



DPRR COMMUNITYLINK

THE DIRECTORATE OF PREVENTION, RESILIENCE AND READINESS NEWSLETTER | OCTOBER 2024



The Army's domestic violence prevention efforts focus on early intervention, support and long-term safety. The Family Advocacy Program works to prevent domestic abuse from happening by educating Soldiers and their Families about healthy relationships, effective communication and stress management. Through these efforts, and by involving bystanders in prevention and support, the Army aims to protect and strengthen its community. (U.S. Army photo)

Army Stands Strong Against Domestic Violence: Breaking the Silence, Offering Support

By Jasmine Taylor, Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness

October, recognized as Domestic Violence Awareness Month, serves as an important reminder for the Army community to unite in breaking the silence surrounding domestic abuse. Facilitating these critically needed conversations puts us one step closer to ending domestic abuse in the Army. Tanya Juarez, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for the Army, G-9, Family Advocacy Program manager, explained, "DVAM calls for raising awareness, educating on prevention and supporting those affected by abuse. Through an effective, coordinated community response, we will continue to foster a culture of safety, respect and trust."

It's a common misconception that victims or abusers fit a specific profile. Many victims go unnoticed, and abusers often hide in plain sight because domestic violence transcends ability, race, gender, age and socioeconomic status. As Janique Parnell, DCS, G-9, FAP specialist, noted: "A person experiencing violence or engaging in violence against an intimate partner (may not) 'look' like a victim or alleged abuser. It is not always obvious who is impacted by domestic abuse. There may not be visible injuries, and to the outside world, the person impacted may be highly functioning and

resourceful." The absence of noticeable injuries and the ability to maintain a high-functioning facade can mask the reality of domestic abuse.

According to the RAND Corporation's 2023 research report "Domestic Abuse in the Armed Forces," DOD clarifies that domestic abuse is not limited to married couples, physical violence or verbal disagreements between couples. An abuser could be a current or former spouse or intimate partner, a co-parent or a domestic partner. It's also important to recognize that domestic abuse extends beyond physical violence, encompassing psychological, emotional, sexual and financial forms of control and manipulation. "Domestic abuse also incurs tactics such as stalking, isolation from families and friends and threatening custody of children, pets and technology to manipulate their victims," explained Dr. Carmen Leggett, DCS, G-9, FAP specialist. Recognizing these signs is crucial in mobilizing the community to act against domestic abuse.

The Army stands firm in its commitment to the safety and well-being of all service members and their Families affected by domestic violence and assists with a coordinated community response. It offers a comprehensive

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DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

Team,

As the prevention and Quality of Life lead for the Army, I take seriously my role and responsibility to provide healthy communities and a haven for Army Families. However, it's a tragic reality that some of our Army team members don't feel safe within their own homes. October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month, providing an opportunity to break the silence and have open, honest conversations about domestic abuse.

This year, the Department of Defense has created two campaigns in support of domestic abuse prevention: "What's Inside Matters" and "Pause." "What's Inside Matters" is geared toward those who have been impacted by harmful behaviors or who notice a partner's risk factors for perpetrating abuse. This campaign encourages help-seeking behaviors. "Pause" speaks to those who recognize their own harmful behaviors toward a partner or identify with the risk factors for such behaviors and want help.

The DOD campaigns are relevant year-round, not just during October—like the resources available through the Family Advocacy Program. FAP offers programs and services to reduce stressors that may lead to harmful behaviors, such as the New Parent Support Program, coping strategies, healthy self-expression and recognizing warning signs in relationships. Many may not be aware that contrary to its name, FAP is not just for Soldiers with Families. FAP offers support to unmarried Soldiers with or without children.

Last week, the directorate supported the Association of the United States Army Annual Meeting and Exposition with two Warfighter and Family Forums and a Fireside Chat with the Army Senior Leaders. I'd like to extend my gratitude to Ms. Joey Miranda and Mr. Rob Hansgen for the exemplary work they did in planning these events. Their efforts ensured greater understanding of how the Army is supporting Soldiers and Families in continuing education and employment opportunities and how the DOD and Army are providing innovative, modern solutions to deliver person-centric, cutting-

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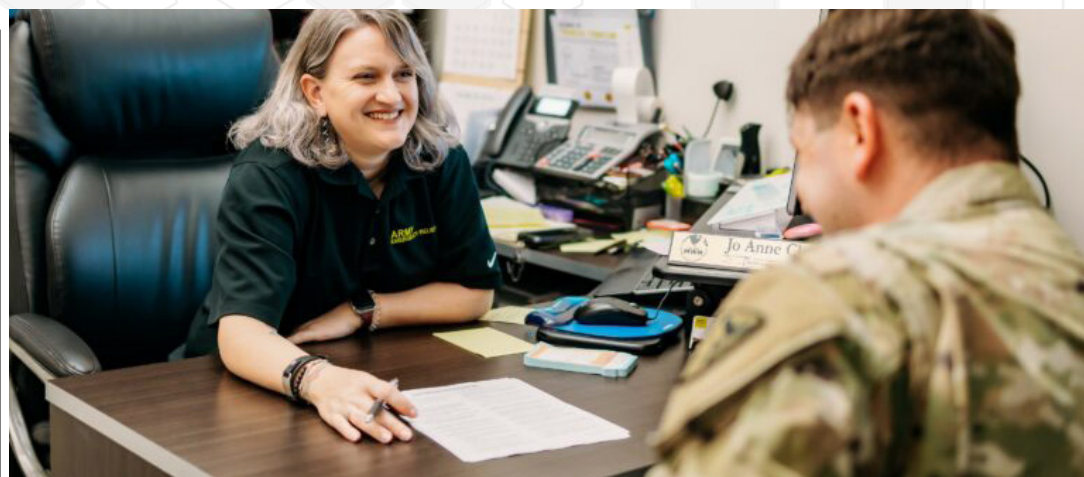


EVERYDAY COURAGE:
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MILITARY FAMILIES FIND
SUPPORT ON SESAME STREET



Army Emergency Relief provides support for Soldiers and their loved ones through the Family Advocacy Program. Jo Close, an AER officer at Fort Novosel, Alabama, speaks with a Soldier in her office. (U.S. Army photo by Brittany Trumbull)

New Army Emergency Relief Policy Supports Those Affected by Domestic Abuse

By Rachel Rachfal, Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness

Army Emergency Relief has updated its policy to expedite financial assistance for victims of domestic violence who have made restricted reports. This policy ensures those affected receive funding for basic emergency needs, including transportation, temporary lodging, food and necessary personal items.

Under the policy, the Family Advocacy Program manager can validate the need for assistance, allowing AER to provide immediate funds without notifying command or law enforcement. The policy allows for up to five days of assistance, streamlining the process of moving victims to safety quickly.

AER meets the changing needs of the Army community by offering assistance in five major areas: basic needs and housing, health and wellness, crisis assistance, workforce development and Family support. Financial assistance also includes support for Army spouses and their dependents in domestic abuse situations. In some cases, victims with restricted reports may need financial assistance that cannot be met by other resources.

Charlene Sanchez, FAP specialist, explained the importance of this policy: "This change ensures that victims of domestic abuse can access the financial resources they need quickly, eliminating barriers to safety. By offering this support, we are not only helping individuals but also strengthening the entire Army community."

