

THE OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Military Community and Family Policy

Quick Reference Guide for Health Care Providers Working With Military Families



Providing policy, tools and resources to further enhance the quality of life of service members and their families.

Updated April 2014

Introduction

The Quick Reference Guide for Health Care Providers Caring for Military Families offers practical information about military families. It is designed for use in assessing their medical and psychosocial needs and in delivering effective services.

This guide provides demographic information and highlights the factors that make military family needs unique. Given the current demand placed on the military, it highlights the importance of continuing to assess the impact of deployment and other stressors on military families and offers suggestions for talking with them about their experiences and needs. The guide also provides referral information for families who need additional support.



What demographics make up our military?

The military is made up of individuals on active duty (1.39 million), as well as individuals who are members of the Reserve Component (848,302). The Reserve Component includes the reserve elements of the Army, Marine Corps, Navy and Air Force, as well as the Army and Air Force National Guard. More than half of the active-duty members are married with 1.94 million family members, as are approximately half of the reserve members with 1.14 million family members. Of these family members, 42.4 percent of the active-duty children and 29.3 percent of the reserve children are 5 years old or younger.

What makes military families different from non-military families?

- Demographics such as ages of parents and children, a large single population
- Cultural diversity of members and families
- Live on or near a military installation, often in remote locations, away from extended family support (Active Component)
- Frequent absence of the military member due to training and deployments
- Multiple relocations (Active Component), sometimes entailing living separately (Active and Reserve Component)
- Exposure to various cultures
- Military member's job entails risk of injury/death
- Military command involvement in the military member's personal and family life
- Irregular hours/unpredictable schedule
- May be the only military family member in a school, church or place of employment

Note that these, and other, factors generate strength in some families, while they pose challenges for others.

What is military family readiness?

Military family readiness is the state of being prepared to effectively navigate the challenges of daily living experienced in the unique context of military service. Ready individuals and families are knowledgeable about the potential challenges they may face, equipped with the skills to competently function when presented with such challenges and aware of the supportive resources available to help them manage such challenges.

What is the Family Readiness System?

As health care providers working with military families, you are part of the Family Readiness System. This network of programs, services, people and agencies on military installations and in civilian communities, and the collaboration among them, promotes the readiness and quality of life of service members and their families. Service providers working within these programs work closely and collaboratively to meet the varied needs of the military families that come to them for support.



What impacts family readiness?

- Member readiness to perform his or her assigned mission
- Spouse satisfaction with the military
- Experience with prior separation; may become easier for some and more difficult and challenging for others
- Marital and family relationships and the ability to manage what causes them stress
- Co-occurring stressors such as relationship difficulties, health problems and financial stress
- How prepared they feel
- Feeling connected to, and informed about, support

What you can do to help

- Be aware of services available through the departments of Defense, Veterans Affairs and other organizations.
- If you are a non-military health care provider, be aware of ways to make your office/agency environment family and military friendly. Similarly, ask about military service on your intake form. Include options for veterans and reserve members.
- Hang a poster or signage indicating that you support military families.
- When military family members come to you for health care:
 - Ask them why they came to see you. Then ask them what else they would like to talk about. (The real issue may be the one they bring up as they exit your office, leaving little time to respond.)
 - Observe energy level, eye contact, facial expression, posture and other indicators of both physical and emotional distress.
 - Listen to what they say but also to what they do not say.

Resource and training websites are provided at the back of this guide.

Focus on the military life cycle

- As a result of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, there is a good chance that a military family member has had some experience with deployment.
- Ask the family member if he or she has experienced deployment and, if so, ask them to tell you about it.
- If the military member has been, is now or will be deployed, consider these suggestions:
 - Acknowledge that deployment is a stressful situation.
 - Ask what concerns he or she has about deployment.
- Recognize that even when a member has not been deployed, the military families may have experienced stress similar to that of deployed families:
 - Non-deployed military members may have had to work longer hours in the absence of deployed members.
 - These families may need to make adjustments in family functions and routines.
- This is also a time when many military families are making transitions to another duty station, from active to reserve status or from military to civilian life.
- Ask what support systems they have in place to help address these concerns and others that may come up later.
- Suggest that they contact one of the resources listed at the end of this guide for assistance with current issues and those that might emerge.
- Schedule a return visit within a specific timeframe if family members seem unlikely to follow through on their own.
- During follow up visits, ensure that current needs are being addressed and determine if services need to be adjusted to meet changing/emerging needs. Make a direct referral for specific services as necessary.

