

## Tips for Using the ACE Card

### ASK

Is the person's use causing problems? Here are some things to consider:

- Are they using illegal drugs or misusing prescription drugs or alcohol?
- Have they lost interest in other things that were important to them?
- Are they experiencing problems in their personal relationships?
- Are they experiencing problems at school/work?
- Do they want to cut down or stop using but can't?

Ask in a direct and non-judgmental manner if they have thought about getting help for their substance use.

### CARE

Show the person that you care about their wellbeing and that you are not passing judgement on their behavior.

- Actively listen to their story.
- Nod your head and encourage them to tell you more.

Accept that their situation is serious and deserving of attention.

### ENCOURAGE

If the person thinks they may be experiencing problems related to substance use, encourage them to seek help.

- *For those currently serving*, contacting the Unit's Substance Abuse Program sooner rather than later may help avoid some negative consequences.
- *For those not currently serving*, Dial 211 for local treatment resources.

Encourage the person to seek more information if they want to learn about substance use and substance use disorders.

## Resources

### For Treatment

Call 211 or visit: [www.211maine.org](http://www.211maine.org)

Call 1-800-342-9647 or visit:  
[www.militaryonesource.mil](http://www.militaryonesource.mil)

\*For those currently serving

### Maine VA Medical Center

Call 1-877-421-8263

### Maine Bureau of Veterans' Services

<http://www.maine.gov/veterans/resources>

### IF YOU OR SOMEONE ELSE IS IN CRISIS

Veterans Crisis Line: 1-800-273-8255

Statewide Crisis Line: 1-888-568-1112

### Information About Substance Use

#### Screening for Mental Health

<https://mentalhealthscreening.org/>

#### After Deployment

[www.afterdeployment.dcoe.mil](http://www.afterdeployment.dcoe.mil)

#### SAMHSA Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs

[www.samhsa.gov/atod](http://www.samhsa.gov/atod)



Paul R. LePage, Governor

Mary C. Mayhew, Commissioner

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## Substance Abuse Prevention for Service Members, Veterans and their Family Members



The purpose of ACE is to empower Service Members, Veterans and their Families to learn ways to prevent substance abuse, identify risky substance use behavior and find useful resources to help them take action.

The acronym ACE (Ask, Care, Encourage) was adapted from the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs' ACE brochure for suicide prevention.



Paul R. LePage, Governor

Mary C. Mayhew, Commissioner



### ASK

- Are they using too much?
- Have they thought about getting help for their substance use?

### CARE

- Show the person that you care about their wellbeing.
- Show them their situation is deserving of attention.

### ENCOURAGE

- Them to seek help if they are experiencing problems.

★ Contact the Unit Substance Abuse Program or Call 211

## Why Care?

The benefits of not using illegal drugs, taking medications as prescribed and using alcohol responsibly after the age of 21 are many, including:

### For Prospective Service Members:

- The ability to enlist or pursue officer candidacy
- Obtaining certain security clearances
- Eliminating need to seek waivers for substance use
- Expanding military job opportunities

### For Service Members:

- Maintaining advancement eligibility
- Advancing to and/or maintaining leadership positions
- Keeping security clearances
- Improving unit morale and performance

### For Veterans:

- Keeping strong social and professional relationships
- Improving civilian career potential
- Maintaining physical and mental health
- Maintaining quality of life

### For Families:

- Keeping strong relationships with family
- Promoting a healthy lifestyle among family members
- Maintaining a supportive environment at home
- Building resiliency and protective factors among family members

Caring for fellow Service Members, Veterans and Family members by encouraging healthy lifestyles improves social, family and work environments.



## Risk Factors

Below are some things that may put individuals at risk\* for experiencing substance use problems:

- Early onset of tobacco, alcohol and other substance use
- Access to tobacco, alcohol and other substances
- Family history of substance use disorder
- Peer substance use
- Experiencing high levels of acute or chronic pain
- Experiencing mental health disorders
- Personal experience with substance use problems
- Low commitment to academic and/or occupational success

\*Risk factors do not cause substance use problems. For more information on risk and protective factors visit: <http://samhsa.gov/capt/practicing-effective-prevention/prevention-behavioral-health/risk-protective-factors>

## Warning Signs to Consider

### Does the person:

- Use in larger amounts or for longer than intended?
- Want to cut down or stop using but can't?
- Spend a lot of time using substances or recovering from substance use?
- Give up important family, social, recreational or work-related activities because of use?
- Continue to use, even while knowing that it may be putting them in danger or contributing to health problems?
- Use increasingly more amounts to get the wanted effect?
- Have withdrawal symptoms, which can be relieved by using more?

(Some withdrawal symptoms can be obvious, but others can be more subtle—like irritability or nervousness.)

## Protective Factors

Below are some things that may help individuals avoid experiencing substance use problems:

- Participation in sports, athletics or exercising
- Assertively refusing peer pressure to use substances
- Having greater perception of substance use risks
- Strong bonds between youth and parents/guardians
- Parental disapproval of substance use
- Committing to do well in school and/or occupation
- Community and neighborhood cohesion
- Attending an educational course on substance abuse prevention

## Dealing With Stress

The stress of everyday life affects us all, but seeking positive ways to cope with stress can be beneficial. Consider suggesting the following healthier ways to manage stress and anxiety:

- Get enough sleep
- Talk problems over with someone you trust
- Welcome humor
- Yoga
- Meditation
- Deep breathing
- Take a break to clear your head
- Participate in regular physical activity:  
*Running, hiking, biking, swimming, weight training, team sports., etc.*

Maintain a positive attitude:  
By hunting the good stuff, we can manage stress in positive ways instead of using drugs and alcohol.