FAP plays a critical role in supporting those affected by domestic abuse, and collaborating with AER ensures those in need are aware of the resources available to

them. Sanchez highlighted the significance of this partnership: "The collaboration between AER and the Family Advocacy Program is essential in providing comprehensive support to those impacted by domestic abuse. The most dangerous time for a victim is when they are attempting to leave an abusive relationship. By working together, we can ensure individuals receive the financial assistance they need in emergency situations, reducing the risk of increased injury and/or fatality."

AER's policy demonstrates its commitment to addressing the evolving needs of the Army community. As financial difficulties and personal hardships persist, AER continues to provide timely and relevant assistance. This effort also aligns with the initiative to offer support in cases of domestic abuse, ensuring that Soldiers and their Families have access to necessary resources when they need them.

Since its establishment in February 1942 by Secretary of War Henry Stimson and Army Chief of Staff Gen. George C. Marshall, Army Emergency Relief has provided support for Soldiers and their Families. Incorporated as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, AER was created with a clear mission: to provide grants, interest-free loans and scholarships to alleviate the financial burdens that Soldiers and their Families face.

Soldiers and Families are encouraged to visit their local AER office or the official [AER website](#) for more information on AER and how to access its services. Together, these services can strengthen the financial stability of Soldiers, helping them stay focused and prepared for their missions. Learn more about [FAP](#).



Accessing Services After the SHARP Program Restructure

By Cynthia Bell, Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness

In 2023 the Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention program was restructured based on recommendations from the Secretary of Defense Independent Review Commission on Sexual Assault in the Military.

The new SHARP framework provides an installation-based response, as opposed to the legacy, command-based structure. Sexual Assault Response Coordinators and Victim Advocates remain embedded, when feasible, or aligned to each brigade, but system coordination is handled through the installation lead SARC. The SARCs and VAs report to and are rated by the lead SARC, who provides professional oversight at the installation level and operates outside the chain of command.

These changes remove the barriers that discouraged Soldiers from reporting sexual harassment and sexual assault by providing unprecedented victim assistance and reporting opportunities to service members, Family

members 18 and older and Army Civilians while providing expert support to commanders.

There is a significant gap between the prevalence of sexual harassment and assault and what is reported. "This review told us what we should have known; (that) we have a problem," said Stacey Hale, SHARP Plans and Operations specialist. "It found a pervasive lack of trust, which acts as a barrier and stifles reporting, workforce deficiencies and a lack of specialization and experience."

The installation-based model addresses these concerns by increasing education and experience requirements for the sexual assault response workforce and by improving access to care by providing services at the installation closest to the victim.

"The restructure establishes a 'no wrong door' approach to sexual assault prevention and response," Hale stated. "Services can be provided by sister services, through the local hotline or

5 THINGS TO KNOW

ABOUT THE SHARP PROGRAM RESTRUCTURE

Read the **SHARP Program Restructure fact sheet.**

DOD Safe Helpline. Defense Department forms have been updated so reports can be taken digitally and telephonically by the SARC or VA providing hotline support and who can coordinate care and available services closest to the victim."

The installation-based model is a victim-centered model focused on providing the best possible care to victims of sexual violence. The SHARP program enhances Army readiness through the prevention of sexual harassment, sexual assault and associated retaliatory behaviors while providing comprehensive response capabilities. The goal is to eliminate these harmful behaviors by creating a climate of respect and dignity for all members of the Army Family.

For more about SHARP, visit the DPRR [website](#).

Debunking Myths About Bystander Intervention

By Mavia Hanson, Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness

October is National Crime Prevention Month, serving as an annual reminder about safety awareness and the prevention of crime in our communities. Addressing harmful behaviors is one way to prevent crimes from happening, specifically sexual harassment and sexual assault. Learning bystander intervention tactics and intervening when necessary can help make Army communities safer.

But what is bystander intervention? Before addressing this question, one must first understand human behavior.

"Excuse me, you just dropped your jacket," "Thanks for holding the door" or "Hey, I think you're next in line" are familiar phrases that we probably deem low-threat exchanges with strangers. These are moments when we can offer or receive assistance without any perceived consequences. Frank Hawkins, Headquarters, Army SHARP Policy & Oversight Branch, described these behaviors as prosocial behaviors, which are "... actions aimed at assisting others, driven by care for their rights, emotions and well-being. These behaviors often involve demonstrating empathy and showing concern for the welfare of others."

So, what happens in situations when the stakes change? Observing an inappropriate conversation, witnessing a battle buddy in a potentially hostile situation or seeing someone being harassed are higher-stakes scenarios that may change someone's willingness to engage. It could also boil down to whether someone is observant enough to step in. "First, there needs to be an awareness. Does the bystander even realize or understand



Soldiers at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, participate in a virtual reality SHARP training to learn the 'Three Ds' of bystander intervention, Direct, Distract, Delegate. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Caleb Pautz)

what's going on? We assume just because proximity is there, everyone has awareness of the situation, and that sometimes simply isn't true," Hawkins explained.

According to Hawkins, the other two factors are taking responsibility and making a plan.

"To be aware of a situation is one thing, but to feel a personal responsibility or obligation to step in and intervene is another," Hawkins said. Another common misconception about bystander intervention is that someone else will step in to help. "Many people will see or hear a situation and say, 'Oh, someone else will say something' or 'This isn't my business or problem,' (but) for Soldiers, it is a duty and an obligation to act. If you see something, say something," Hawkins said.

Hawkins explained that diffusion of responsibility is what happens when individuals refrain from acting, then believe that because those around them are not helping or responding, action was not needed. But that may not be true. With the proper tools, anyone can intervene. That is why the Army has a three-step approach:

1. **Direct.** Call out the perpetrator's statements or behavior by saying, "You need to stop," "Why would you say that?" or "That is so inappropriate." Offer to escort the potential victim somewhere safe.
2. **Distract.** Do anything that distracts the perpetrator. Change the subject or say, "I think I hear someone coming." Remove either the potential victim or perpetrator from the situation/hostile environment by saying, "Hey, I want to show you something. Come over here with me."
3. **Delegate.** Delegate others to intervene. Have friends, squad members or coworkers take the perpetrator or potential victim out of the situation or send someone to intervene (e.g., chain of command, MPs, etc.).

It takes personal courage to intervene. By learning to recognize when others need assistance, accepting the responsibility to offer help and knowing how to effectively provide it, you can do your part to support others. If you or someone else needs additional support, anonymous services are available. Call the Safe Helpline at 877-955-5247 or [visit the website](#) to chat online.



DPRR

DIRECTORATE OF PREVENTION, RESILIENCE AND READINESS

OCTOBER 2024

QUALITY OF LIFE PROGRAMS

Promoting the Health and Well-Being of the Army's People

The Army is committed to providing the resources Soldiers and their Families need to grow and thrive together, no matter the challenges they face. Whether they are in search of a safe, reliable child care arrangement or desire to work through relationship difficulties with a spouse or intimate partner, the Army has programs and services to support every Army Family. DPRR has published new information toolkits for command teams, program managers and public affairs officers to share with Soldiers and Families highlighting available resources:

FAMILY ADVOCACY PROGRAM TOOLKIT

Learn about a wide range of programs and services to help Families develop skills and strengthen relationships. Emergency assistance and continued support is also available to Family members who have reported abuse.



