



DPRR COMMUNITYLINK

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



Resilience prepares Soldiers and Families to deal with life's challenges by equipping them with the ability to cope with adversity, adapt to change and thrive under new conditions. Investing in personal and professional relationships enhances unity, trust and satisfaction, boosting overall health and resilience. The Army aims to ensure that Soldiers and Families receive quality-of-life support through programs and services. (U.S. Army photo by Prudence Siebert)

Building Stronger Bonds: Cultivating Resilience Through Meaningful Relationships This Winter

By Jasmine Taylor, Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness

As the leaves fall and the drop in the mercury reminds us that the year is drawing to a close, a critical question arises for Soldiers and their Families: How do we navigate the stresses of winter and emerge stronger on the other side? Winter brings a shift in routines, shorter days and often increased financial pressures illuminated by holiday obligations. For some, winter celebrations may mean joyful gatherings; for others, they can mean heightened feelings of loneliness because of separation from loved ones. Amid these seasonal transitions, the Army wants to emphasize the power of strong relationships as a cornerstone of resilience.

Trust and unity are helpful for both Family well-being and mission success. Trust can help form the foundation of strong relationships, fostering open communication, mutual support and increased cohesion.

"By building trust within Family and within their units, Soldiers can be assured that they have the social support and psychological safety that they need in work life and personal life," said Ian Gutierrez and Madhavi Reddy of the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, Research Transition Office.

Building trust often starts with finding ways to connect with others.

Connection is not just a feel-good concept; it's a fundamental human need and a critical component of resilience. According to an [academic journal](#) article "Social Neuroscience: Progress and Implications for Mental Health," while social interaction is important for everyone, it is even more impactful for those working in "team-based, high-risk occupations like the military." The Army recognizes this, making social connectedness one of the six core competencies within its comprehensive resilience program.

"Social connectedness impacts resilience in the Army Community because everyone needs a support network to navigate the challenges and stressors of Army life," said Erin Towner, Master Resilience Trainer - Performance Expert and Ready and Resilient Performance Centers program advisor. "Knowing that you matter to someone is essential to well-being and combats feelings of isolation and loneliness."

While the Army actively promotes connectedness, certain stigmas and roadblocks may hinder relationship building. For example, some Soldiers may believe that emotional vulnerability equates to weakness. This stigma may prevent individuals from reaching out or forming deeper connections with others.

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DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

Team,

For this month's edition of the "Director's Column," I've asked Sgt. Maj. Ruben Murillo to share his thoughts on the importance of resilience in buffering the stressors of transitions, especially during the winter PCS season.

—Dee Geise, DPRR Director

Sgt. Maj. Murillo:

The winter holidays can be a busy and stressful time for Families. As we transition into a new year, many Army Families are also facing the challenges of a Permanent Change of Station move. Even though Soldiers are built for the challenge, change can be difficult for the entire Family. Warm hand-offs to resources like the Spouse Education and Career Opportunities program, school liaisons and Exceptional Family Member Program are available to help ease the stress of moving.

To further support Army Families, a groundbreaking intergovernmental support agreement was established with the child care network Upwards to increase access to child care services for Army Families at and around Camp Bull Simons, Florida. The IGSA will provide a free-to-user mobile app that will alert Army Families to available spaces. This new agreement aims to ease the burden of finding child care for Army Families (see page 8).

With the release of the Department of Defense Annual Report on Suicide in the Military in November, we remember the 279 Soldiers who died by suicide in 2023. The report shows an increase in deaths by suicide from calendar year 2022. It also serves as a reminder of the impact of gestures like a phone call, video chat or invitation to a holiday celebration for someone struggling.

Calendar year 2024 trends are promising, but it's crucial to continue emphasizing the importance of supporting each other and following the A.C.E. (Ask, Care, Escort) prevention model. Staying connected is essential for our mental well-being and collective resilience.

The Winter Resilience social media campaign shared on DPRR's Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and X accounts is a great resource with information on how to help you and your Family thrive during the winter months. Further support across the Army is provided by the More to Be Done campaign, emphasizing the importance of everyone working together and encouraging help-seeking behavior, especially for

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Military Spouse Employment Resources Offered

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

There are 1 million military spouses in the global U.S. military community. They provide critical support to our Soldiers and their Army careers, and often, their own careers suffer as a result. The Army and the Department of Defense recognize that many military Families need two incomes and that military spouses sacrifice years of education, hard work and experience in service to our nation. To ease the burden and encourage career advancement and development, programs and other support services have been created to help Army spouses continue to pursue their professional endeavors.

The Spouse Education and Career Opportunities program delivers support to military spouses through four main components: MY SECO website, Military Spouse Employment Partnership, My Career Advancement Account Scholarship and Military OneSource SECO Career Center. Each component enriches military spouses professionally and allows them to pursue their ambitions. Some of the resources



A military spouse gets information about a new career as an engineering tech during the Total Army Career Fair in Inglewood, California, Nov. 1, 2024. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Yarisma De Leon)

and services that SECO provides include:

- Help building a resume.
- Resources for finding employment.
- Career exploration and counseling services.
- Reimbursement of occupational licensing and business-related expenses up to \$2,000.

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

Smart Budgeting and Spending Strategies for Soldiers

By Mia Holloman, Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness

Budgeting plays a vital role in financial readiness, helping Soldiers align income with expenses and savings goals to provide long-term financial security. To support Soldiers and their Families, the Army offers tools designed to promote informed financial decision-making.

Effective budgeting serves as a road map for managing finances, helping Soldiers take control of their money and make intentional decisions about their financial future.

"A spending plan is an excellent tool for outlining your income and expenses, covering everything from bills and debt payments to retirement contributions," Robyn Alama Mroszczyk, Deputy Chief of Staff, G-9 Financial Education program manager, stated.

Here are some tips to guide Soldiers in developing a [spending plan](#) that aligns with their priorities and future aspirations:

Assess your current financial situation. Knowing where your money is going now can help you determine whether these expenses need to remain as is or adjustments are needed. Review your various bank and investment accounts, your debts, employer benefits, insurance and your income.

Define your financial goals. These goals might include paying down debt, buying a home, or saving

for retirement or college tuition. What is important to you? Develop a plan to meet your goals and prioritize them accordingly.