Children and Youth

On installation

- Approximately 300 youth and teen centers are available worldwide.
- More than 775 child development program facilities provide approximately 174,000 child care spaces.
- Care is also provided in approximately 4,500 family child care homes.
- Child development programs serve approximately 200,000 children between the ages of 4 weeks and 12 years on a daily basis through full-day, part-day and hourly programs.
- More than 26,000 staff are employed in child development and youth programs, more than 7,800 of which are military spouses.
- Ninety-seven percent of eligible centers are nationally accredited.
- Child Care Aware of America's, "We Can Do Better," report for 2012 ranked Department of Defense child care as the highest in both standards and oversight in the continental United States.

Off installation

- 11,000 military youth participated in a variety of camp programs in 2012 at little or no out-of-pocket expense.
- Respite child care is provided for families of deployed and independent duty personnel.
- Child care fees range from \$52 to \$140 per week based on total family income.

For more information, visit <http://www.militaryonesource.mil/cyt>.



Department of Defense schools

The Department of Defense Education Activity schools provide a comprehensive pre-kindergarten through 12th grade curriculum that is dedicated to attaining highest student achievement for all students. Currently 100 percent of DoDEA schools are accredited and in good standing with their regional accrediting agency. Students consistently achieve high scores in the National Assessment of Educational Progress and above the national average on standardized assessments.

The DoDEA measures student progress with multiple performance-based assessments. The TerraNova standardized test provides DoDEA with results that it can compare to a nation-wide sample. Students in DoDEA schools also take the National Assessment of Educational Progress, which provides comparisons of student achievement in reading, writing, math and science. All DoDEA schools are accredited by the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement or the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement, which provide each school with an independent evaluation. The DoDEA operates 194 schools in 12 countries, seven states, Guam and Puerto Rico.

All schools within DoDEA are fully accredited by U.S. accreditation agencies. Approximately 8,700 educators serve more than 81,000 DoDEA students. Additionally, through partnership and outreach efforts, DoDEA's Educational Partnership branch shares its experience and resources to support expansion of educational opportunities for all 1.2 million children from military families through a variety of methods to include a congressional authority to execute a grant program. The DoDEA grants aim to strengthen family-school-community relationships and enhance student achievement for military dependent students. School districts may choose to design their projects with academic goals, family engagement goals or a combination of both. Since 2009, DoDEA has awarded 230 grants to 191 military-connected public school districts for academic and support programs through a competitive grant program.

These efforts in partnership with United States public schools mitigate academic disruption and promote educational continuity.

For more information, visit DoDEA online at <http://www.dodea.edu> or at <http://www.militaryk12partners.dodea.edu>.

Military and family support centers

- 248 installation military and family support centers worldwide; all are required to provide access to the following services:
 - Relocation assistance
 - Emergency family assistance
 - Non-medical individual and family counseling
 - Deployment assistance
 - Information and referral
 - Personal financial management
 - Spouse education and employment assistance
 - Personal and family life education
 - Exceptional family member support
 - Domestic violence prevention and response
 - Child abuse prevention and response
 - Transition assistance
 - Volunteer coordination
- The services vary with respect to whether counseling and Family Advocacy Program services are offered in military and family support centers or through medical services.

For more information and to find a local military and family support center, visit <http://www.MilitaryINSTALLATIONS.dod.mil>.



Exceptional Family Member Program

- As many as 220,000 members of active-duty families may have a member with special needs; more than 128,500 are currently enrolled in the Exceptional Family Member Program.
- Enrollment is mandatory for these members.
- Enrollment provides information about the family member's needs, which is taken into consideration during the assignment process.
- All services provide EFMP family support services.

For more information, visit <http://www.militaryonesource.mil/efmp>.