CHILD CARE TOOLKIT

Learn about child care programs in your area, including some with fee assistance, as well as child care provider employment benefits.



The toolkits are now available for download and printing on the DPRR Products on Demand [website](https://www.armyresilience.army.mil).

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The Army Is Preparing Service Members for Financial Readiness

By Mia Holloman, Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness

Discussing matters related to finances is crucial for the future well-being of service members. That is why the Army offers comprehensive support and resources to enhance financial readiness for both Soldiers and their Families. The Army is promoting responsible spending, implementing effective budgeting strategies and addressing the challenge of food insecurity.

The Army's Financial Readiness Program provides financial education and no-cost, unbiased counseling services to help Soldiers and their Families boost their financial well-being and secure their financial future. Robyn Alama Mroszczyk, Deputy Chief of Staff, G-9, Financial Education Program manager, said, "When individuals experience challenges to their financial well-being, those challenges, or financial stressors, may appear in several ways, and financial stress may lead to stress-related physiological or psychological factors."

One common financial stressor in the Army community is food insecurity, which can negatively impact the physical and mental health of Soldiers and their Families. The Army established an Army Food Program Board of Directors to bring the Army Food Program processes and capabilities into the 21st century. The BOD's current focus is the overarching strategy and food service modernization efforts on installations. Teams are conducting installation assessments to understand food services across all Army bases. The Army ultimately wants to provide easy food access for all service members and enhance their overall quality of life. Mroszczyk said,

"The Army is committed to taking care of our Soldiers, Civilians and their Family members. The Army is committed to ensuring food security for our people—our greatest asset."

The Financial Readiness Program also offers education on essential topics such as indebtedness, consumer advocacy and protection, spending and budgeting, money management, credit and debt management and retirement planning. Resources are available to Soldiers and Family members through online tools, classroom training and free individual sessions with credentialed personal financial counselors. The Department of Defense also created the [Financial Well-Being Assessment](#), which helps service members gauge their economic well-being and access resources to build their knowledge.

Mroszczyk said she believes that financial literacy provides the pathway for sustaining financial well-being and resilience. Soldiers can use FRP resources to craft a [spending plan](#) to map their current income and expenses, from bills and debt payments to retirement contributions. A huge aspect of that is healthy spending and using the SMART



Spc. Vasco Watts serves lunch to Soldiers at the Muleskinner Warrior Restaurant, Fort Drum, New York. Easy food access can enhance military service members' overall quality of life. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Osvaldo Martinez)

method—specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time-bound—to achieve short- and long-term goals. Mroszczyk said, "An example of a SMART goal is saying, 'Six months from today, I want to have an extra \$1,000 in my account to put toward my outstanding auto loan. I will save \$42 per week by taking my lunch to work and making my own coffee in the morning. This small action will help me pay off my loan more quickly.'"

To learn how to become financially ready, read the [Financial Readiness Toolkit](#). For more information, including current initiatives and [counseling resources](#), visit the DPRR [Financial Readiness page](#).

Single Soldiers and the Army's Family Advocacy Program

By Kristen E. Murphy, Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness

Being single does not necessarily mean that a Soldier is not involved in a relationship or has no Family. Across the Army, the Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers, or BOSS, program collaborates with the Family Advocacy Program to address single Soldiers' needs and challenges.

Cultivating and maintaining healthy relationships are crucial for both civilian and military life. The Army's Family Advocacy Program grows with Soldiers and their loved ones. It provides services to improve critical relationship skills, regardless of a Soldier's relationship status (single, divorced, single parent).

"Resources and tools are available for young, single Soldiers preparing for their first relationship, as well as for experienced Soldiers who are in or entering new relationships," explained Charlene Sanchez, Family Advocacy Program specialist.

FAP offers support through classes and resources on healthy self-expression, parenting, coping strategies, effective communication, anger management and recognizing warning signs in relationships.

"Arming Soldiers with the education and information to be the best for their Families is one of the most



U.S. Soldiers assigned to 1st Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment prepare to race in go-karts during a Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers event in Wackersdorf, Germany. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Christian Aquino)

effective tools for preventing incidents of abuse," said Cindy Morita, Family Advocacy Program specialist.

By providing these tools, the program aims to help Soldiers maintain healthy relationships at every stage of their personal and professional lives.

Morita emphasized that "utilizing and participating in local Family Advocacy Programs does not adversely

affect a Soldier's career when used to improve interpersonal skills or when used by victims to report abuse. Getting access to the right resources before an incident occurs is the best way to prevent negatively impacting a Soldier's career."

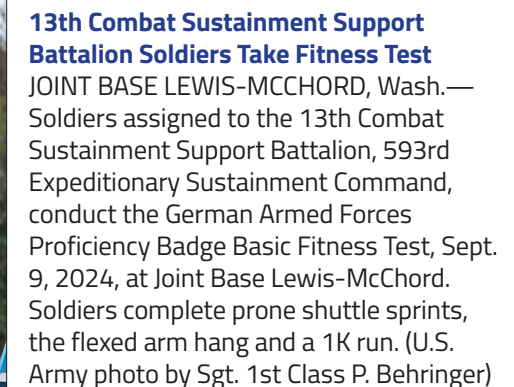
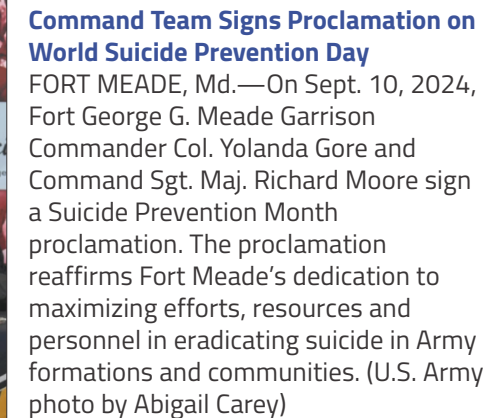
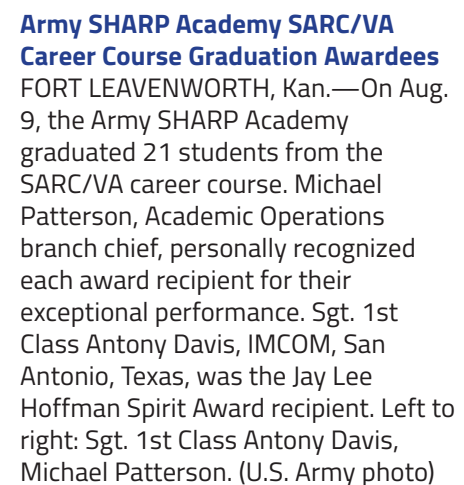
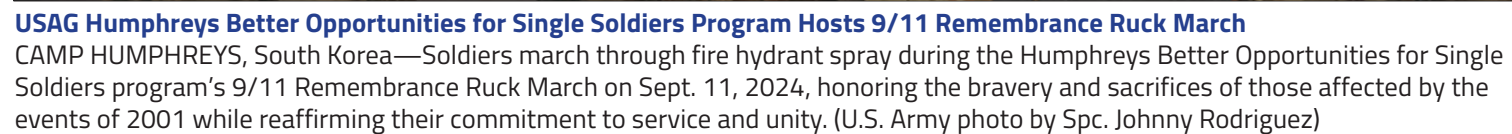
For single Soldiers who have experienced relationship trauma or abuse, FAP can provide support and, when necessary, make outside referrals. While the goal is prevention, intervention is also a critical support service.

