

**Marine Corps**  
**NCO Suicide Prevention Training**  
**Train-the-Trainer Guide**

# USMC NCO Suicide Prevention Train-the-Trainer Guide

## **Introduction**

This Train-the-Trainer Guide is designed to train Marine Corps NCOs to prepare for and conduct the Marine Corps NCO Suicide Prevention Training. This Guide is accompanied by the Marine Corps NCO Suicide Prevention Training Instructor Guide.

### ***Objectives***

Upon completion of the Train-the-Trainer session, the NCOs, hereafter referred to as sergeant instructor trainees or trainees, will be able to:

- Understand the objectives of the NCO Suicide Prevention Training;
- Prepare and deliver the NCO Suicide Prevention Training to ensure that all objectives are met; and
- Utilize effective presentation skills.

## **Guidance for Conducting the Training**

### ***Size of Training Group***

Train-the-Trainer courses will be most effective in relatively small groups of no more than 30 sergeant instructor trainees. The smaller the group, the more each trainee will be able to practice delivering the material before a group.

### ***Number of Instructors***

The Train-the-Trainer course is taught by two instructors, hereafter referred to as master instructors, just as the NCO Suicide Prevention Training is taught by two instructors. The master instructors will model how the NCO Suicide Prevention Training should be taught, switching off with the other master instructor. The master instructor who is not teaching can control the classroom's lights, advance the slides, participate in activities, provide input in the form of personal experiences and stories, and assist in answering trainees' questions.

### ***Materials Required***

The Train-the-Trainer course requires the following materials:

- PowerPoint presentation of NCO Suicide Prevention Training
- Playable DVD Video of Movie
- Sign-in sheet for sergeant instructor trainees
- One copy of the Instructor Guide for each sergeant instructor trainee
- One copy of the resource handout for each sergeant instructor trainee

The Train-the-Trainer master instructors are responsible for making copies of the resource handout, confirming that all other materials are on hand, and ensuring that the presentation technology has been tested beforehand.

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### ***Equipment/Settings***

- All training settings must have audiovisual equipment, including a projector that can be connected to a computer. In auditorium-type settings, a large projection screen is essential. (More tips for effectively presenting video are discussed in the course Instructor Guide.)
- If possible, dim the lights near the projection screen or monitor. Though dimmed, the room should have enough light to encourage interaction between the master instructor and the sergeant instructor trainees.
- Cell phones and BlackBerries must be silenced.

### ***Training Format***

The format of the NCO Suicide Prevention Training is dynamic and innovative, and master instructors should emphasize that point during the Train-the-Trainer course. Many sergeant instructor trainees will find the NCO Suicide Prevention Training to differ from any they have attended or taught for the following reasons:

- The training is taught by peer instructors, not by superiors or professional trainers.
- The training has very few traditional PowerPoint slides but instead relies on two types of video—a dramatic movie and documentaries—to make the appropriate teaching points.
  - The movie features a fictional but realistic scenario of a Marine who is in distress and is suicidal.
  - The documentary interviews feature Marines who have contemplated or attempted suicide; the family and friends of those Marines; and family and friends of Marines who died by suicide.
- All video segments are embedded in the PowerPoint presentation.
- The extensive use of video engages the participants, and with some practice, instructors will find that it will enhance their instruction. Instructors should be very familiar with the videos in the course so that they can discuss them.

NCO Suicide Prevention Training is designed to be interactive, and the Train-the-Trainer course will help prepare sergeant instructor trainees to lead discussions and activities. The discussions and activities are designed to engage participants and to ensure their understanding of the course content. In teaching the sergeant instructor trainees how to conduct activities, master instructors should stress the following:

- Activities work best in small groups of 3-5 Marines. In most classes, these can be formed simply by instructing Marines to turn to those sitting next to them.
- Activities are designed to be short in duration; instructors should provide about five minutes for the small groups to participate in the activity or discussion and 5-10 minutes to discuss it in the full class.
- The NCO Suicide Prevention Training is more meaningful if instructors interject personal stories and anecdotes. Sergeant instructor trainees should develop some of these stories during the Train-the-Trainer course (as homework) and should practice sharing these stories.

