfless support of your fellow Soldiers and the whole Army Family.



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 **U.S. ARMY**  
BE ALL YOU CAN BE.

**Post-Training Survey**



[https://wrair.gov1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_aXFrN0d3WYotlii](https://wrair.gov1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_aXFrN0d3WYotlii)

Participants: You have just completed the **ACE Active Listening** module.

*Completing the survey will assist the DPRR in determining the effectiveness of training and will inform curriculum revisions during the next update cycle.*

*If you received the Base module prior to this module, please select the Base + Active Listening option on the survey.*

Record your own notes here:



## Introduce Post-Training Survey

### 1. Introduce survey.

- Before we dismiss, please take a few moments to complete the ACE Post-Training Survey.
- The survey was developed by the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research on behalf of the DPRR.

**[NOTE: Emphasize the importance of the survey.]**

- Completing the survey will assist the DPRR in determining the effectiveness of training and will inform curriculum revisions.
- Participation is optional and responses are anonymous.
- You can access the survey by either scanning the QR code with your phone or by going to the website URL, which is shown in blue.
- Please note the module you are surveying and select the matching bubble on your survey.

**[NOTE: Participants should only take survey at the end of the base module if it is the only module trained. If a second module is trained, check the box that represents the ACE Base + (appropriate subsequent module) Example: ACE Base + Active Listening.]**

**[NOTE: For survey issues, contact CPT John Eric M. Novosel-Lingat at [johneric.m.novosel-lingat.mil@health.mil](mailto:johneric.m.novosel-lingat.mil@health.mil)]**



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