Morita reminds Soldiers, "No victim is alone, and FAP has domestic abuse victim advocates (who) can support 24/7."

FAP is one of many programs that can improve the quality of life for every Soldier. Discover how the Family Advocacy and BOSS programs can enhance your Army journey and enrich your quality of life with the following resources:

- [The Army's Family Advocacy Program](#)
- [Army Benefits Library—Family Advocacy Program](#)
- [Military OneSource—Family Advocacy Program](#)
- [Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers](#)

- ▶ BOSS
- ▶ SHARP
- ▶ SP2
- ▶ R2



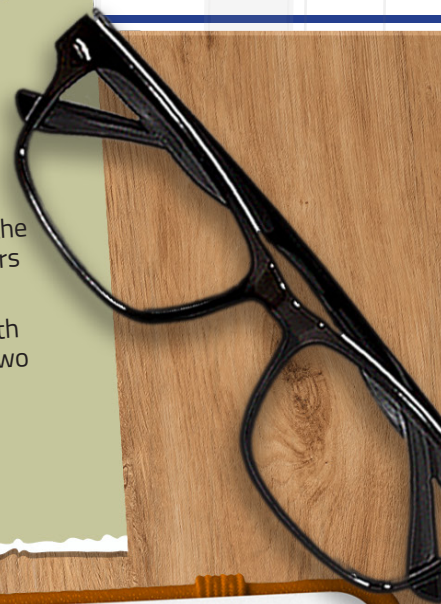


EVERYDAY COURAGE

sharing stories of resilience

Military living has plenty of challenges, from deployment and permanent change of station pains to unexpected financial or health setbacks. Resilience is the thing that keeps us flexible in the face of hardships and changes. "Everyday Courage" is a series that highlights stories from Soldiers about times their resilience was put to the test and how they were able to overcome adversity.

First Sgt. Larry FloresBerrier is a native of Las Vegas, Nevada. His 16-year career is peppered with deployments, promotions and personal achievements. Among his awards and decorations are two Purple Heart medals, the Meritorious Service Medal, seven Army Commendation Medals, four Army Achievement Medals, the Air Force Achievement Medal and the Afghanistan Campaign Medal. This is his story.



First Sgt. Larry FloresBerrier



If you need help!
Text: 838255
988lifeline.org/chat

I had a buddy of mine in my squad who passed away from an IED attack. During that event, we were injured, which resulted in multiple burn injuries, and all four of us were put into a medically induced coma. We were all sent home from this one event. When we were healing in the burn ward of the hospital known as the San Antonio Medical Center, it took us about three months to recover.

Every day, without fail, the medical personnel would ensure that we were seen by a counselor. They would ask if we were having nightmares or thoughts of hurting ourselves. At first, we would lie and try to hide how we were really feeling. Being strangers to these people asking questions, you don't know them, but we talked among our squad. I and my other surviving squad members all struggled with nightmares and depression but initially refused help. It wasn't until fellow squad members broke down and started talking to counselors that I realized the importance of opening up. I didn't myself until I got back and spoke to my sergeant. I tried to play the same card I played earlier by not talking, but he told me to be honest with him.

At that point, I broke down and started crying, telling him how I was genuinely feeling. After letting me get everything out, he told me I needed to talk to somebody. I went into counseling and anger management. It was a difficult journey, but finally confiding in someone helped me cope. The most important lesson I've learned is that talking about what you're going through is OK. Sharing your feelings can significantly improve your well-being. You don't have to internalize it; reaching out is a strength, not a weakness. You should talk about it. The more you do, the better you'll feel.





Ending Domestic Violence in the Army *BREAKING THE SILENCE* Continued from page 1

support network that ensures victims have access to the support they need. Leggett reinforced: "Support for victims of domestic abuse is provided by the Family Advocacy Program, law enforcement, Judge Advocate General, local agencies and a host of other helping activities involved in the prevention and intervention of domestic abuse. Safe shelters, Special Trial Counsel and Transitional Compensation are a few of the services offered to assist victims of domestic abuse in their journey."

Notably, the Army's Domestic Abuse Victim Advocacy program provides nonjudgmental guidance, safety planning and information on available resources. Its role extends to helping victims rebuild their lives, from finding vital documents to securing child care services. The program's victim advocates offer 24/7 support, explaining reporting options, filing reports, assisting

eligibility applications request approval from the Secretary of the Army when the Soldier separates for reasons other than dependent abuse but there is documented evidence that dependent abuse occurred.

"The process is different for traditional and exceptional eligibility and can vary from case to case. It is best to reach out to your DAVA to begin the application process and ensure the correct documentation is submitted for approval," explained Leanne Lemons, DCS, G-9, FAP specialist.

In short, the intricate support network available to victims of domestic violence prioritizes their well-being and access to resources. "Communication and collaboration between these partners is essential to providing victim care and safety and abuser accountability," said Lemons.

Encouraging open conversations

Domestic violence often thrives in silence, but it should not be viewed as a private or Family matter. The goal of speaking openly about this issue will hopefully educate the community about the signs of abuse and available resources while encouraging victims to seek help.

Witnessing a friend or Family member experience abuse can be difficult, scary and upsetting. There are many nuances to navigate, such as power and control, and even the danger associated with leaving the abusive relationship. Knowing how to talk to someone experiencing domestic violence can help empower them to make tough decisions. Support your loved one by listening without judgment, and offer to connect them to support services and safety.

If you're concerned about a friend's harmful behavior, hold them accountable. You can even use [bystander intervention tactics](#) to diffuse a situation if you're in the room during a concerning exchange.

Addressing your own harmful behavior to a partner or spouse is another critical piece of the conversation. Personal accountability can help you identify warning signs and seek help. Consider speaking with a [nonmedical counselor](#) for support.

The Army's domestic violence prevention efforts focus on early intervention, support and long-term safety. FAP works to prevent domestic abuse from happening by educating Soldiers and their Families

about healthy relationships, effective communication and stress management. In the event of a domestic violence incident, immediate support is provided, including counseling, advocacy and various services. According to Cindy Morita, DCS, G-9, FAP specialist: "The Army also works to prevent domestic violence from recurring. Ongoing counseling, monitoring and access to resources help ensure the safety and well-being of Families. Through these efforts, and by involving bystanders in prevention and support, the Army aims to protect and strengthen military Families."

Trusting and supporting victims and holding offenders accountable can create real change and put a stop to domestic violence. This means reporting domestic violence is paramount. "Domestic abuse is not only devastating to the Family, but it also affects mission readiness. Reporting domestic violence begins the process toward healing," explained Leggett. Everyone is encouraged to report suspected abuse, and certain individuals, such as command teams and "covered professionals," must do so.