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### *Format of the Instructor Guide*

The sergeant instructor trainees will receive an Instructor Guide at the end of the first morning, after they experience the entire course. Explain the format of the Instructor Guide, and suggest that trainees read the instructions for using the guide before class begins on Day 2. Explain that:

- The Instructor Guide includes a screen shot of each slide, talking points, and a full suggested script for each slide.
- Instructors should avoid reading directly from the script, if possible. The script has key words bolded so that instructors can occasionally glance at the script to find their place.
- As instructors become more familiar with the content of the course, they can refer to the talking points on the left-hand page and not feel compelled to read the script.
- Point out that each instructor will develop his or her unique teaching method. As instructors work with the material, they will develop their own style, favorite stories, questions, and ways to approach the material.

### *Interactivity*

The subject matter of the NCO Suicide Prevention Training will likely provoke many questions and much discussion. As you train the sergeant instructors, emphasize the following guidelines for conducting the training:

- **Set the ground rules at the beginning.** In smaller classes, instructors should encourage class members to ask questions at any time. Instructors should provide opportunities for class members to be heard; all contributions are valuable. In larger classes, however, instructors should encourage class members to hold their questions or write them down for collection during breaks. A few of these questions may be answered at the beginning of the next segment. If a question is not directly related to the course objectives, instructors can arrange to address it after the course.
- **Keep an eye on the clock and stay on topic.** Instructors have a lot to accomplish and can't afford to let discussions or excessive questions keep them from moving to the next topic. Instructors need to know when to move on.
- **Avoid reading directly from the slides or script.** Instructors should feel comfortable enough with the material that they maintain eye contact with the participants except to glance at the slides or script.
- **Discussions are important.** If the class participants are engaged, they will launch into discussions. Despite the need to stay on schedule, allow such discussions to proceed, as long as the participants stay on-topic. In some cases, instructors should be alert to Marines who bring up personal experiences with suicide, even Marines who might either admit to making a suicide attempt or display some anxiety discussing the issue. **Advise the sergeant instructor trainees to arrange for a chaplain or counselor to be on hand during training courses to provide one-on-one support to Marines who may be in distress.**
- **Walk the room.** Instructors should walk around the room during activities and discussions. This improves participation and engagement.

Master instructors should model the above techniques for handling questions and discussions throughout the Train-the-Trainer course.

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### ***Important “Dos and Don’ts”***

Make sure the sergeant instructor trainees are aware of the following tips:

- **Do not** use the phrase “successful suicide.” The loss of life should never be considered a “success.”
- **Do** refer as much as appropriate to the movie because it is a very useful launching platform for further discussion.
- **Do** be alert to statements that reveal a stigma toward Marines who are suffering from psychological and/or emotional distress or seeking help for such distress. **Do not** reinforce these types of statements.
- **Do** ensure that everyone in the room can hear a Marine’s question or comment. Ask the Marine either to turn to the others in the classroom and speak louder or to come forward to address the group if practical. The instructor can also paraphrase and repeat the Marine’s question or comment.

Master instructors should model the above Dos and Don’ts throughout the Train-the-Trainer course.

### **Suggested Schedule**

The Train-the-Trainer course is set up for three days. This can be divided roughly into morning and afternoon phases. The following is a description of the Train-the-Trainer course schedule.

#### ***DAY 1***

##### **0800 – 0830**

At the beginning of the course, cover the following:

- The training program objectives.
- Administrative issues, such as the daily schedule, taking notes and so on.
- The strategy for the training: Sergeant instructor trainees will first experience the course, as if they were regular training participants. Explain that they will participate in discussions and ask questions as if they were any other NCOs taking the course, not instructors in training.
- Explain that they will receive the Instructor Guide and learn how to teach the course **AFTER** they participate in the full course.

##### **0830 – 1130**

- For the remainder of the morning, master instructors will present the NCO Suicide Prevention Training in its entirety, taking breaks at the designated times during the course.
- Hand out the resource list at the designated point in the training.
- Answer any and all questions relating to the actual course.

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- Defer questions that relate to teaching methods. Otherwise, you will not have enough time to present the full course and the trainees will not experience it as they should.

### 1130 – 1200

- At the end of the course, answer any initial questions the sergeant instructor trainees might have.
- Pass out the Instructor Guide to each trainee, and go over the key points (Training Format, Format of the Instructor Guide, Interactivity, and Dos and Don'ts) from above.

### 1200 – 1300

Lunch Break

The afternoon will be spent going through the course slide by slide, reviewing objectives, teaching points, and discussions and activities.

