



DPRR

COMMUNITYLINK

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



The Financial Readiness Program connects Soldiers to resources and credentialed financial counselors, who help them with budgets and other money issues. (Photo by Justin Kase Conder)

Making Dollars and Sense Out of Financial Planning

By Kim Ferraro, Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness

We're only in the second month of 2024, but by now the majority of us have abandoned those earnestly made New Year's resolutions. Tellingly, an October 2023 Forbes Health/One Poll survey of 1,000 U.S. adults found that just 8 percent of respondents tend to stick with their goals for a month. One resolution that is worth all the willpower, though, is to get your personal finances in order and create a realistic budget that is lean enough that it won't break the bank but not so stringent that it breaks your resolve.

A daunting task, yes, but military Families can simplify it by taking advantage of the Army's Financial Readiness Program (FRP), which offers free services from credentialed financial counselors and resources such as the [Financial Readiness Tip Sheet](#). As Robyn Mroszczyk, AFC®, Financial Education program manager, Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness, explains: "Personal financial managers and counselors provide educational and counseling programs on topics such as understanding budget and debt management, the Thrift Savings Plan, setting financial goals and developing strategies to achieve those goals. Classroom training and individual counseling sessions provide participants with the knowledge

and skills needed to develop individual strategies to achieve financial goals and maintain their financial well-being."

Rather than being a mammoth undertaking, financial planning can be handled in a relatively short time if you figure out your goals and work from there. Mroszczyk points to the value of setting SMART goals (those that are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely), as these will help you stay focused and ensure that you use your time and resources wisely. And whether you are trying to save \$1,000 or \$20,000, you need a clear financial picture before you know how many dollars you have to put away. Essential to that picture is a spending plan, or budget, Mroszczyk says. Creating one is as straightforward as figuring out your money goals (say, saving for a car, repainting your living room or adding to a retirement account), calculating your total income, listing your expenses, deducting your expenses from your net income to get a balance and then regularly updating your plan.

"Spending plans help Soldiers and Families gain control of how they spend their money by mapping their expenses—both fixed and variable—against their income. The key is to find a plan that works for you and giving yourself grace when unexpected expenses come up,"

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DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

Happy New Year!

As you can tell from this month's *Community Link*, we are continuing our focus on economic security with our cover article, "Making Dollars and Sense Out of Financial Planning." As we navigate fiscal uncertainties, inflation, financial stresses and the day-to-day challenges of spouse employment, the G-9/DPRR is working to put critical resources into the hands of command teams, Soldiers and Family members.

Recently, we created new tools in support of strengthening the Army Family. These resources include the [Financial Readiness Tip Sheet](#), a new [Financial Readiness Toolkit](#) and a new [Army Spouse Employment Toolkit](#).

In January, we hosted [webinars](#), a [podcast](#) and a [Facebook Live](#) session on financial readiness and related topics of interest to the Army team. If you were not able to attend the sessions, I encourage you and your Family to visit the links above to catch up on the discussions.

The new Army Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention (SHARP) and Suicide Prevention materials developed under the tagline "More to Be Done" are now available for ordering/downloading via the DPRR [Products on Demand](#) site. In addition, at the end of January we fielded the 2024 Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month materials "Change Through Unity: Empower. Protect. Prevent." I encourage you to visit the [SAAPM microsite](#) for additional information ahead of April's observance.

"As we navigate fiscal uncertainties, inflation, financial stresses and the day-to-day challenges of spouse employment, the G-9/DPRR is working to put critical resources into the hands of command teams, Soldiers and Family members."

— Dee Geise, DPRR Director

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Accessible, Reliable Childcare Initiative for Military Families

By *Mavia Hanson, Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness*

Military Families face unique challenges, especially when it comes to finding reliable childcare. Deployments, PCS moves and long training missions make it difficult for Families with small children to access the support they need. Recognizing this challenge, the Army is taking action to provide better opportunities for Families through the Intergovernmental Support Agreement (IGSA).

The Army is pleased to highlight the IGSA partnership with West Liberty, Iowa, and Clay County, Missouri, working with Upwards (formerly WeeCare). Upwards is the largest childcare network in the United States, committed to providing families with access to quality, affordable care. The partnership allows United States Army Reserve (USAR) Families to access safe, quality, reliable, no-cost childcare during weekend drill and battle assembly trainings. This pilot is the first of its kind and operating in Kansas, Missouri, Iowa and Illinois. The partnership is a one-year pilot program with nine optional years, if successful.