How you can help

While Domestic Violence Awareness Month serves as a focal point, the Army's dedication to preventing domestic violence extends throughout the year. Support the Army's commitment against abuse by participating in discussions about domestic violence. Lean into educational resources such as webinars, articles and brochures. If you're discussing domestic violence and someone tells you they're a victim, listen and communicate that the abuse they're experiencing is not their fault. Take them seriously and refer them to FAP. Encourage those seeking assistance to reach out to a DAVA, who can help navigate the differences in reporting options. In cases of suspected child abuse or neglect, make a report to the nearest child welfare agency.

If you or someone you know is experiencing domestic violence, reach out to your installation FAP. Remember, you are not alone. The Army stands ready to provide the support and resources needed to break the cycle of abuse and to create a safe and supportive environment for all. Find your nearest [FAP](#) office, and connect with a DAVA by calling 800-342-9647 or by using the [DAVA Locator](#).

"Domestic abuse is not only devastating to the Family, it also affects mission readiness. Reporting domestic violence begins the process toward healing."

—Dr. Carmen Leggett, DCS, G-9, FAP specialist

with protective orders, providing financial support and benefits information, coordinating emergency services and offering referrals to resources both on and off Army installations.

Also covered under the DAVA program, the Transitional Compensation program offers temporary support, services and benefits to Family members who have experienced spousal or child abuse. The program aims to equip and empower survivors as they transition to safe environments free from abuse. There are two types of TC applications: traditional and exceptional eligibility. An application is considered traditional when the dependent-abuse offense is specifically cited as a reason for the Soldier's separation. Exceptional

Supporting the Army's People *DIRECTOR'S COLUMN* Continued from page 2

edge health care to 9.6 million service members and their Families.

Beginning in January, the Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness will field new awareness materials for prevention and Quality of Life programs, including FAP; Child and Youth Services; Morale, Welfare and Recreation; Health Promotion; and the Integrated Prevention Advisory Group. The materials, developed under the tagline "We've Got

Your Six!," highlight the many programs and resources available to help members of the Army team build and sustain healthy communities. Look for more information about these new campaigns over the next few months.

Last, but not least, I'm pleased to announce the long-awaited arrival of my new deputy, Cailin Crockett. Ms. Crockett comes to DPRR with many years of experience in the prevention realm, including

a stint with DOD as a Senior Adviser for the Independent Review Commission on Sexual Assault in the Military. More recently, she served with the National Security Council as the Director of Military Personnel and Readiness and as the Senior Adviser for the White House's Gender Policy Council.

I'm confident she will be an invaluable asset to DPRR and the Army writ large.

—Dee Geise, DPRR Director



AIT Students Build Strong Foundation for Connection, Resilience

By Erik Moshe, Contractor, Ready and Resilient

Advanced Individual Training is where Soldiers learn the skills they need to perform specific Army jobs, such as artillery, financial management, infantry or aviation logistics. While Soldiers are away from home, missing their families or friends, and navigating new challenges, they may experience negative emotions. Ready and Resilient, or R2, Performance Centers provide services to help individuals or teams overcome these trying situations.

Master resilience trainer – performance experts at the Fort Gregg-Adams, Virginia, R2 Performance Center conducted a team-building event for 300 AIT students from Charlie Company, 832nd Ordnance Battalion. Trainers Alison Gavigan, Charles Bell and Kevin Danaher divided the AIT students into groups and rotated them among the human knot, helium hula hoop and connection circle exercises for 60 minutes.

During the human knot, groups stand in a circle and grab one another's arms to create a knot, then work to untangle the knot without letting go of one another. In the helium hula hoop activity, each team member must place one finger under the hoop and, without speaking, get the hoop to the ground while keeping it level. The connection circle involves

teams sitting in a circle, reading and sharing their answers to an empathy question. These exercises are designed to help students develop teamwork skills, build camaraderie and strengthen resilience.

"These Soldiers are still very new to the Army. If they can build a strong foundation while at Fort Gregg-Adams, the transition to their first duty station can be much smoother," Danaher said. "Understanding how to be a teammate and what it means to build connections with those to their left and right can be a step toward being a resilient Soldier."

After the training, Gavigan expressed that the connection-circle activity may have been the most impactful for the unit. "During the debrief, the AIT students were appreciative of the time to get to know one another on a deeper level," she said. "They understood how being more connected leads to greater happiness, team effectiveness and work-life satisfaction."

Bell stated that cadre and AIT students interacted and got to know each other in a stress-free environment, which will surely help them moving forward. Its value to the mission is priceless. "The AIT students all reached (a) consensus that they

don't do enough activities or trainings like the one we did with them," Bell said.

Contact your nearest [R2 Performance Center](#) to schedule training to boost your team's cohesion and connection.



Trainers at the R2 Performance Center in Fort Gregg-Adams, Virginia, use the human-knot exercise to help Soldiers learn to work together as a team. (U.S. Army photo)

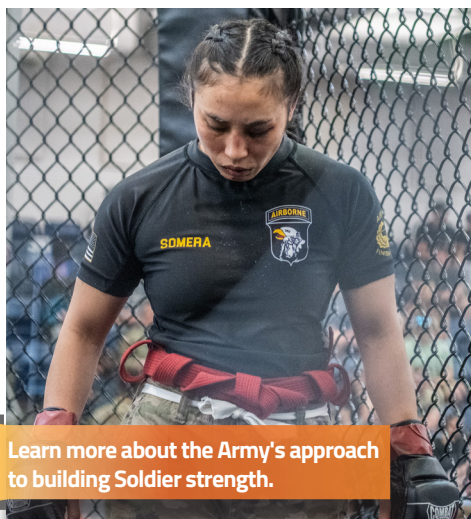
Army Offers Multiple Centers That Ensure Personal Readiness

By Antonieta Rico, Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness

What makes strong Soldiers who can meet the demands of combat? Traditionally, strength has been equated to physical fitness only, but over time the Army's understanding of what it means to be a strong Soldier has evolved. This evolution has led to greater recognition of mental, emotional and relational well-being as significant components of Soldier strength while still maintaining a focus on physical fitness. With this comprehensive understanding in mind, the Army has established multiple facilities on installations that work collaboratively and are dedicated to strengthening the whole Soldier.

Through the combined use of three assets—the Ready and Resilient Performance Centers, the Armed Forces Wellness Centers and the Holistic Health and Fitness Soldier Performance Readiness Centers—Soldiers and units have capabilities like big college Division 1 athletic teams, said Carlos Medina, a Master Resilience Trainer-Performance Expert with the R2 Performance Center at Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Virginia.

Division 1 athletics department staff can include athletic trainers, team physicians, nutritionists, sports performance specialists, mental health specialists and even academic support services.



Learn more about the Army's approach to building Soldier strength.

R2 Performance Centers are instrumental in building mentally and physically strong Soldiers. U.S. Army 1st Lt. Allene Somera competes in the 2024 Lacerda Cup Competition Championship in Columbus, Georgia. (U.S. Army photo by Patrick A. Albright)

Similarly, the R2 Performance Centers, AFWCs and H2F SPRCs offer units and individual Soldiers the staff, equipment and training needed to build each aspect of Soldier strength, and combined, ensure Soldiers are ready—and stay ready—for combat.