### 1300 – 1430

- Begin going through the course. You should get through Slide 25 before the break.
- Answer any questions the trainees might have as they arise.

### 1430 – 1440

Break

### 1440 – 1610

- Continue through the course, slide by slide.
- Discuss teaching strategies, such as reading the script versus speaking from talking points; the development of personal anecdotes and stories and so on.
- Emphasize that the script is designed as a guideline for beginning instructors but that instructors, as they become familiar with the material, should be able to teach from the talking points without relying on the script.

### 1610 – 1620

Break

### 1620 – 1700

- Assign homework.
- Divide the class into triads (groups of three).
- Instruct the sergeant instructor trainees in each group to select Segment 1, Segment 2, or Segment 3 (see below) for practice teaching on Day 2. Each trainee in a group will take a different segment. (Segment 4 is mainly a review and discussion of the path forward, and therefore is not an option when assigning segments to the triads.)

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- Explain that on Day 2, each sergeant instructor trainee will deliver a segment to the two others in his/her group. The other two trainees in that group will listen and provide feedback. The next trainee in each group will then present and so on.

The course segments are divided as shown below.

### **Segment 1 – Movie and Course Overview (Slides 1-10)**

### **Segment 2 – Leadership Responsibility (Slides 11-25)**

### **Segment 3 – Leadership Action (Slides 26-35)**

### **Segment 4 – Leadership Commitment (Slides 36-39)**

- As homework, each Marine should review his or her selected segment and personalize the instruction as noted in the Instructor Guide. Each sergeant instructor trainee should be prepared to practice-teach that segment on Day 2. Explain that the movie and other videos will not be shown again during the training.
- In addition, each trainee should prepare a 2-to 3-minute personal story associated with Slide 27 (Prepare: Know Your Marines). On Day 2, the trainees will be expected to present this story to the others in their three-person groups.
- Also, remind sergeant instructor trainees to read through the introduction and instructions in the Instructor Guide.

## **DAY 2**

### **0800 – 0810**

Explain the structure of the teach-back training that will take place on Day 2 and Day 3.

- Sergeant instructor trainees should break into their groups of three, and will take turns delivering their segments of the NCO Suicide Prevention Training.
- Each sergeant instructor trainee will alternate between three roles: instructor, audience (student), and critic. While the instructor is practice-teaching his/her segment of the course, one person (student) will listen as if he/she were participating in a class. The other person (critic) will take notes and be prepared to offer a critique of the instruction.
- Each instructor will have 15 minutes to deliver his/her selected segment, and the critic will have 15 minutes to offer feedback, with input from the student.
- The large group will then have a 20-minute discussion of issues that arose, techniques that worked or didn't work, etc.
- The above format will be repeated for each of the three segments.

Make sure that all sergeant instructor trainees understand the guidance.

### **0810 – 0900**

- For 15 minutes, the sergeant instructor trainee who selected Segment 1 will practice-teach the segment to a student in his/her triad while the critic observes. (Master instructors should cut off the training at 15 minutes even if the sergeant instructor trainee has not finished the segment.)

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- Allow up to 15 minutes for small-group critique of the instruction, then direct attention back to the front of the classroom and have a 20-minute full-group discussion of the teach-back experience as noted above.

### **0900 – 0910**

Break

### **0910– 1000**

- The trainee who selected Segment 2 will practice-teach the segment, following the above instructions.

### **1000 – 1050**

- The trainee who selected Segment 3 will practice-teach the segment, following the above instructions.

### **1050 – 1100**

Break

### **1100 – 1135**

- The teach-back exercises will resume with the personal stories developed for Slide 27 (Prepare: Know Your Marines.)
- The master instructor who did not present his personal story on the morning of Day 1 will now tell his story.
- After that, each sergeant instructor trainee will present his/her personal story to the student in his triad, and the critic (and student) will provide feedback.
- Each story should take no more than 2-3 minutes; allow several minutes for feedback.
- Instruct the sergeant instructor trainees to help each other improve their stories during the feedback sessions.

### **1135 – 1200**

- Ask for volunteers to deliver their personal stories to the whole class.
- Have the large group provide a few minutes of feedback.
- Take as many stories as you can fit into the 25 minutes before lunch.