Build spending habits. In addition to reviewing your regular monthly expenses, talk about your spending habits when it comes to flexible expenses like entertainment, dining out and clothing. Create a spending plan that you are comfortable with.

Focus on saving and investing. With your goals in mind, how much money do you want to put away each pay period or month to strengthen your financial situation? Think about how much risk you would be comfortable taking, and whether you want to use a financial advisor or take a do-it-yourself approach.

Begin planning. Develop a plan to pay bills and build your savings. Your plan should include who will be the primary money manager in case of training or deployment.

"You can plan to decrease spending on some items and use the extra money to pursue goals such as paying down debt or saving for the future," Mroszczyk advised.

For more resources, visit [Financial Frontline](#) or [DPRR: Financial Readiness](#).

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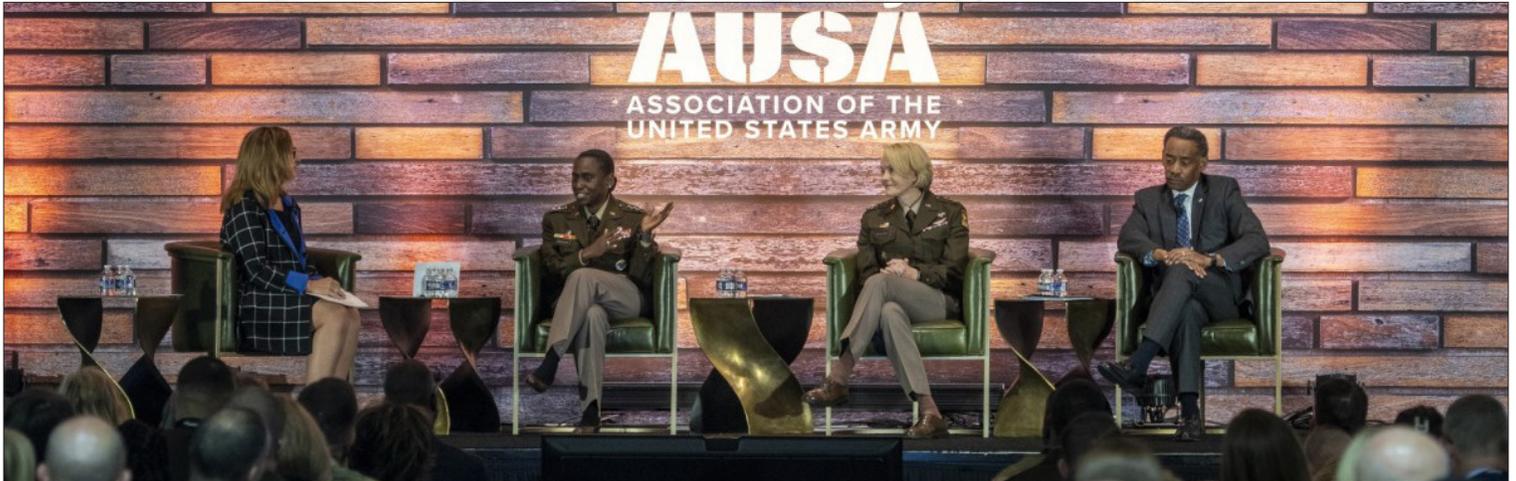


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FAMILY CHILD CARE HOMES PROVIDE OPTIONS FOR ARMY FAMILIES



Defense Health Agency Director, U.S. Army Lt. Gen. Telita Crosland participates in a panel discussion on "Transforming Combat Ready Care" at the Association of the United States Army's annual meeting and exposition in Washington, D.C. on Oct. 15, 2024. (U.S. Army photo by Robert Hammer)

Leaders Discuss How Digital Innovation Is Transforming Military Health Care

By Antonietta Rico, Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness

Innovative digital tools, including artificial intelligence and telemedicine, can be leveraged to fill gaps in medical services, but the key to military health care will always be people, military health leaders said during a Warfighter and Family Forum at the Association of the United States Army Annual Meeting and Exposition, Oct. 15, in Washington, D.C.

"People are at the heart of delivering care, whether it is in the deployed environment or whether it's in a garrison," said Dr. Jonathan Woodson, president of the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, which trains military medical students. However, Woodson emphasized that digital solutions are critical to supporting medical providers and can help with the ongoing health care workforce shortage. Woodson said USU is revising their curriculum to ensure the military medical workforce has the competency to work with innovative technology tools, including AI.

Leveraging digital tools "maintains those human clinical capabilities for the cases that really require it," said Lt. Gen. Mary Krueger Izaguirre, U.S. Army Surgeon General, while allowing patients to access care "wherever they are, closest to their place of need—it gives them more choice." Izaguirre said patients who, for example, need a prescription refill can use digital solutions, while patients who need to see a doctor in person will be able to because providers will have the availability.

Retired Lt. Gen. Patricia Horoho, 43rd U.S. Army Surgeon General, moderated the discussion during the Transforming Combat Ready Care forum at AUSA, in which panelists—including Izaguirre and Woodson, as well as Lt. Gen. Telita Crosland, Director, Defense Health Agency—talked about how the military and the Army are "focusing on innovation and modern solutions to deliver person-centric, cutting-edge, health care."

The military medical community is already leveraging technology in innovative ways to

improve access and convenience for patients, said Crosland. Earlier this year, five military hospitals began testing a [suite of digital tools](#) called [My Military Health](#). These digital tools include the SilverCloud behavioral health platform, which uses an app on mobile devices to provide mental wellness care; secure video for telehealth appointments; and Care Companion, another digital health tool that can help patients keep up with their recovery care plan. Some of these tools are in the process of being rolled out stateside and eventually overseas, Crosland said.

The advantage of leveraging these digital tools became evident most recently in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene. Staff at Martin Army Community Hospital, Fort Moore, Georgia—one of the test sites for My Military Health—were able to transfer 600 appointments to a virtual environment during the natural disaster, Crosland said.

Read the [full article](#) on army.mil.

Building a Safer Future for Army Communities With CIPPIA

By DPRR Communications and Outreach Division

The American Institutes for Research was selected by the U.S. Army to operate a new center that will guide data-informed actions to build a more robust, responsive and proactive primary prevention workforce, known as the Integrated Prevention Advisory Group, or I-PAG. The Center for Integrated Primary Prevention Innovation and Advancement will support the I-PAG, which aims to reduce two or more harmful behaviors, such as sexual assault, sexual harassment, retaliation, domestic abuse, child abuse and neglect, and suicide, by addressing shared risk and protective factors.