"It allows (a) Soldier to have all of the necessary resources to be as great as they can be, or be as prepared as they can be, for their jobs, for combat, for any situation that they're in," Medina said.

Dr. Michael Jarka, program manager, Armed Forces Wellness Centers, said he sees each center as fulfilling different needs at different stages of Soldier well-being, creating and sustaining "a seamless support network" for the Soldier that improves readiness for the Army.

"We all have an equal part to play in that continuum of lethality," Jarka said.

BUILDING STRONG SOLDIERS

R2 Performance Centers

The skills taught at the R2 Performance Centers were first fielded by the Army in 2009 [to build resilience in Soldiers and the Army community amid the strain caused by the high operational tempo of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars](#). Working to strengthen Soldiers' five dimensions of personal readiness and resilience—[physical, emotional, social, spiritual and Family](#)—R2 Performance Centers continue the core mission of building resilience and improving performance, along with building team cohesion.

Read the [full article](#) on the DPRR website.



Military Families Find Support on Sesame Street

By Kim Ferraro, Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness

As the annual November observance of Military Family Month approaches, Americans reflect on the many sacrifices that service members' loved ones make, including adapting to a life that is always in flux, one in which places and faces blur together after a few moves, one in which there is an ever-present fear of their Soldier being injured or dying. Constant change is particularly tough for military kids, who need reassurance and comfort. One of the many sources they can turn to are the lovable luminaries of Sesame Street, thanks to a partnership between the Defense Department and Sesame Workshop.

Whether it's Big Bird, Cookie Monster or Oscar the Grouch, these cultural touchstones easily connect with all types of kids, and that's why, since 2022 the Defense Department's Office of Military Community and Family Policy has funded Sesame Workshop's Sesame Street for Military Families, or SS4MF, a free website with multimedia resources in English and Spanish that cover topics military parents and children confront regularly. "We recognized the need to focus on the specific needs of young children and their Families through all the major milestones of military life while celebrating their service. SS4MF has partnered with the Defense Department and national partners to find innovative ways to reach military and Veteran Families and the providers that support them," said Janay Powell, program analyst at SS4MF.

The [site](#) has interactive games, such as ArtMaker, a drawing tool that helps youngsters colorfully express their emotions; Sunny, Cloudy, Stormy Days, which allows them to pick a type of feelings day and then explore different environments that bring joy and reduce stress; and Comfy-Cozy Nest, where Big Bird demonstrates how to create a safe place in your mind when you are anxious. And in touching, humor-laced videos, the *Sesame Street* stars talk children through issues like adjusting to a new home base, saying goodbye to friends or a parent who is deployed overseas

and managing emotions like disappointment and frustration. Elmo, who has a special connection to the military's 1.6 million kids (his dad is a National Guard member), stars in a story about the importance of joining community events.

"The Family and Community Bonds resources that were launched this year are incredible," Powell enthused. *'Better Together'; 'Solo Parenting'; 'Making the Effort' videos* are great wellness tools to promote positive Family functioning and improve well-being of military parents and their young children."

The over 5 million resources include toolkits, apps, webinars and professional development conferences. Professionals who work with military Families can find resources at this link: https://militarylearning.militaryonesource.mil/course/sesame_street.

To make more military Families in the Washington, D.C., metro area aware of SS4MF, the Office of Military Community and Family Policy asked officials at Fort Belvoir and Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall, in Virginia, to each host a photo shoot in May with local parents from all the services, their kids and their furry TV friends from *Sesame Street*.

At Fort Belvoir, each of the Families got VIP treatment, spending about 45 minutes getting silly with the show's stars. "It was especially interesting to meet the team behind *Sesame Street*. They were very caring and wanted to make sure the kids had the opportunity to meet their favorite characters and made every effort to keep the magic of *Sesame Street* alive," said Jason Shepherd, Fort Belvoir deputy director of public affairs.

The command team at Joint Base Myer "gave their wholehearted approval" when asked to host a photo shoot on the base, said public affairs specialist Denise Caskey. She noted that the website provides a tremendous service by



Big Bird takes a stroll with new friends at Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall. (Photo courtesy of DOD, Military Community and Family Policy)

addressing life disrupters like relocating. "From talking to our service members with Families, I have learned that PCSing and all that comes with it creates a huge amount of stress. SS4MF is a valuable resource for parents because of the guidance it offers on how to approach a move before it happens and how to deal with feelings of loneliness and isolation after the move," Caskey said.

Over two days, military kids spent time with on-screen idols Elmo, Rosita, Big Bird and the Count while photographers captured the action at the Cody Child Development Center and on the playground. "It was really fascinating to watch because it seemed like once the characters started interacting with the children, the cameras and all the people standing around watching were forgotten," Caskey said. "It was exciting to see how they create the *Sesame Street* magic. I think I can speak for all the joint base staff who helped with the project when I say it was one of the best experiences we've had in a long time."

PERSONAL READINESS: FAMILY DIMENSION

Frequent moves, long deployments and major transitions can put stress on military Families. Strengthen your relationships by:

- Scheduling family time. Whether it's a video chat or movie night, put special occasions on your calendar and keep the date.
- Bonding over an activity or meal. Use playtime or meals as opportunities for connecting and catching up.
- Putting distractions aside. Stash devices and unplug from work to give your loved ones attention.



To learn more about the five dimensions of personal readiness and resilience, visit: <https://www.armyresilience.army.mil/ard/R2/Five-Dimensions-of-Personal-Readiness.html>.



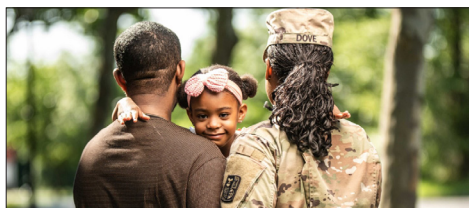
Boosting Resilience Ahead of the Winter Months

By Mavia Hanson, Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness

With the last official day of summer in the books, many Soldiers and their Families look to the fall and winter months as a time for celebrating holidays with loved ones and sometimes for looking ahead to plans, like permanent change of station moves or setting annual goals. During this stretch of the year, it is important to find ways to navigate the possible stressors that come with the change in the seasons. This can start with adopting a few practical self-care habits.

So, what can you do to take better care of yourself? Start by carving out time for yourself. We might sacrifice activities such as working out, going on walks and other things that are typically staples in our routines when things get busy. It's important to use down time in ways that take care of our brains and bodies. Scheduling daily meaningful movement can get you outside and off the couch. "Whether it's stretching, taking a walk or even building a snowman, reserving daily time to getting fresh air and deep breathing can do wonders in restoring balance to your mind and body and boost your overall well-being," said Shania Tazelaar, a Master Resilience Trainer-Performance Expert at Fort Hunter Liggett, in California.

Staying stress-free can also be as simple as picking up a new hobby. Actively pursuing hobbies and activities can help rejuvenate your mind by



Taking better care of yourself now can prepare you for the months ahead. Implementing self-care practices can positively affect your overall health and family well-being. (U.S. Army photo)

10 Easy Ways to Practice Self-Care

1. Begin a daily journal about the things you are grateful for.
2. Create a fun music playlist.
3. Take your medication on time.
4. Try a new fitness routine.
5. Learn meditation, mindfulness techniques or breathing exercises.
6. Schedule weekly sessions with a therapist.
7. Plan a lunch date with someone you haven't seen in a while.
8. Create a DIY self-care kit of things that make you feel better.
9. Eat healthy, balanced meals.
10. Join a support group.

giving you a break from work and everyday tasks. It can even help you sharpen your skills overall. Rob Parson, a Master Resilience Trainer-Performance Expert at the Defense Language Institute in Monterey, California, confirmed, "Personal outlets not only enhance your overall well-being but also improve your performance once back at work."