Child and domestic abuse prevention and treatment

New Parent Support Program

These installation-based home visiting programs promote a healthy family environment for new and expectant parents. The program focuses on building the protective factors associated with reducing the stress and challenges of becoming a new family. Depending on the location, the program may also provide lactation support, play mornings, outreach and referral.

Family Advocacy Program

The Family Advocacy Program is the Department of Defense agency designated to address child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse in military families and is available on military installations where families are present. The abuse of children and family members is contrary to military values, detracts from mission readiness and requires a coordinated response. The Family Advocacy Program works with military and civilian agencies to promote relationship health and family wellness, prevent abuse, promote victim safety and provide appropriate treatment and intervention for offenders and all affected family members. Health care providers are mandated to report suspected child abuse and neglect to local civilian child protection agencies and military Family Advocacy Programs. Adult victims of domestic abuse generally have two reporting options: An unrestricted report includes command notification and may trigger a law enforcement investigation. A restricted report does not

include command or law enforcement involvement and can be made to a military health care provider or Family Advocacy Program clinician or victim advocate. Restrictions apply in duty to warn/threat to life situations.

Sample Family Advocacy services include:

- A reporting line to receive reports of suspected abuse or neglect
- Child Abuse Prevention and Domestic Abuse Awareness campaigns
- Life skills training, including anger and stress management
- Parenting and couples education and support
- New Parent Support Program home visits for expectant and new parents
- Domestic Abuse Victim Advocacy information and support
- Professional assessment and treatment for all affected family members
- Transitional compensation for victims when a service member is separated from the military due to child or domestic abuse

For more information, visit <http://www.militaryonesource.mil/abuse>.



Outreach

Military OneSource

Military OneSource is a 24/7 support program offering assistance and resources at no cost to service members and their families online or with professionally trained consultants by telephone. Military OneSource is particularly helpful for service members and families who live far from military installations, because they can access services quickly and easily where they live. The Military OneSource program includes the following key components:

- An interactive website with expertly prepared information, resource lists, moderated chats, audios, discussion boards, blogs, podcasts, webinars, access to consultants, an exhaustive online library, and downloadable and orderable materials
- Information on a wide range of topics, including deployment adjustment, relocation, spouse employment, special needs, parenting, education, elder care, and health and wellness
- Master's level consultants available to provide support
- No-cost, non-medical counseling services with licensed counselors who provide confidential, short-term counseling face-to-face in the local community, by telephone and online through secure chat (up to 12 sessions per person, per issue)
- Health and wellness coaching by telephone or online with information, support and encouragement for weight management, nutrition, exercise and stress reduction
- Referrals to resources, services and support in military and communities
- Specialty consultations, such as online and telephone financial counseling, spouse career consultations, wounded warrior consultations and consultations for families with special needs
- Official document translation and simultaneous language interpretation in support of a consultation
- Outreach support that incorporates a network of Joint Family Support Assistance Program Military OneSource consultants in each state to provide briefs and support for deployment-related events, including Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program events

For more information, visit <http://www.militaryonesource.mil> or call 800-342-9647.

Military and family life counselors

Military and family life counselors are licensed professionals who provide face-to-face confidential non-medical counseling services at no cost to military members and their families for everyday issues such as anger management, stress, parenting, family relationships and deployment adjustment. These counselors:

- Are master's or doctorate level counselors who are licensed to practice counseling independently
- Support service members and family members with non-medical, short-term, confidential counseling, as well as financial counseling services
- Provide private and confidential counseling, with the exception of mandatory state, federal and military reporting requirements (such as domestic violence, child abuse and duty to warn situations)
- Provide flexible support to meet the needs of service and family members when and where they need help
- Provide surge support for service members returning from combat or in response to emergency situations at a commander's request with up to 20 MFLCs and six personal financial counselors for up to 45 days
- May be embedded to provide military units with dedicated support
- Support service members and family members on rotations up to 90 days
- Include child and youth behavioral MFLCs who support children and youth in child development and youth programs, schools and summer programs

For more information, visit <http://www.militaryonesource.mil/non-medical-counseling>.