Through CIPPIA, a five-year, \$71.4 million investment by the U.S. Army, AIR's [public health](#)

and [violence prevention](#) experts will work alongside the Army's Integrated Prevention Division and its partners to support and build capacity of the I-PAG and prevention programs, practices and policies with the greatest potential to prevent harmful behaviors across military communities.

The I-PAG's primary role is to build the Army's integrated prevention system and engage in data-informed prevention actions. The I-PAG will support leader-led efforts to improve prevention activities (policies, programs and practices) intended to increase shared protective factors and address common risk factors, build positive organizational environments and ultimately

prevent harmful behaviors within the Army. The I-PAG will serve as an additive workforce and will not replace current personnel working to prevent or respond to harmful behaviors.

Using a community-oriented approach, the I-PAG will work with Army commanders to implement integrated prevention activities across the service that reinforce the safety, health and well-being of Soldiers, Army Civilians and their Families. Additionally, the I-PAG will collaborate with on and off installation prevention partners and will advise leaders on the best evidence-based and data driven strategies to address two or more harmful behaviors and create protective military communities.

WINTER Resilience



By prioritizing sleep, nutrition and exercise, Soldiers and Army Families can significantly improve their physical health and resilience throughout the year. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Adrian Greenwood)

New Year, New Habits: Achieving Wellness, Balance in 2025

By Lytaria B. Walker, Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness

It's almost time to ring in the New Year. Everyone knows what that means. People everywhere are all vowing to eat more veggies, get to the gym, drink gallons of water, sleep better, manage their stress and hold fewer grudges. Well, the New Year isn't a magic wand. Let's be real. All of these things take work, commitment and time.

Kimberly Crowell, Master Resilience Trainer-Performance Expert at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston, Texas, says that kicking off the New Year with a fresh outlook gives Soldiers the opportunity to start working on new habits or goals. Starting over in January also gives people permission to indulge a bit during the holidays.

"It gives us permission to kind of move through the holidays without the guilt," Crowell said.

Developing and sustaining healthy habits is something everyone can do year-round. Prioritizing sleep, nutrition and exercise plays a major part in our mental health and our day-to-day performance. But how can someone select practical health and wellness goals? Going to the gym for two hours a day may not be realistic for everyone. Playing outdoors with one's children or walking the dog may be more

realistic (and it counts). This could allow Families to spend quality time with one another while still receiving the benefits of a healthy lifestyle.

Practicing better sleep hygiene is another realistic habit to work on in the New Year. Crowell says that sleep is the only way we can recover cognitive function.

"If we are living in a state of chronic sleep restriction, we actually underperform our ability to regulate emotions. Our body's ability to regulate itself through hormones and recovery is at a detriment if we are not getting enough sleep," Crowell said.

Military life can get extremely busy. Crowell teaches Soldiers the idea of implementation intention. This is a self-regulatory strategy that helps people achieve goals, form habits and change problematic behaviors. While there are obstacles that may get in the way, this strategy allows Soldiers to navigate around those obstacles ahead of time. For example, when someone knows they will be working late next week and returning home after a long commute, they may not have the energy to cook dinner. To address this obstacle, they can plan ahead by preparing meals over the weekend. This way, if they get home late,

they will only need to heat up their preprepared meals. By identifying a challenge and creating a strategy to solve it, they can set themselves up for success. Also, it's a good idea to take advantage of opportunities as they arise. If someone is able to leave work early, they could take their dog for a walk or hop into the kitchen to test out a new recipe. The key is to recognize both challenges and opportunities and to plan accordingly to make the most of each situation.

Forming these good habits is great, but consistency is key.

"Tying a behavior back to a specific value and how that value helps you ... that's going to help you sustain in the long run," Crowell said.

"Remember, it's a process. Build upon the process. Rome wasn't built in a day."

Ready and Resilient is the Army's strategy for strengthening individual and personal readiness and fostering a culture of trust. R2 provides training and resources to the Army Family to enhance resilience and optimize performance. Learn more about the R2 program [here](#).



Winter Resilience Strengthening resources are now available for download and printing on the DPRR Products on Demand website.



Social media use can worsen feelings of isolation and inadequacy in Soldiers who are separated from their Families during the holidays. (U.S. National Guard photo by Sgt. Abraham Morlu)

Christmas Just Isn't Christmas Without Social Media

By Mavia Hanson, Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness

It's officially the holiday season, a time when individuals can share in fellowship and camaraderie with family and friends. For Soldiers, that may mean spending the holidays on duty instead of participating in the festivities. Social media can allow Soldiers to keep in contact with loved ones in their day-to-day lives via shared content. As of 2023, *Search Engine Journal* reported that there were 5.17 billion social media users worldwide. It's very likely Soldiers and many of their Family members and friends are utilizing social platforms to stay in touch.

Social media allows people to maintain a sense of community and increase social cohesion and access to support systems. Though the benefits are widely known, some of the consequences of social media use by Soldiers may not be as evident. For some Soldiers, the practice of checking social sites can exacerbate already-existing feelings of isolation and inadequacy from being separated from Family around the holidays.

"Social media use and its association with depression and anxiety ... it can feed it or feed at it. If I'm already sad and isolating, I'm more likely to pick up my phone and doomscroll, which, depending on what I see, could make it worse," said Scott Parrott, associate professor in the Department of Journalism and Creative Media at The University of Alabama. "Grappling with how media on our phones is affecting us, not just how we think, but what we think—it's extremely complex."

One way to combat a potential downward spiral is to have a de-stress strategy in place.

1. Use social media to connect. Reach out to Family, friends and fellow service members for mental and emotional support around how you are experiencing your holiday season.

2. Focus on what you can control. Not being where you want to be or doing what you want to do, particularly around the holidays, can cause a lot of stress. Recognize this is "uncontrollable" and create a meaningful experience that aligns with your current reality.

3. Limit social media consumption. Be mindful of how much time you spend scrolling and avoid falling into any life comparisons or unrealistic portrayals of others' curated timelines.

4. Breathe and be kind to yourself. Deep breathing and focus can help you reset, even in the most trying of times. Engage in activities that promote self-care, such as exercise, meditation and increasing readiness.

