



UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS  
I MARINE EXPEDITIONARY FORCE  
U. S. MARINE CORPS FORCES, PACIFIC  
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IN REPLY REFER TO:  
1700  
SSEC/EPBH  
APR 4 2016

LETTER OF INSTRUCTION 10-16

From: Commanding General, I Marine Expeditionary Force  
To: Distribution List

Subj: LETTER OF INSTRUCTION (LOI) FOR STRENGTHENING AND SUSTAINING A  
CULTURE OF READINESS

Ref: (a) 37th Commandant's FRAGO, January 2016  
(b) 36th Commandant's Planning Guidance, January 2015  
(c) MCO 1500.61 Marine Corps Leadership Development  
(d) MCO 1720.2 Marine Corps Suicide Prevention Program  
(e) MCO 1754.11 Marine Corps Family Advocacy and General  
Counseling Program  
(f) MCO 5300.17 Marine Corps Substance Abuse Program  
(g) Final Report of the DoD Task Force on the Prevention of  
Suicide by Members of the Armed Forces, August 2010  
(h) MCO 1700.41 Marine Corps Embedded Preventive Behavioral  
Health Capability  
(i) I MEF FY16 Campaign Plan  
(j) MCRP 6-11B Marine Corps Values: A User's Guide for  
Discussion Leaders

Encl: (1) Guided Discussion Lesson Plan - Suicide Prevention  
(2) One Minute Anonymous Feedback Form

1. Situation

a. Marines are I Marine Expeditionary Force's (I MEF) greatest asset. They are the foundation that underpins our ability to innovate, adapt, and win; and their sustained readiness determines future success in a complex and uncertain operating environment. Marines are expected to support and execute a myriad of tasks; from maintaining current operations, to supporting the modernization of the force, all while continuing to develop their warfighting readiness.

b. In order to succeed in an environment with unprecedented professional and personal demands, Marines must continue to be fit, disciplined, adaptive, and resilient.

c. They must be prepared to overcome personal stressors such as relationship problems, illnesses, changes in duty stations and the overall complexities of life.

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d. Strengthening and sustaining a "culture of readiness", as referenced in (a), will enable the force to recognize risk factors and mitigate negative outcomes such as intimate partner abuse, substance abuse, and suicide-related thoughts or actions.

2. Mission. From 1 April 2016 through 31 December 2016, I MEF will conduct unit-led guided discussions and targeted training in order to strengthen and sustain a culture of readiness through responsible decision-making and sound problem solving.

3. Execution

a. Commander's Intent and Concept of Operations

(1) Commander's Intent. Marines are expected to be ready to go anywhere in the world, on short notice, and win decisively. This can only be done with a force that is confident, adaptive, and resilient. Leaders at all levels must establish a culture of readiness by engaging Marines in a sincere and professional dialogue; and understanding how to effectively apply the resources at hand. The desired end state is an optimized and resilient force prepared for the challenges of military life, and postured to excel at warfighting.

(2) Concept of Operations. Guided discussions and targeted training set the conditions for strengthening a culture of readiness and mitigating adverse events such as substance abuse, relationship problems, intimate partner abuse, and suicide-related thoughts and actions.

b. Subordinate Element Tasks. In accordance with reference (a) through (j), engage no less than twenty percent of assigned personnel, at the battalion level, during the period of 1 April 2016 through 31 December 2016. The following sequential steps provide a framework for implementation:

(1) Determine Unit Trends. Determine unit trends, assisted by monthly reports prepared by Embedded Preventive Behavioral Health (EPBH) Analysts.

(2) Plan Guided Discussion. Plan guided discussion topics and training goals based on unit trends, as outlined in Enclosure (1). Guided discussions are well established as an effective method for instruction within the Marine Corps. Both the discussion leader and participants are postured to think more critically about an issue, reevaluate their opinions, and set the conditions for greater learning and understanding.

