



The “Ask” in ACE

TASK: Teach your Soldiers the importance of asking directly when risk factors and/or warning signs for suicide are present.

CONDITIONS: Discussion – Question based.

STANDARDS: Understand when risk factors and/or warning signs are present, it is very important to ask, “Are you thinking about killing yourself?”

REFERENCE(S): Unit trained Gatekeepers IAW AR 600-63, para 4-4.j. and AKO SP:

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



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Soldiers are expected to know the risk factors and warning signs they might see in themselves or battle buddy if he or she is suicidal.

DISCUSSION: Ask Soldiers what some of the risk factors/warning signs are:

- Examples may include: (1) Death of Battle Buddy, (2) physical and emotional challenges of deployment/garrison, (3) separation from Family/Friends, (4) break-up, (5) death of Family member, legal issues, finances, health problems, job related issues, relationship issues, divorce/separation.

Look for any outward sign that shows a departure from your battle buddy's usual self and ask simple questions such as: How does that feel? What does that mean to you?

YOUR LITTLE QUESTIONS MAY MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE.



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Teach Soldiers How to “ASK”:

- Ask directly about thoughts and plans for suicide.
- Say something like, “I can see that you feel distressed about possibly losing your wife and kids.” “Is this bothering you to the point of you thinking about suicide?” “Have you thought of killing yourself or someone else?”
- Also ask, “Have you thought of how you plan to kill yourself?”

TALK OPENLY ABOUT SUICIDE. BE WILLING TO LISTEN AND ALLOW YOUR BATTLE BUDDY TO EXPRESS HIS OR HER FEELINGS.



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- Ask Soldiers: “Why their Battle Buddy might want them to be the person to ask about suicide?”

They need you to signal it’s ok to talk about suicide.

Possible fear of rejection....

Ask why they think it is important to ***ASK DIRECTLY – ARE YOU THINKING ABOUT SUICIDE?***

- *What might happen if they ask indirectly? Such as, “You aren’t thinking about doing something stupid, are you?”*

- Their Battle Buddy probably won’t answer honestly.

- **What if they say NO? Help in some other way based on the circumstances.**
When the risk factors/warning signs are present, talking with your Battle Buddy about them gives them the sign that they are recognized and acknowledged.

Asking directly gives your Battle Buddy relief and meets their need for permission to talk...that it’s ok to talk about suicide.