5. Seek professional help. If you are overwhelmed by emotions such as sadness or feeling stressed, don't hesitate to reach out to a nonmedical counselor or contact the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline by calling 988 and pressing 1 for the Military Crisis Line.

Regardless of how you are spending your holiday season, whether with family and friends or on duty with your best battle buddy, know that connection and support are just a call, chat or swipe away.

Military OneSource is a 24/7 communication portal where Soldiers can call, text or email for information and get help to reach their goals, overcome challenges and thrive. For more information, visit the [website](#).

Military and Family Life Counselors are licensed mental health professionals who provide situational, problem-solving consultations. No written records are kept, and the counseling is free to service members and their Families. To find an MFLC near you, use the [online locator](#).

Holiday Party Safety

By DPRR Communications & Outreach

Leaves on the ground are the first sign that the holiday season is fast approaching, and it also means it is time to remind ourselves and each other how to stay safe while celebrating. From Halloween to New Year's, as we celebrate, we can have fun, remain vigilant, be aware and stay safe. Use these eight tips to have a great holiday season.

- 1. Respect personal boundaries.** Unwinding and having fun does not mean anyone has the right to invade another person's personal space. Respect individual boundaries and let others know when they have invaded yours or made you feel uncomfortable.
- 2. Get consent.** Requesting consent before touching, hugging, or taking photos with others is critical. Remember, "No" means "No"! Consent is always crucial to respectful connections. Consent must be enthusiastic, clear and ongoing. If someone says no, respect their decision immediately. Consent can be withdrawn anytime, even if it has already been given.
- 3. Choose respectful costumes and festive attire.** Holiday parties are a time to be creative and expressive, but it is important to avoid costumes or other clothing that are not respectful and that could perpetuate harmful stereotypes. In any group setting, there is a diversity of thought and beliefs. No one wants their beliefs mocked or disrespected. Costumes and festive outfits should be fun and respectful of all cultures, communities and beliefs.

Read the [blog post](#) on the DPRR website.



Attending holiday parties can strengthen our connections with family and friends, which helps boost resilience. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Melissa N. Lessard)

AROUND THE FORCE

- ▶ FAP
- ▶ SHARP
- ▶ ASAP
- ▶ R2



HQDA Family Advocacy Program Supports the 40th Annual Army Ten-Miler Race During Domestic Violence Awareness Month
 ARLINGTON, Va.—The DPRR HQDA G-9 Army Family Advocacy Program joined in the 40th Annual Army Ten-Miler in support of Domestic Violence Awareness Month. The team joined nearly 40,000 people in solidarity, running and walking together while taking a stand against domestic violence. (U.S. Army photo)



Army SHARP Academy SHARP Basic Course Graduation Awardees
 FORT LEAVENWORTH, Kan.—On Nov. 8, the Army SHARP Academy graduated 46 students from the SHARP Basic Course. During each course graduation ceremony, individuals are recognized by the Academy staff and their peers for their exceptional performance. Master Sgt. Shakira Anglin, USARPAC Korea, and Sgt. 1st Class Margarita Hurtado, USAREUR Germany, were the Jay Lee Hoffman Spirit Award recipients. Left to Right: Ms. Tammy Tillman, Master Sgt. Shakira Anglin, Col. Travis Jacobs, Sgt. 1st Class Margarita Hurtado. (U.S. Army photo)



88th Readiness Division Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment Soldiers Participate in Fall Ruck March
 FORT MCCOY, Wis.—Soldiers assigned to the 88th Readiness Division, Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, participated in a ruck march on the Elroy-Sparta Trail. Ruck marches support the Army Holistic Health and Fitness program by enhancing multiple fitness domains such as muscular endurance, cardiovascular health and mental toughness, all essential for mission readiness. (U.S. Army Reserve photo by Sgt. Nataja Ford)



Prevention Summit Supports Integrated Prevention Advisory Group Activities
 FORT IRWIN, Calif.—National Training Center and Fort Irwin held a Prevention Summit on Oct. 10 to introduce the Integrated Prevention Advisory Group. Leadership from HQs, USAG and MEDDAC spoke on the importance of collaboration and unity of effort for primary prevention. The three-hour summit kicked off with an icebreaker to build the team, followed by stakeholder information briefs, an activity to identify catalysts and inhibitors to harmful behaviors and discussion on the Commander's Ready and Resilient Council way ahead. (U.S. Army photo by Marisa Saucedo)



Camp Zama Teens Learn Leadership Skills During Red Ribbon Week 2024
 CAMP ZAMA, Japan—Members of the Torch Club, a Boys and Girls Clubs of America initiative aimed at helping nurture and develop teen leadership skills, performed a skit at the Camp Zama Youth Center as part of the final day of events recognizing Red Ribbon Week. (U.S. Army photo by Army Garrison Japan Public Affairs)



US Army Garrison Yongsan-Casey Hosts Community Resource Fair
 CAMP CASEY, South Korea—Cathynn Robinson, Family Advocacy Program manager, right, and Marissa Jordan, Family Advocacy Program victim advocate, participate in a community resource fair hosted by U.S. Army Garrison Yongsan-Casey. Over 100 Soldiers and Army Civilians attended the fair at Carey Fitness Center, receiving valuable information from over 20 different installation programs. (DOD photo by Pfc. Jung Min Lee)



New Initiative Addresses Child Care Needs at Camp Bull Simons

By U.S. Army Public Affairs

A new intergovernmental support agreement with the child care network Upwards will increase access to child care services for Army Families at and around Camp Bull Simons, Florida.

Under the IGSA, Upwards will alert Army Families to available spaces through agreements with local community child care centers and Family child care providers via a mobile phone app.

According to the IGSA, the Army will cover the subscription costs for the app service for 100 Army Families per month in the Camp Bull Simons area, who currently receive base-operations services through Eglin Air Force Base. Army Families will pay the current DOD hourly child care rate (\$8 per hour), and the Army will subsidize provider fee costs that exceed the DOD hourly rate (currently between \$4 and \$6 an hour).

“Reliable, quality child care isn’t just a nice-to-have resource; it’s a necessity and is essential for our Soldiers’ peace of mind and their ability to remain ready for the mission and task at hand,” said Lt. Gen. David Wilson, deputy chief of staff of G-9, during a signing ceremony.

Read the [full article](#) on army.mil.



