



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF
WASHINGTON, DC

JUL 2 2001

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

FROM: AF/CVA

SUBJECT: Community Training for Suicide Prevention

The loss of a single life from suicide is one too many. The Air Force Suicide Prevention Program originated in the summer of 1996 to curb an increasing number of suicides among active duty personnel. In the five years prior to the beginning of our program, the Air Force averaged 60 deaths annually at a rate of 14.3 per 100,000 personnel. Since 1996, Air Force suicide rates have dropped by more than half.

Increased training, heightened awareness, and encouragement to seek assistance during times of personal crisis have been critical factors in achieving our results. We have demonstrated that with an increased focus on taking care of our own, lives can be saved. Suicide is preventable if we all do our part.

Community training is an essential part of our suicide prevention endeavors. Education in suicide prevention requires effort by Air Force members at all levels and across all functional communities. Although there is a requirement to track the number of personnel trained annually, this information is collected and reported only through the SG chain. In order to more accurately monitor the training at the installation level this information should be collected by the military treatment facility and reported to the installation Integrated Delivery System (IDS) up through the base and MAJCOM Community Action Information Boards (CAIB) to the Air Force CAIB. A planned update of AFI 44-154, Community Training: Suicide and Violence Awareness Education, will reflect this change.

While our improvements in suicide prevention are significant and our initiatives have saved lives, suicide remains a serious concern. Since January 1st we have already lost 12 airmen. Suicide prevention is an ongoing effort that requires our continued compassion and concern for our fellow airmen. Toward that end I am soliciting your ideas and best practices. Please forward your recommendations, and concerns to the Air Force Integrated Delivery System through your MAJCOM CAIB. I appreciate your continued support as we continue our work on this effort. If we take care of our people, they will take care of the mission.


LANCE W. LORD
Lieutenant General, USAF
Assistant Vice Chief of Staff

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