Finally, Soldiers and their Families can seek support from their community to maneuver through the fall and winter months. While the holidays can be a time of positive emotion and connection, they can also be emotionally overwhelming or lonely for many. It's important that Soldiers and their Family members know that they are not alone and should tap into their support circle. A circle of support may look different from one person to another and can include friends, leaders, or a pastor or coach. One truth remains: Having a reliable support system is essential, regardless of its form. Additionally, installations throughout the country have programs in place to support Soldiers and Families. Programs and services from the U.S. Army Family and [Morale, Welfare and Recreation](#) support home life for Soldiers and Families with enriching, engaging activities.

Setting healthy practices now can help you build your resilience for life's future curve balls in the fall, winter and years to come. For more about self-care and how to boost your resilience, visit the [DPRR website](#).

What Soldiers Are Learning About Healthy Communication

By Abigail Strother, Melissa Coaxum and Carmella Mixon, Walter Reed Army Institute of Research

Suicide is a nationwide public health issue affecting military members and civilians alike. According to the Department of Defense Quarterly Suicide Report 1st Quarter, CY 2024, 72 Army Soldiers died by suicide. Taking a proactive approach to strengthening protective factors is more critical now than ever for building relationships and interpersonal connections. Effective communication is a powerful connection tool that can contribute to social relationships, increase cohesion and reduce suicide risk.

In partnership with the U.S. Army Public Health Center, Walter Reed Army Institute of Research modernized the Act, Care, Escort suicide prevention training for both Basic Combat Training and annual suicide prevention training. The +1 module, Active Listening, aims to teach Soldiers how to be better listeners and communicators when someone needs support. This training outlines a process called Receive, Acknowledge, Summarize and Ask, highlighting effective listening skills and social support as critical components for enhancing resilience and connection.

The Walter Reed institute also developed the current Basic Connections training, a skills-based module that teaches new Soldiers how to better connect during BCT. Delivered by a unit chaplain or drill sergeant, this training helps Soldiers mitigate loneliness and encourages a sense of comradery and community. Participants learn to:

- Ask questions about similarities between them and their peers, to build trust.
- Understand that each person has past/present experiences and conflicts that will influence how they interact and communicate.
- Recognize their emotions, name them and express them respectfully.

Through training programs like ACE +1 and Basic Connections, Soldiers are equipped with vital skills to intervene in a crisis and cultivate long-term protective factors such as trust, camaraderie and resilience. By remembering and applying these communication skills across all contexts and circumstances, Soldiers and civilians can strengthen support networks, promote mental well-being and contribute to a safer and more close-knit environment for all.

Effective Listening Skills: Receive, Acknowledge, Summarize and Ask

Receive: Receiving is listening to understand what someone else is saying.

- Ensure open body language: Face the person, lean forward, use eye contact, and avoid crossing arms or legs.
- Just listen: Do not mentally prepare a response.
- Allow the individual to share: Do not interrupt.
- Put yourself in their shoes: Empathize.

Acknowledge: Affirm that you understood what was said.

- Nod.
- Change facial expressions.
- Encourage conversation by saying, "Go on" and/or "I see."

Summarize: Repeat to the speaker what you understood them to say.

- Paraphrase what you heard to confirm your understanding.
- Get clarity in case you missed what the speaker said.

Ask: Ask questions when necessary.

- Ask follow-up questions to clarify what they said (e.g., "What do you mean by _____?").
- Ask the person to elaborate on important details (e.g., "Can you tell me more about _____?").



Free Up Mental Space by Finding, Practicing Wellness

By Marco A. Bongioanni, Readjustment Counseling Therapist, Veterans Affairs

November is Warrior Care Month, when we look to raise awareness of the resources and programs available to wounded, ill and injured Soldiers, is an important time for all to understand and embrace. In the field of wellness there are a variety of focused models that, like military readiness, focus on the individual.

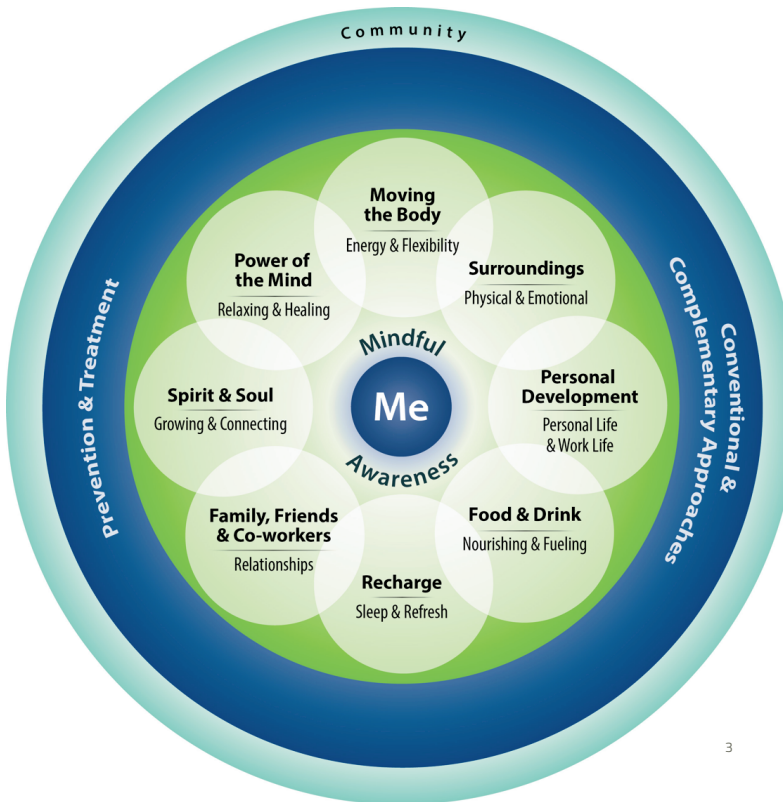
Over the past several years the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs has embraced the Whole Health model: "an approach to health care that empowers and equips people to take charge of their health, well-being, and live their life to the fullest." Just as the military sees unit readiness as depending on the readiness of individual service members, the Whole Health model "is fueled by the power of knowing yourself and what will really work for you in your life. Only you have these insights and this knowledge."¹

Circle of Health²: Whole Health uses the Circle of Health (see graphic) to illustrate the relationships and connections that our health and wellness have to aspects of our life.

Me: You are at the center of this model in that you are the sole expert in your health.

Mindful awareness: This concept stresses noticing what is happening when it happens, paying attention in the present and being nonjudgmental about your thoughts and feelings.

Eight circles of self-care: In military terms, these are the readiness indicators or metrics of our health.



Community: Finally, there is the larger community around us. This consists of not only the places you live, work and worship but also all the people, connections and groups you interact with—those whom you rely on and those who rely on you.