Army Deputy Chief of Staff, G-9, U.S. Lt. Gen. David Wilson hosts an inter-governmental support agreement signing event at the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia, Nov. 13. (U.S. Army photo by Henry Villarama)

Family Child Care Homes Provide Options for Army Families

By Chet Curtis, Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness

The number of Family Child Care program homes is growing, giving Army Families more options for affordable and flexible child care to support their work schedules and careers.

As of Oct. 31, there were 194 FCC homes available Army-wide, and interest (as expressed by application downloads) in becoming an FCC provider has grown to over 200 candidates. This number is an increase from 148 FCC homes one year ago. As part of the Child, Youth and School Services continuum of child care options, FCC offers full-day, part-day and hourly care in a safe, cost-effective way to meet the mission needs of those with atypical or extended child care hours, those who desire smaller group sizes or a home environment, or those who are experiencing long waiting lists for center-based care. The FCC homes program is also able to assist Soldiers who need 24/7 child care while providing their children with a home-based setting for those extended hours.

Why the growing interest?

The FCC program offers the opportunity for a portable profession that can move with your sponsor’s career as you make a PCS.

“It’s a means of building a resume, earning additional income, starting a business and receiving additional training paid for by the Army. It’s also portable as you transfer to other posts and units,” said Donna Garfield, chief of the Child, Youth and School Services division at the Army Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness.

The FCC provider transfer process assists with expediting and streamlining the transition of FCC



The increasing number of Family Child Care program homes is providing Army Families with additional affordable and flexible child care options that accommodate their work schedules and professional commitments. (U.S. Army photo)

providers from one garrison to the next during the PCS process, allowing them to continue their career as they transition.

A relocation bonus of up to \$1,000 is provided to FCC providers who successfully relocate their home business to a new installation. FCC also offers a one-time recruitment bonus of up to \$1,000 to FCC providers who successfully open their homes. Providers receive these payments over a 12-month period.

Providers can take care of up to six children and receive income from parent fees as well as from centrally funded FCC subsidy payments.

Family fee assistance supplements reimburse FCC providers the difference between the Army Child and Youth Services assigned parent fee and the specified provider rate cap. The monthly rate caps for full-time children in each status are:

- \$1,200 per child for provisional certification
- \$1,400 per child for full certification
- \$1,600 per child after 18 months of full certification
- \$1,800 per child for nationally accredited providers

For Army Families, FCC offers a 15% cost savings compared with Child Development Centers and School Age Care fees.

FCC providers are vetted, and only the most-qualified candidates are recommended for certification. Providers must complete background checks and regular home inspections as part of certification. They also receive paid ongoing training for professional development.

Army policy requires anyone who regularly provides care for more than 10 hours per week to be certified through their installation Child and Youth Services as an FCC provider. Unauthorized child care by an uncertified provider can put children at risk. Providing unauthorized child care in government owned/leased housing could result in the loss of housing privileges. Due to installation missions, FCC may not be available at all locations.

For more information on how to register your children in the FCC program, visit militarychildcare.com.

Families interested in becoming FCC providers should complete the form on militarychildcare.com or contact their garrison’s CYS Parent Central Services office for information on attending an FCC orientation.



Building Strong Relationships *WINTER STRENGTHENING* Continued from page 1

“There is often a vulnerability that comes with sharing our struggles and challenges with others; however, building strong relationships makes it easier to give and ask for help when needed,” said Heather Hassinger, Chief, R2 Training Branch.

PCS moves, deployments and milestones like marriage, divorce or having children can disrupt routines and can make establishing and maintaining relationships difficult. For Soldiers and Families experiencing any major life change, the busy winter season can add further complexity and stress.

“Relationships are work, and you might think, ‘Why bother?’ when you know that your time in an area is limited,” said Towner. However, it might be helpful to be proactive during these times by seeking out opportunities to connect with others, which can, in turn, strengthen one’s support network and build resilience.

It can be easy to overlook the importance of social connections when life is smooth sailing, but nurturing those bonds can be a great investment in one’s future resilience. When challenges inevitably arise, a strong support network can provide the sense of belonging and security needed to weather the storm.

“There is often a vulnerability that comes with sharing our struggles and challenges with others; however, building strong relationships makes it easier to give and ask for help when needed.”

—Heather Hassinger,
Chief, R2 Training Branch

When in person, consider setting aside time for distraction-free quality time. Plan activities based on shared interests, such as books, movies or hobbies, to connect and create positive memories.

“Put your phone down, limit distractions and focus on the people in front of you,” said Towner.

However, when separated by land or sea, Families can leverage technology to maintain strong bonds and stay actively involved in one another’s lives. Soldiers can plan video chat sessions to stay connected with Family during holiday deployments or rotations.

“Some Soldiers might create a video while they read their children a holiday story. One Soldier who couldn’t be with his Family on Thanksgiving shared that he planned to FaceTime his mom so that they could cook together,” said Kelly O’Brien, Master Resilience Trainer - Performance Expert at the R2 Performance Center at Fort Carson, Colorado.

Initiating and maintaining social connections doesn’t come easily to everyone, and that’s OK. Resilience training highlights skills that can help Soldiers and their Family members enhance their relationships.

“‘Hunt the good stuff’ helps to build optimism and can be used within the unit, with friends or with Family members,” said Hassinger.

“The skill involves sharing good things with other individuals and taking the time to reflect on the good.” Implementing HTGS could look like reflecting on pleasant holiday memories or looking at photos together to reexperience the positive emotions they evoke.

Another skill used to engage others is Active Constructive Responding.

“This skill involves listening to the individual’s good news and showing genuine interest in the person by asking questions about their news,” said Hassinger. Consider using ACR when catching up with a friend or Family member over the phone or at a holiday gathering to get to know them on a deeper level.

“It (shows) you care about the person. Every time we respond to someone in an active constructive way, it is like putting money into the relationship bank (and) building our relationships,” she said.

Although building professional relationships shares many similarities with nurturing personal connections, there are some unique considerations to keep in mind. One can foster stronger professional relationships through mentorship, being dependable and recognizing teammates’ accomplishments.

“Acknowledge and appreciate the contributions of your colleagues,” said Towner. “Celebrate successes and offer praise for a job well done.”

Towner also said it is essential that leaders set an example by modeling these behaviors.