(3) Conduct. Conduct and lead guided discussions, with the assistance of EPBH Specialists and in collaboration with subject

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matter experts. Subject matter experts include, but are not limited to, the Community Counseling Center (CCC), Substance Abuse Counseling Center (SACC), Family Advocacy Program (FAP), Military and Family Life Consultants (MFLCs), Operational Stress Control and Readiness (OSCAR) providers, Chaplains, Families Overcoming Under Stress (FOCUS), Sexual Assault Response Coordinators (SARCs), Medical Officers, etc.

(4) Evaluate. Evaluate the effectiveness of guided discussions; and provide metrics to EPBH Analysts on a monthly basis.

(5) Plan Targeted Training. Informed by Marines' feedback during guided discussions, plan targeted training that meets the specific needs of the unit.

(6) Conduct. Conduct targeted training, with the assistance of EPBH Specialists and in collaboration with subject matter experts.

(7) Evaluate. Assess the quality and efficacy of targeted training; and provide metrics to EPBH Analysts on a monthly basis.

(8) Report. With the assistance of EPBH Analysts and guidance of the I MEF EPBH Director, compile metrics, conduct statistical analysis, incorporate results into monthly reports, and develop follow-on recommendations.

c. Coordinating Instructions

(1) Reporting Guidance

(a) With the assistance of EPBH Specialists, EPBH Analysts will receive monthly metrics in the categories of: suicide-related behavior, intimate partner abuse, DUI/DWIs, positive urinalyses results, and guided discussion/targeted training assessments.

(b) Existing training evaluation forms will be utilized to assist with assessment. If a guided discussion or targeted training does not have a corresponding evaluation form, Enclosure (2) is provided.

(c) With the assistance of EPBH Analysts, monthly metrics will be compiled, statistical analysis performed, and standardized monthly and quarterly reports provided that identify Regimental-level unit trends and recommended courses of action. With the guidance of the I MEF EPBH Director, monthly reports will be prepared and submitted through the chain of command on the second Friday of each month. Standardized report templates, as well as quarterly report due dates, will be sent through separate correspondence.

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(d) The subject matter expertise of EPBH Analysts will be leveraged to create a final report which identifies measures of effectiveness, between 1 April 2016 and 31 December 2016; and provides a comparison in relation to 1 April 2015 through 31 December 2015. The report will include Regimental-level statistical analysis and interpretation, best practices, lessons learned, and recommended courses of action for future initiatives. On 1 March 2017, final reports will be submitted through the chain of command to the I MEF EPBH Director.

(2) Training Guidance

(a) In an effort to support all I MEF Marines, the intent is for widest participation with added emphasis on Marines ages 18-24. Even the most prepared and effective Marines will have experiences that temporarily impact readiness.

(b) In accordance with established best practices, commands are highly encouraged to conduct discussions and training in peer groups of thirty Marines or less.

(c) Guided discussions and targeted training complement, but do not replace, existing initiatives and training such as the "Protect What You've Earned" campaign, and Unit Marine Awareness Prevention and Integrated Training (UMAPIT).

(d) Coordination of support will be determined by Regimental Commanders for units not staffed with EPBH Specialists.

4. Administration and Logistics. Directives issued by this Headquarters are published and distributed electronically.

5. Command and Signal

a. Command

(1) This LOI is applicable to all I MEF commands.

(2) The point of contact is I MEF EPBH Director Denise L. Feldbush at denise.feldbush@usmc.mil or (760)763-8109.

b. Signal. This LOI is effective the date signed.

  
M. L. JONES  
Chief of Staff

Distribution: I/II

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GUIDED DISCUSSION LESSON PLAN - SUICIDE PREVENTION

INTRODUCTION

Discussion Leader:

Good morning/afternoon, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. Today we will be talking about suicide prevention, the warning signs of suicide-related behavior, the risk factors that may increase the likelihood of suicide; and how intervening and applying certain leadership traits and principles can help with preventing suicide.

The ground rules for this discussion are:

- (1) No personal attacks on anyone's opinions
- (2) Allow each participant to express themselves
- (3) Drinking coffee and soda is allowed
- (4) Make head calls at your leisure, just don't interrupt the group
- (5) Keep your language clean as not to offend others
- (6) PARTICIPATION BY ALL!