Whole Health = Individual Readiness

In the military, achieving a high level of readiness is an important component of daily life. The ability of a unit to achieve its wartime mission, however, can only be built first with individual readiness. During Warrior Care Month, this November, we can further our commitment to understand and embrace wellness. As we have seen, personal-wellness models like Whole Health can provide the readiness architecture and mental maneuver space for service members and Veterans to find balance in life and thrive. Whole Health ultimately centers on what matters to you, not what is the matter with you.⁴

There are a variety of these, all equally important and mutually supportive of one another. When we notice we are lacking in one area of self-care, we may notice how it affects another area.

Prevention and treatment: This is made up of both conventional and complementary medicine and care. Conventional care teams can consist of doctors, nurses, mental health providers, medicines and other clinically focused care. Complementary care can be things like acupuncture, therapy dogs, equine therapy, yoga, walking in nature or meditating.

About the author: Marco A. Bongioanni is a licensed mental health counselor who also works for the Department of Veterans Affairs and is a senior leader in the Army Reserve. His professional interests include human behavior, applied psychology and military cultural competence.

¹U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Health Administration, Office of Patient Care and Cultural Transformation. Whole Health: It Starts With Me, 2020.

²U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Circle of Health Overview, <https://www.va.gov/WHOLEHEALTH/circle-of-health/index.asp>, Accessed 19 January 2024.

³U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Health Administration, Office of Patient Care and Cultural Transformation. Taking Charge of My Life and Health participant workbook, 1-5, 2021.

⁴U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, "What is Whole Health?", <https://www.va.gov/wholehealth>.

Addressing Food and Financial Insecurity in the Army Community

By Chet Curtis, Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness

The military has the strategies, policies and resources to support food and economic security, as well as the well-being of our service members and their Families. However, we must address these issues holistically, which was the key takeaway from the Total Force Fitness webinar Strengthening Health, Wellness and Financial Security Through Total Force Fitness, part of the 2024 Military Family Readiness Academy.

The Total Force Fitness framework is a detailed blueprint to help the military community optimize their health and performance across eight life domains. This webinar, focused on economic readiness and military Family well-being, was attended by more than 200 people across the Department of Defense on Aug. 29. Participants

learned about initiatives to support financial readiness and food security.

Joanna Reagan, public health nutritionist with the Defense Centers for Public Health, explained how low food security affected almost 13% of the country in 2022 and why this issue is critical within our units.

"That's 17 million individuals, and if you add in children, that adds up to 17.3% of households in the U.S. (that) are food insecure, or 6.4 million individuals. Since the military mirrors the civilian population, this becomes a military issue," she said.

That's where the data comes in, and the figures don't lie. The Department of Agriculture defines a food-secure household as one where everyone can

access enough food for an active, healthy life. Reagan mentioned that from 2018 to 2022, the USDA found that 15% of all active-duty personnel lived with insufficient food security and another 10.4% had very low food security.

According to Reagan, a 2023 RAND Corporation report, Food Insecurity Among Members of the Armed Forces and Their Dependents, found that 25.8% of Army, Navy, Marines and Coast Guard personnel experienced food insecurity. The report also identified the high cost of living, lack of spousal employment opportunities and difficult-to-find assistance programs as contributing factors to food insecurity in the military.

To read the [full article](#), visit the DPRR website.



DPRR

DIRECTORATE OF PREVENTION, RESILIENCE AND READINESS

OCTOBER 2024

HAIL AND FAREWELL

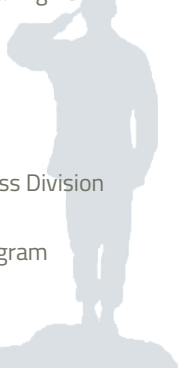
We invite the Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness community to join us in welcoming new members to DPRR. Congratulations to current members on taking new positions and a fond farewell to departing staff.

Hail

- Cailin Crockett, Deputy Director, DPRR
- Dr. Cindy Morita, Family Advocacy Program
- Janique Parnell, Family Advocacy Program
- Kenitha Woodhouse, Soldier and Family Readiness Division

Farewell

- Paul Grossman, Exceptional Family Member Program



UPCOMING EVENTS

OCTOBER

American Public Health Association Annual Meeting and Expo

Oct. 27–30: "Building trust in public health and science" is the theme of the APHA annual conference, at which participants will explore the promise and effectiveness of public health.

Location: Minneapolis, Minnesota **Learn more:** Visit the [APHA website](#) for more information.

NOVEMBER

NABITA Annual Conference

Nov. 17–22: At the National Association for Behavioral Intervention and Threat Assessment 16th annual conference, professionals will glean insights from experts in the fields of behavioral intervention, threat assessment and case management.

Location: West Palm Beach, Florida **Learn more:** Visit the [NABITA website](#) for more information.



If you experienced sexual trauma during your military service, Veterans Affairs can help.

Free Services The Department of Veterans Affairs, or VA, offers free health care and other benefits for current and former Service members who experienced sexual assault, harassment or abuse during military service, also known as military sexual trauma, or MST.

For Current Service Members Current Service members (including current National Guard and Reserve members) can access confidential MST-related counseling at VA's Vet Centers without a referral and care at VA medical facilities with a Department of Defense referral.

No Report or Evidence of MST Needed to Receive Care No report to authorities or other documentation of the MST experience is needed to receive health care services.

For more information, scan the QR code, download the Beyond MST mobile app, or visit/call:

www.mentalhealth.va.gov/mst • www.va.gov/find-locations • 1-800-698-2411



TOP-PERFORMING POSTS

FACEBOOK



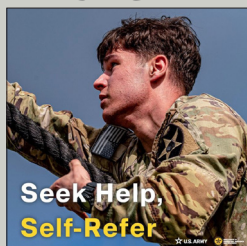
Impressions: 2,187

TWITTER



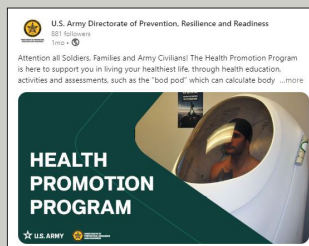
Impressions: 158

INSTAGRAM



Impressions: 898

LINKEDIN



Impressions: 82

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Please coordinate with your Public Affairs Office to share or retweet @ArmyResilience content on command or installation Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn platforms. Contact Kevin O'Brien for questions regarding DPRR social media at kobrien@strategyconsultingteam.com.

Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness

DPRR COMMUNITYLINK

Oct. 23, 2024, Volume 10, Issue 1

The DPRR Community Link newsletter is an authorized bi-monthly publication produced by the Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness for the Army community. The contents of the DPRR Community Link are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense or the Department of the Army. The editorial content of the DPRR Community Link is the responsibility of the Communications & Outreach Division at DPRR. For questions, or to subscribe or submit articles and photographs to DPRR Community Link, please contact the editor at jtaylor@strategyconsultingteam.com. This publication is available for download at <https://www.dvidshub.net/publication/1102/r2-community-link-newsletter>.

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Submit articles and photographs by Nov. 8. For any questions, contact the editor at jtaylor@strategyconsultingteam.com.

Do you want to contribute to the next issue of the newsletter?

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