“Get to know your team members on a personal level and build genuine connections. Leaders can demonstrate vulnerability by being willing to acknowledge their challenges and seeking help when needed,” Towner said.

The Army also offers a wealth of resources to help Soldiers and Families invest in their relationships:

- [Army Community Service](#) offers programs and resources to support Families, including Family readiness groups, deployment support groups and financial counseling.
- The [Family Advocacy Program](#) provides services to promote healthy Family relationships, including parenting classes, anger management workshops and counseling for Family members.
- The [R2 Performance Centers](#) offer resilience training programs to equip Soldiers with the skills to cope with stress, build healthy relationships and thrive in tough circumstances.
- [Building Strong and Ready Teams](#) offers chaplain-led, community-partnered resources to strengthen spiritual readiness for Soldiers and their Families.
- [Military OneSource](#) gives Soldiers and their Families the resources to reach their goals, overcome challenges and thrive.

The Army community is striving to create a supportive atmosphere in which seeking connection is seen not as a weakness but as a testament to shared commitment to one another. By weaving a tightly knit tapestry of support and connection, Soldiers and Families can emerge from the winter months stronger, more unified and ready to face whatever challenges come their way in the New Year and beyond.

Assisting Soldiers and Their Families *DIRECTOR'S COLUMN* Continued from page 2

those struggling with thoughts of suicide and self-harm.

The Veterans/Military Crisis Line provides confidential support 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. Call 988 and Press 1, text 838225 or chat online at [MilitaryCrisisLine.net](https://www.militarycrisisline.net).

As we look forward to the New Year, the DPRR team is honored to provide the Army Team with new Prevention and Quality of Life awareness

campaigns developed under the tagline, “We’ve Got Your Six!” More than 200 new print and digital products developed in support of programs such as Child, Youth and School Services, Family Advocacy Program, Morale, Welfare and Recreation and the Integrated Prevention Advisory Group, will be available to the field starting in January.

Finally, the Headquarters, Army Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention

program, has selected the DOD theme: “STEP FORWARD. Prevent. Report. Advocate.” for the Army’s 2025 Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month, or SAAPM, commemoration. Look for campaign materials and the SAAPM microsite in late January.

Happy Holidays to you and your Family, and thank you for all you do in support of the Army’s mission!



Great Teams Workshop Teaches Hospital Staff Cooperation

By Erik Moshe, Contractor, Ready and Resilient

During an impactful training to enhance team dynamics, the Great Teams workshop brought together Soldiers, commanders and Army Civilians from the 549th Hospital Center at Brian D. Allgood Army Community Hospital at Camp Humphreys, Korea. Master Resilience Trainer – Performance Experts Doug Crowell and Marty Raymond from the Ready and Resilient Performance Center at Camp Humphreys worked with the hospital center personnel to foster discussions for their organization and to strengthen their collaborative efforts.

Great Teams is a culture-development program that brings together selected Soldiers and leaders from across a unit. The program engages participants in a series of exercises and discussions, such as role-playing scenarios, group problem-solving tasks and open forums, to solidify or redefine the unit’s shared vision, values, philosophy and standards. By identifying strategies for creating trust, generating buy-in and empowering peer-to-peer accountability, leaders leave with actionable items to build well-led, cohesive teams committed to the Army professional ethic.

The collaborative process allows all team members to contribute to a shared vision of who they want to be as a group, helping them to overcome common leadership challenges and to create a healthier unit environment.

DENTAC Staff Improve Communication, Conflict-Resolution Skills

By Erik Moshe, Contractor, Ready and Resilient

As the TV show character Ted Lasso once famously quipped, “Be curious, not judgmental.”

It’s in this spirit that staff members from Dental Health Activity in Fort Jackson, South Carolina, learned how to give more effective peer-to-peer feedback and resolve conflict in the workplace.

Master Resilience Trainer – Performance Experts Tomer Blas, Cheyenne Godby, Nate Harris and Robert Raikin-Mejias from the Fort Jackson Ready and Resilient Performance Center provided team-building training to four dental clinics. The exercises included in-depth group discussions, mock scenarios and communication framework briefs.

“We went through a learning conversation road map as a main communication strategy to navigate conflicts objectively ... we covered the Situation-Behavior-Impact model and how to create an action plan to move forward,” said Raikin-Mejias.

The Situation-Behavior-Impact model is a technique for providing constructive feedback: Summarize the situation in which the behavior occurred, describe the behavior in question, and explain how it affects others.

The trainers also discussed the importance of



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

Participants from the 549th Hospital Center identified the values that were important to the success of their team, such as communication, accountability, respect, effectiveness and synergy (the merging of efforts), and how these values align with their commander’s intent. The workshop concluded with descriptions for each value that included behavioral indicators, and the

workshop’s format paved the way for teams to take ownership of their workplace culture.

The trainers said the most important takeaway from the workshop was the opportunity to have leaders, Soldiers and Army Civilians in the same room engage in open dialogue about their shared values and how those values are paramount for creating an effective organization.

“The participants identified actionable behaviors and acknowledged that actions are the fuel that drives the engine,” Crowell said.

Healthy, connected teams create trust within units, and trust allows Soldiers to feel safe to give and seek support.

“Their commander emphasized the importance of psychological safety throughout this process.”

“A great team is able to participate in an open and collaborative dialogue about its shared vision or goal,” Raymond said.

“Team members hold each other accountable for actions that are not progressing the team toward that shared goal. A great team supports constructive feedback while minimizing personality conflict.”

Reach out to your nearest [R2 Performance Center](#) to schedule training to improve your team’s cohesion.

recognizing fundamental attribution error in daily communication, which is the assumption that a person’s actions stem from what kind of person they are, rather than from social and environmental influences or factors.

“It’s key to not look at things on the surface but to dig deeper,” Raikin-Mejias said.

The mock scenarios added additional layers of information, allowing participants to see how quickly they make assumptions and how inaccurate those assumptions can be.

“People aren’t always aware of how much their biases and assumptions can play a role when they watch the actions their peers take and how those judgments impact how they treat their peers,” Godby said.

Peer-to-peer feedback and improved communication can also enhance trust within an organization. Learning and practicing effective communication techniques can allow individuals to share their challenges, connect with others and ask for help.

“Having an open forum to share feedback can help employees develop skills in a nonthreatening

environment and be more honest when providing input to others,” Blas said.

An equally crucial communication skill in the workplace is the ability to navigate potential contentions.