### **1200 – 1300**

Lunch break

### **1300 – 1430**

- Ask the sergeant instructor trainees to get out the resource list that was handed out during the presentation of the entire NCO Suicide Prevention Training.

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- Go through each resource. Explain that the resources are grouped by “Immediate Links in a Crisis,” “Direct Links for Prevention,” and “Resource Links for Understanding.”
- In an immediate crisis—if a Marine is having suicidal thoughts and has a plan to kill himself or herself—emergency intervention is necessary.
- If a Marine is in distress but a suicide attempt is not imminent, there are more options. These options, “Direct Links for Prevention,” are listed in order of degrees of confidentiality, with the most confidential resources at the top.
- Master instructors should be familiar with this list and review the resource websites for more information before the Train-the-Trainer course.

### 1430 – 1515

- **Discussion.** Discuss the questions related to the exercises on Slides 30 and 31 about where Sergeant Bridges took Lance Corporal Decker after the intervention and where he might have taken him for help if he had noticed earlier that Decker was in distress.
- Discuss the variety of suggestions that might arise and how to respond to those questions.
- Emphasize that instructors should avoid “bashing” the chain of command or mental health counselors, who can be very helpful to Marines who are in crisis.

### 1515 – 1525

Break

### 1525 – 1545

- Take questions that have arisen in the class.
- Ask if there are any questions about the Instructor Guide.

### 1545 – 1615

- Assign homework.
- Each sergeant instructor trainee should prepare the two segments he/she didn’t prepare for Day 2 and should be prepared to practice-teach the new segments on Day 3.
- In addition, each trainee should prepare a second 2- to 3-minute personal story, this one associated with Slide 38 (Being a Leader). On Day 3, the trainees will be expected to present this story.

## DAY 3

### 0800 – 0805

- Remind the sergeant instructor trainees of the format for practice-teaching using triads (from Day 2). (The training is set up for groups of 30 sergeant instructor trainees. In smaller groups, master instructors may elect to have trainees practice-teach in front of the large group for part of Day 3.)

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### 0805 – 0855

- For 15 minutes, one sergeant instructor trainee will practice-teach Segment 1 to a student in his/her triad while the critic observes. (Master instructors should cut off the training at 15 minutes even if the sergeant instructor trainee has not finished the segment.)
- Allow up to 15 minutes for small-group critique of the instruction, then direct attention back to the front of the classroom and have a 20-minute full-group discussion of the teach-back experience as noted above.

### 0855 – 0945

- A sergeant instructor trainee will practice-teach Segment 2, following the above instructions.

### 0945 – 0955

Break

### 0955 – 1045

- A sergeant instructor trainee will practice-teach Segment 3, following the above instructions.

### 1045 – 1120

- The teach-back exercises will resume with the personal stories developed for Slide 38 (Being a Leader).
- The master instructor who did not present his personal story on the morning of Day 1 will now tell his story.
- After that, each sergeant instructor trainee will present his/her personal story to the student in his triad, and the critic (and student) will provide feedback.
- Each story should take no more than 2-3 minutes; allow several minutes for feedback.
- Instruct the sergeant instructor trainees to help each other improve their stories during the feedback sessions.

### 1120 – 1145

- Ask for volunteers to deliver their personal stories to the whole class.
- Have the large group provide a few minutes of feedback.
- Take as many stories as you can fit into the 25 minutes before lunch.

### 1145 – 1300

Lunch break

### 1300 – 1350

Resume practice-teaching in triads, with each trainee presenting the third segment he/she has prepared.

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- For 15 minutes, one sergeant instructor trainee will practice-teach Segment 1 to a student in his/her triad while the critic observes. (Master instructors should cut off the training at 15 minutes even if the sergeant instructor trainee has not finished the segment.)
- Allow up to 15 minutes for small-group critique of the instruction, then direct attention back to the front of the classroom and have a 20-minute full-group discussion of the teach-back experience as noted above.

### 1350 – 1440

- A sergeant instructor trainee will practice-teach Segment 2, following the above instructions.

### 1440 – 1450

Break

### 1450 – 1540

- A sergeant instructor trainee will practice-teach Segment 3, following the above instructions.

### 1540 - 1630

The instructors can answer any additional questions that arose during training and teach-back segments.

### For More Information

Marine Corps Suicide Prevention Program

**Web:** <http://www.usmc-mccs.org/suicideprevent/>

**Phone:** 703-784-9542