Joint Family Support Assistance Program

This program delivers mobile family support and services to geographic-dispersed service members and military families facing the same deployment-related challenges as installation-based families, but whose access to support is more challenging. The JFSAP serves members and families from all components and collaborates with existing military and family support resources to augment their activities and fill gaps where they exist.

The JFSAP provides the following services and resources:

- Information and referrals to community services and support
- Non-medical counseling and education to individuals, families and groups
- Child and youth services, including assistance locating child care
- Financial education and counseling
- On-demand support for Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program and other deployment events.

For more information, visit <http://www.militaryonesource.mil/jfsap>.

Online Resources

Military OneSource

<http://www.militaryonesource.mil>

Military OneSource provides comprehensive information on every aspect of military life at no cost to service members and their families. In addition to the website support, Military OneSource offers call center and online support for consultations on a wide range of issues from everyday concerns to deployment-related issues. Military OneSource also offers non-medical counseling services online, via telephone or face to face addressing issues requiring short-term attention. The website, call center and non-medical counseling services are available 24 hours a day, no matter where you live or serve.

Plan My Move

<http://planmymove.militaryonesource.mil>

Plan My Move provides service members and their families with access to information about entitlements and benefits, points of contact, checklists, planning tools and information on education and employment designed to make frequent moves easier and less disruptive.

MilitaryINSTALLATIONS

<http://www.militaryinstallations.dod.mil>

MilitaryINSTALLATIONS provides contact information for programs and services, maps and directions, links to comprehensive location overviews and community points of interest for military installations worldwide.

Military Youth on the Move

<http://apps.militaryonesource.mil/myom>

Military Youth on the Move provides information and resources for elementary, middle and high school-age children and parents to help navigate the challenges of the mobile military life.

TRICARE

<http://www.tricare.mil>

TRICARE provides information pertaining to health care resources and benefits for active-duty and retired military families.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

<http://www.va.gov>

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs provides a wide range of benefits information for veterans including topics such as health care, disability, education and training, vocational rehabilitation and employment, home loan guaranty, dependent and survivor benefits, life insurance and burial benefits.

The National Resource Directory

<http://www.nationalresourcedirectory.gov>

The National Resource Directory provides access to services and resources at the national, state and local levels to support recovery, rehabilitation and community reintegration for wounded, ill and injured service members, veterans, their families and those who support them. Available information addresses topics including benefits and compensation, education and training, employment, family and caregiver support, health, homeless assistance, housing, and transportation and travel.

Joint Family Support Assistance Program

<http://www.militaryonesource.mil/jfsap/service-providers>

The Joint Family Support Assistance Program provides information and resources to include the JFSAP Desk Reference and the link for on-demand support requests.

Joint Services Support

<https://joinservicesupport.org>

Joint Services Support provides information for National Guard and reserve members, including event schedules and links to programs specific to National Guard and reserve members and their families.

Wounded warrior resources

<http://www.militaryonesource.mil/wounded-warrior>

Military OneSource wounded warrior resources provides articles and links to other resources specific to the needs of wounded warriors and their families.

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For assistance with:

Military life and deployment

Career and education

Crisis situations

Family life and recreation

Finances and legal affairs

Health and relationships

Contact:

Installation military and family support center:

MilitaryINSTALLATIONS for local military and family support center contact information:

<http://www.militaryinstallations.dod.mil>

Military OneSource: 800-342-9647 or

<http://www.militaryonesource.mil>

Health care resources for active and retired military families:

<http://www.tricare.mil>

Resources for geographically dispersed families -

contact state family program directors

<http://www.militaryonesource.mil/deployment/joint-family-support-assistance-program>

Resources for wounded, ill and injured service members, veterans, their families and those who support them:

<http://www.nationalresourcedirectory.gov>

Resources for veterans:

<http://www.va.gov>





Mission Statement. The Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy is directly responsible for programs and policies which establish and support community quality of life programs for service members and their families worldwide. This office also serves as the focal point for coordination of the broad range of quality of life issues within the Department of Defense.



Information in this guide may not be current due to policy or program changes which may have occurred since it was published. Send questions to <http://www.militaryonesource.mil/feedback>.



Brought to you by the MC&FP Office of Military Community Outreach



Providing policy, tools and resources to further enhance the quality of life of service members and their families.