“Avoiding conflict can lead to a breakdown in communication over time and cause friction,” Godby said. “Discussing conflict resolution, as well as giving peer-to-peer feedback, allows colleagues to have more ‘uncomfortable’ conversations to improve themselves, their peers, the team, working environment and their team mission.”

Participants learned that there is more to a person’s actions than meets the eye.

After the training, one participant noted that the exercises were “very engaging and applicable to real situations we see in the clinic.” Another found the training “very relevant to our daily job and our clinic’s mission.” Others said they gained a better understanding of effective communication strategies when working in a team environment.

Contact your nearest [R2 Performance Center](#) to learn more about training to improve your conflict-resolution and communication skills.



Healthy	Unhealthy	Abusive
<p>A healthy relationship means both you and your partner are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicating • Respectful • Trusting • Honest • Equal • Enjoying personal time away from each other • Making mutual choices • Economic/financial partners 	<p>You may be in an unhealthy relationship if your partner is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not communicating • Disrespectful • Not trusting • Dishonest • Trying to take control • Only spending time together • Pressured into activities • Unequal economically 	<p>Abuse is occurring in a relationship when one partner is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicating in a hurtful or threatening way • Mistreating • Accusing the other of cheating when it's untrue • Denying their actions are abusive • Controlling • Isolating their partner from others

The relationship spectrum by love is respect, a project of the National Domestic Violence Hotline, provides an overview of healthy, unhealthy and abusive behavior in a relationship. (Courtesy of love is respect)

Is Your Family Healthy or Dysfunctional? Here Is How to Tell and What to Do About It

By Antonieta Rico, Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness

In the hectic routine of work, Family and household obligations, a child running late for school can lead to a shouting match, a sink full of dirty dishes can turn into criticism, and a forgotten errand can lead to name-calling. If these moments become a pattern, a home that is supposed to be a safe haven can feel like a battleground.

"A safe, supportive and nurturing home is comprised of mutual respect, consideration for others, communication free of fear, and emotional security," said Dr. Carmen Leggett, an Army Family Advocacy Program Specialist.

Is that what your home feels like?

"We want people to have those relationships where you can have disagreements. ... Two people coming together from two very different backgrounds should absolutely be having disagreements—but how do you have them, and can you do that safely and speak freely?" said Katie Ray-Jones, CEO of the National Domestic Violence Hotline.

"That's what makes that (relationship) healthy, unhealthy or abusive."

"Everybody deserves to be treated with dignity and respect—and if you have anything other than that, please pick up the phone, enter the chat, visit our website to get more information."

—Katie Ray-Jones, National Domestic Violence Hotline Chief Executive Officer

Domestic abuse is not only physical. It also consists of emotional and verbal abuse and control. Verbal abuse can include criticizing, discounting, ridiculing, yelling and joking at the expense of others, including your spouse and kids, said Leggett. Emotional abuse includes manipulating, pressuring, and gaslighting—lying about something you did or said to make the other person "doubt their own memories or perceptions."

Emotional abuse can also take the form of "stonewalling"—shutting down to avoid discussing a partner's legitimate concerns—or giving a partner the silent treatment, leaving them feeling "confused, rejected and defeated," Leggett said.

In an emotionally abusive relationship, one partner may believe their own feelings, wants and needs take priority over the feelings, wants and needs of their significant other. They will try to tell their partner what to do—telling them who they can be friends with on social media, demanding their social media passwords or telling them what they are allowed to wear. When their significant other doesn't follow their rules, they may get angry.

Some military Families may be especially vulnerable to abusive control—a Soldier or spouse can find themselves isolated from their Family and support networks when stationed in a new place. Spouses can also be vulnerable to financial abuse and control if they depend on the service member being the sole breadwinner, as constant PCS moves may mean the spouse is unemployed or underemployed.

"These behaviors are all about exerting power over another person," said Leggett.

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

The Public Secret We Cannot Ignore

By Dr. Donna Ferguson, Licensed Mental Health Counselor

While its prevalence is widely acknowledged, domestic violence is frequently minimized or hidden, leaving profound, unaddressed impacts on individuals, Families and even entire organizations. This disparity between perception and action is especially critical within high-stress environments like the Army, where domestic violence not only affects individual health and Family dynamics but also has far-reaching consequences for organizational readiness and culture.

Despite its devastating effects, domestic violence often remains hidden due to societal stigma, fear of repercussions, and the normalization of certain harmful behaviors. Victims may view domestic violence as a private matter, discouraging them from seeking support, while societal attitudes frequently downplay nonphysical forms of abuse, such as psychological and emotional manipulation.

Research shows that victims of domestic violence are often blamed or questioned for remaining in abusive relationships, perpetuating harmful stereotypes and discouraging victims from coming forward (Ben-David & Renick, 2008). This lack of understanding reinforces silence, leading to missed opportunities for early intervention and support. Within organizations like the Army, where strength and resilience are highly valued, discussing domestic violence can feel stigmatizing, creating additional barriers to disclosure.

Unique pressures faced by Army Families

Army Families may experience unique stressors that exacerbate the complexities of domestic violence. The constant demands of deployment cycles, frequent relocations and the hierarchical structure of the Army can add layers of pressure that impact Family dynamics. Long separations and reintegration periods can create emotional strain, while the tightly knit Army community may discourage individuals from coming forward for fear of judgment or repercussions on their career or Family stability.

Army spouses, in particular, may be reluctant to report domestic violence because of concerns about their partner's career and the potential impact on their Family's financial security, housing arrangements or social standing within the community. This interplay between personal and professional concerns creates a heavy burden for many spouses, highlighting the need for confidential and supportive reporting systems tailored to Army life.

The role of leadership in domestic violence prevention

Leadership plays a critical role in setting the tone for how domestic violence is addressed within Army settings. Read the [full article](#) on the DPRR website.



The Army Substance Abuse Program at White Sands Missile Range won the 34th annual Secretary of Defense Community Drug Awareness Award, highlighting its effectiveness in enhancing mission readiness and the collective efforts of the team, including contributions from Ed Westbrook, ASAP program manager. (U.S. Army photo)

DOD Recognizes 2024 Red Ribbon Award Winners

By Chet Curtis, Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness

The Department of Defense recognized the winners of the 34th Annual Secretary of Defense Community Drug Awareness Awards in a ceremony at the Pentagon on Oct. 17. The Army winners included U.S. Army Garrison White Sands Missile Range Army Substance Abuse Program and the Arizona Army National Guard Drug Demand Reduction Outreach.

