



THE “ASK” IN ACE

(This card is used to facilitate instruction, questions to ask – answers ETC... If the back is required – that’s OK – but try to limit to one card for reference)

The “Ask” in ACE: ---BEFORE THEY ASK---

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.

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

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

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.