Key points for this discussion will be:

- (1) Definition of suicide
- (2) Discuss suicide-related warning signs
- (3) Discuss risk factors of suicide
- (4) Discuss how intervening and applying certain leadership traits and principles can help prevent suicide

Learning Objective:

After this guided discussion, you will have a better understanding of suicide, the warning signs of suicide-related behavior, the risk factors that may increase the likelihood of suicide; and how intervening and applying certain leadership traits and principles can help prevent suicide.

KEY POINT 1

1. What does the term suicide mean? Do you know anyone who attempted or died by suicide?

- Death caused by self-directed injurious behavior with any intent to die as a result of the behavior.
- Suicide is an irreversible reaction to a problem.
- Suicide is now understood as multidimensional; resulting from a complex interaction of biological, psychological, sociological, and environmental factors.

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- Suicide is among the top 10 causes of death in every country; and the second leading cause of death of 15-34 year-olds in the United States.

2. Is there a typical Sailor or Marine who dies by suicide?

- Most suicides occur among white males under 30 in the enlisted ranks. Keep in mind, however, that suicide risk can be found in all ranks, in both genders, and across all races.

Interim Summary: We just finished defining suicide and discussing who may be at risk. Now let's talk about warning signs of suicide-related behavior.

KEY POINT 2

1. Do you think there are warning signs that precede a suicide? What would you consider to be warning signs of suicide-related thoughts or actions?

- Talking About Dying
  - ✓ Any talk about suicide, dying, disappearing or harming oneself
- Preparing to Die
  - ✓ Visiting or calling people to say goodbye. Putting affairs in order, tying up loose ends, giving things away. Withdrawing from friends and family - quieter than usual.
- Looking for Ways to Die
  - ✓ Preoccupation with means to die by suicide, seeking information about how to die, and seeking to obtain means to kill oneself.
- Recent Loss
  - ✓ Through death, divorce, separation, broken relationship, loss of job, money, status, self-confidence, self-esteem, loss of religious faith, loss of interest in friends, sex, hobbies, activities previously enjoyed. Facing a situation of humiliation or failure.
- Change in Personality or Emotions
  - ✓ Sad, withdrawn, irritable, anxious, tired, indecisive, apathetic. A sudden, unexpected switch from being very sad to being very calm or happy.
- Change in Behavior
  - ✓ Tempting fate by taking reckless or impulsive risks that could lead to death. Can't concentrate on routine tasks. Worsening personal appearance.
- Change in Sleep Patterns
  - ✓ Insomnia, often with early waking or oversleeping, nightmares.
- Change in Eating Habits
  - ✓ Loss of appetite and weight, or overeating.

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- Low Self-Esteem
  - ✓ Feeling worthless, shame, overwhelming guilt, self-hatred, "I'm useless", "everyone would be better off without me".
- No Hope for the Future
  - ✓ Expressing a sense of hopelessness, "it's never going to get any better".

Interim Summary: We just finished discussing warning signs of suicide-related behavior, such as...

Now let's talk about risk factors that may increase the likelihood of death by suicide.

KEY POINT 3

1. Do you think any of the deaths by suicide mentioned earlier could have been prevented? What do you think is the first step in preventing suicide?

- Suicides can be prevented.
- The first step in preventing suicide is to identify and understand the risk factors.
  - ✓ A risk factor is anything that increases the likelihood that persons will harm themselves. However, risk factors are not necessarily causes.

2. What are some risk factors you should identify and understand?

- Situations
  - ✓ Family history of suicide or violence.
  - ✓ Sexual or physical abuse.
  - ✓ Death of a close friend or family member.
  - ✓ Divorce or separation, ending a relationship.
  - ✓ Work related problems.
  - ✓ Physical illness/ serious medical problem.
  - ✓ Current or pending disciplinary or legal action.
  - ✓ Financial problems.
  - ✓ Transitions (retirement, PCS, discharge, etc.).
  - ✓ Severe, prolonged, or perceived unmanageable stress.
  - ✓ History of alcohol and substance abuse.
  - ✓ History of suicide attempts.
  - ✓ Alcohol or drug dependency.
  - ✓ Setbacks (academic, career, or personal).
  - ✓ Isolation, a feeling of being cut off from other people.
  - ✓ Unwillingness to seek help because of the stigma attached to mental health and substance abuse disorders or suicidal thoughts.
  - ✓ Easy access to lethal methods.