Established by the department in 1990, the awards promote outreach and prevention programs within the DOD community. The Community Drug Awareness Awards highlight the best Drug Demand Reduction Program within each military service, the National Guard, Reserve, defense agencies and DOD Field Activities. This year's nominations focused on efforts aimed at preventing fentanyl misuse.

Andrea Donoghue, DPRR Army Substance Abuse Program manager, noted that "award nominations highlighted efforts and actions aimed at preventing drug and alcohol misuse." Selection criteria for the awards emphasized innovative outreach initiatives that combined creative digital and traditional methods during

fiscal year 2024, including activities for Red Ribbon Week.

During FY 2024, the White Sands Missile Range ASAP engaged in a robust awareness and educational campaign throughout the year at the White Sands Missile Range Garrison and in the surrounding community. The program provided proactive and responsive services to address the needs of both the White Sands Missile Range and surrounding areas, focusing on education, deterrence, prevention, intervention and postvention. Some of the year's highlights included:

- **Red Ribbon Week (Oct. 23–31, 2023):** This campaign utilized \$3,300 in funding from drug demand reduction sources, benefiting one elementary school and one middle school, while providing drug prevention awareness to more than 280 students and 30 faculty, administrators and staff.
- **ASAP Prescription Takeback (Oct. 23 and April 24):** These one-day events allowed WSMR community members to dispose of unwanted and expired medicines safely and anonymously.

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

DOD Releases Annual Report on Suicide in the Military for 2023

By U.S. Department of Defense

On Nov. 14, the Department of Defense released the DOD Annual Report on Suicide in the Military for Calendar Year 2023. The report provides annual data on suicide counts and rates among service members and their dependents, and outlines current and ongoing suicide prevention efforts across the DOD.

Every death by suicide is a tragedy. That's why, on May 7, 2022, Secretary of Defense, Lloyd J. Austin established the Suicide Prevention Response and Independent Review Committee to conduct a review of clinical and nonclinical suicide prevention and response programs, which resulted in over 100 recommendations. As a result of the SPRIRC recommendations, in September 2023, Secretary Austin announced a suicide prevention campaign plan across five lines of effort: fostering a supportive environment, improving the delivery of mental health care, addressing stigma and other barriers to care, revising suicide prevention training and promoting a culture of lethal means safety with 83 enabling actions.

In the first year since Secretary Austin's establishment of the suicide prevention campaign plan, the DOD has completed 20 SPRIRC recommendations, and we have an aggressive path forward with unprecedented investments for FY25 to combat current trends. The DOD will continue to build on these efforts to demonstrate our unwavering commitment to the wellness, health and morale of our Force and to honor the memory of those lost to suicide. Read more on [defense.gov](#).

Invest in Your Relationships With Active Constructive Responding

Every relationship functions like an emotional bank account in which our actions and communication can either deposit or withdraw from our balance. Actively supporting others during their good times through Active Constructive Responding fosters joy and gratitude, enhancing closeness and trust and adding value to relationships

- Be present in the conversation and maintain focus on them.
- Seek more details, asking questions about the good news or using nonverbal cues to show interest (eye contact, nodding).



To learn more about Active Constructive Responding, visit the DPRR [website](#).



DPRR

DIRECTORATE OF PREVENTION, RESILIENCE AND READINESS

DECEMBER 2024

HAIL AND FAREWELL

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

Hail

- Brittany Criswell, Integrated Prevention Division
- Dr. Sharon Cross, R2I&T Division
- Fred Davis, Operations
- Briana Mayers, Integrated Prevention Division
- Dr. LaQuana Reaves-Green, Soldier and Family Programs
- Jessica Slaughter, Senior Leader Engagement Division
- Brian Thomas, Assessments Division

Farewell

- Priscilla Ross, Ready and Resilient



UPCOMING EVENTS

JANUARY

Society for Social Work and Research 29th Annual Conference

Jan. 15–19: The SSWR annual conference offers a broad program featuring studies in child welfare, aging, mental health, substance abuse and more.

Location: Seattle, Washington **Learn more:** Visit the SSWR [website](#).

FEBRUARY

Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month

This month-long effort focuses on advocacy and education for young adults and their loved ones to raise awareness about teen dating violence.

Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America National Leadership Forum

Feb. 3–6: CADCA's four-day conference will bring professionals together to learn the latest strategies to fight substance misuse and hear from trusted experts.

Location: National Harbor, Maryland **Learn more:** Visit the CADCA [website](#).

IMCOM Pacific Problematic Sexual Behavior in Children and Youth Forum

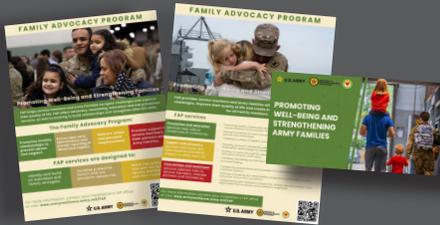
Feb. 4–6: The forum will train leaders on the PSB-CY program and services.

Location: Fort Shafter, Hawaii

Quality of Life Programs

Whether 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 Family.

FAMILY ADVOCACY PROGRAM TOOLKIT



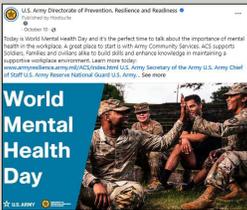
CHILD CARE TOOLKIT



The toolkits are now available for download and printing on the DPRR Products on Demand [website](#).

TOP-PERFORMING POSTS

FACEBOOK



Impressions: 1,308

X



Impressions: 10,023

INSTAGRAM



Impressions: 463

LINKEDIN



Impressions: 150

SOCIAL MEDIA UPDATE

Follow @ArmyResilience

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

Dec. 31, 2024, Volume 10, Issue 2

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.divdshub.net/publication/1102/r2-community-link-newsletter>.

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

Submit articles and photographs by Jan. 24. For any questions, contact the editor at jtaylor@strategyconsultingteam.com.

Connect With DPRR!

Contact DPRR Communications & Outreach at usarmy.pentagon.hqda-dcs-g-9.list.dpr-comm-and-outreach-div@army.mil

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