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- Behaviors
  - ✓ Previous suicidal behavior.
  - ✓ Extremes of behavior.
  - ✓ Impulsive or aggressive tendencies.
- Physical Changes
  - ✓ Disturbed sleep patterns- sleeping too much or too little.
  - ✓ Lack of energy.
  - ✓ Sudden change or lack of interest in appearance.
- Thoughts and Emotions
  - ✓ Deep sadness or guilt.
  - ✓ Anxiety and stress.
  - ✓ Loss of self-worth.
  - ✓ Feelings of hopelessness.
  - ✓ A sense of powerlessness or helplessness.

Interim Summary: We just finished discussing some risk factors that may increase the likelihood of death by suicide such as... Now let's talk about how intervening and applying certain leadership traits and principles can help prevent suicide.

KEY POINT 4

1. Earlier we stated that suicide can be prevented. What can you do to help prevent one of your fellow Marines from dying by suicide?

The most important thing to do if you are concerned or recognize warning signs is to intervene and TAKE ACTION. A substantial proportion of Marines who are at risk for suicide will not seek help on their own. Your intervention may save their life.

- Ask open-ended questions, i.e., "How are things going?"
- Lend support.
- Be willing to listen.
- Share your concern for their well-being.
- Remove any weapons, pills, or rope.
- **Do Not Leave the Marine Alone.**
- Seek professional help right away.

It is common to not feel adequately prepared; or wonder if you will be held responsible if a Marine dies by suicide. One question, one conversation, or one phone call can save a life. Taking action requires courage; and intervening will never be viewed as the reason for a suicide.

2. Who has heard of R.A.C.E. SUICIDE ALERT? Can someone please explain what it means?

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- Recognize distress in the Marine
  - ✓ Note changes in personality, emotions or behavior.
- Ask the Marine
  - ✓ Calmly ask the most important question, "Are you thinking about killing yourself?"
- Care for the Marine
  - ✓ Don't judge - handle the situation peacefully.
- Escort the Marine
  - ✓ Stay with the person and escort to the chaplain, medical, or behavioral health professional.

3. Do you think any of our leadership traits or principles apply to suicide prevention? Which ones? Why?

- Leadership Traits:

- ✓ Justice
- ✓ Judgment
- ✓ Dependability
- ✓ Initiative
- ✓ Decisiveness
- ✓ Tact
- ✓ Integrity
- ✓ Enthusiasm
- ✓ Bearing
- ✓ Unselfishness
- ✓ Courage
- ✓ Knowledge
- ✓ Loyalty
- ✓ Endurance

- Leadership Principles:

- ✓ Know Yourself and Seek Self Improvement
- ✓ Be Technically And Tactically Proficient
- ✓ Know Your People And Look Out For Their Welfare
- ✓ Keep Your Personnel Informed
- ✓ Set The Example
- ✓ Ensure That The Task Is Understood, Supervised, and Accomplished
- ✓ Train Your Marines And Sailors As A Team
- ✓ Make Sound And Timely Decisions
- ✓ Develop A Sense Of Responsibility Among Your Subordinates
- ✓ Employ Your Command Within its Capabilities
- ✓ Seek Responsibilities And Take Responsibility

SUMMARY/CONCLUSION

Today we have discussed the definition of suicide, the warning signs of suicide-related behavior, the risk factors that may increase the

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likelihood of suicide; and how intervening and applying certain leadership traits and principles can help prevent suicide.

Closing Statement: The Marine Corps sees suicide prevention as the responsibility of the entire Marine Corps community. Each of us, as fellow Marines, family members, and friends, is responsible for encouraging those who are troubled to seek help before it affects their relationships, work performance, career, mental health, or desire to live. Thus, suicide can be prevented in our unit by addressing quality of life concerns and watching for "red flags" on a daily basis. Watching out for each other helps keep us ready to serve.

1700  
APR 4 2016

One Minute Anonymous Feedback Form

Discussion Topic or Training: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

The purpose of this form is to solicit your feedback on the discussion or training you just experienced. Your feedback is anonymous and will be used solely to improve or develop future training. Please candidly answer the following questions:

I. What did you learn that you did not know before the discussion or training began?

II. What did you learn from the discussion or training that you would like to know more about?

III. Would you recommend this discussion or training for other units? If so, please explain why; and if not, please explain why not.

IV. Additional Comments (Please use the back if necessary.)

Enclosure (2)



**UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS**  
**I MARINE EXPEDITIONARY FORCE**  
 Box 555300  
 Camp Pendleton, CA 92055-5300



1. DATE 24 Mar 2016

2. OPERATION CODE

X ORIGINATOR OF ROUTE SHEET  
 A APPROPRIATE ACTION  
 B SIGNATURE  
 C CONCURRENCE  
 D INFORMATION  
 E RETENTION  
 F RETURN TO: **EPBH**  
 G COMMENT(S)

3. SUBJECT: I MEF LOI: Strengthening and Sustaining a Culture of Readiness

9. NATURE OF ACTION REQUIRED	ORIGINATOR INITIALS	DUE DATE
ROUTINE	DLF	30 Mar 2016

10. ACTION OFFICER (NAME, GRADE, SECTION, EXT)  
**Denise Feldbush /NF-5/ I MEF EPBH/ 763-8109**

4. RTNG	5. OPR CODE	6. ADDRESSEES	7. DATE		8. INITIALS	
			IN	OUT	CONCUR	NON CONCUR
6	C, G	CG				
5	C, G	DCG				
4	C, G	<b>COS</b> SERGEANT MAJOR CMD MASTER CHIEF	4/1	4/4	<i>DLF</i>	
3, 7	A, F	SSEC AC/S, G-1 AC/S, G-2 AC/S, G-3 AC/S, G-4 (Motor T) AC/S, G-5 AC/S, G-6 AC/S, G-7 AC/S, G-8 COPS FOPS ADJUTANT RLO IMA SJA PAO	3/30	3/30	<i>DLF</i>	
2	C	INSPECTOR SURGEON CHAPLAIN CAREER RETEN SPEC SECURITY MANAGER	3/28		<i>DLF</i>	
1, 8	X	EPBH			<i>DLF</i>	

11. REMARKS AND SIGNATURE:

**PURPOSE:** To provide the Commanding General with recommended I MEF guidance, for the remainder of CY16, regarding strengthened readiness through Marines' increased responsible decision-making and sound problem-solving.

**BACKGROUND:** The intent of the LOI is to provide guidance for strengthening a culture of readiness through leveraging engaged leadership who effectively apply resources that develop resilient and adaptive Marines. Specifically, the LOI focuses on the mitigation of relationship problems, intimate partner abuse, suicide-related thoughts or actions, and substance abuse through educating Marines about responsible decision-making and problem-solving skills.

**DISCUSSION:**

BLUF: I MEF will exploit opportunities to further develop Marines, in order to assure their greatest asset is postured to innovate, adapt, and win in a complex and uncertain operating environment.

- Readiness includes Marines' ability to overcome adversity and personal stressors.
- Readiness results from committed and engaged leadership executing effective strategies that develop Marines who demonstrate sound judgment.
- Educating Marines about healthy decision-making and problem-solving strategies sets the conditions for strengthening readiness and mitigating the risk of destructive behaviors that may lead to substance abuse, intimate partner abuse, or suicide-related thoughts or actions.

VR,

D.L. FELDBUSH

**received**  
 [Signature] 3/30

3/30 - Ready for review and signature -  
 May Sgt Mancano