The initiative is beneficial because it provides reliable childcare for 12 hours a day during battle assembly and annual training, allowing reserve Soldiers to fully commit to their service. So far, Upwards has registered over 950 military children. Within just over four months, 269 children have already received high-quality childcare during drill weekends, and every family that signed up has been able to receive childcare support and attention.

Not only does this initiative support military Families, but it also reinforces two priorities of Lt. Gen. Daniels, the 34th chief of Army Reserve and 9th commanding general, U.S. Army Reserve Command: people and readiness. By improving the quality of life for troop program unit (TPU) Soldiers, this program also positively affects recruitment and retention for USAR.

With Upwards, care is customized to the Soldier's needs, even accommodating unexpected schedule changes. This ensures that Families can confidently report to duty with peace of mind.

And the benefits go beyond just childcare. This initiative supports the quality of life for Soldiers, increasing retention in the U.S. Army Reserve. It resolves the conflict between reserve duties and parental responsibilities, alleviating stress for the



Children play with blocks and other toys at the Strong Beginnings Program at the Fort Carson Ivy Child Development Center. (Photo by Amber Martin)

Soldier while knowing their children are in safe hands. West Liberty and Clay County chose Upwards for its easy-to-use technological approach via the Upwards app, making it simple to find safe and reliable childcare.

Just ask reserve Soldier Kadine Thompson, who says this program has already been life-changing. "It was like a big burden came off my shoulders," Thompson says. "I was able to focus and just be at work for the first time." The result is, Thompson plans to stay in the reserves as long as she can. "I feel very valued and appreciated, like I belong in the Army...like I can give my all now, since I'm getting this tremendous help. My kids come first, but if they're taken care of, I will do everything that my company needs done."

If you're a reservist drilling in pilot locations, here's what you can do: Register on the program landing page <https://upwards.com/benefits/military>, via email heroes@upwards.com, or by calling 816-670-3286 to connect with a dedicated care manager.

Or download the Upwards app on your Apple or Android device to create an account and register there.

The Army is looking to expand the pilot program to all components in the future so that all Soldiers can perform their best and know their Families are being taken care of.

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Helping Parents Navigate Teen Dating Violence

By Tara Davis, Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness

You've made your way from sleepless nights during infancy to arguing with your child as a preteen about wearing those ripped jeans to middle school or keeping their hoodie on 24/7, and just when you think the waters are calming, your now high schooler smiles while looking down at their phone and tells you they have a boyfriend or girlfriend. I'm betting you are wishing your next conversation was going to be about those jeans.

No parent wants to imagine their teen as a victim of teen dating violence (TDV). This is why Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month, recognized each year in February, serves to raise awareness and promote safe, healthy relationships. TDV is an [adverse childhood experience](#) and a type of [intimate partner violence](#). TDV is common, and some teens are at a greater risk than others. In 2019, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Youth Risk Behavior Survey found that [1 in 12 U.S. high school students](#) experienced physical dating violence and/or sexual dating violence.

"Kids want to fit in and sometimes will find themselves dealing with peer pressures of many sorts that potentially could result in toxic relationships," says Dr. Carmen Leggett, FAP specialist at the Army's DCS G-9 Family Advocacy

Program. Just like talking to your teen about safe driving before handing over the keys to your car, it's important to talk to them about intimate relationships, even if it's awkward at first. Teens are just learning to navigate relationships and may not recognize that extreme jealousy or teasing can turn into what they see frequently referred to as "red flags" on social media.

"During the preteen and teen years, it is crucial for youths to learn and adopt healthy and effective communication skills, along with learning how to manage their feelings," says Leggett. Leggett further emphasizes the importance of parents spending time talking with their children about defining boundaries, respecting others' space and demonstrating respect and consideration. She also notes that parents should allow children to be honest and share their feelings around dating and that fostering these skills will help them create and maintain healthy relationships.

As a teen once yourself, you can probably remember a time where your friends' influence outweighed your parents' influence. Your teens' friends might think that name-calling or rough physical play is normal, so make sure to discuss with your teen

the signs of unhealthy and healthy relationships. According to Leggett, "Signs of an unhealthy relationship might look like an imbalance of power and control between partners resulting in poor communication, inequality, lack of respect and lack of honesty. These relationships are full of control, manipulation, isolation and accusations. This abuse can take place in person, verbally or digitally on the phone and via other teens." Leggett explains that signs of a healthy relationship are effective communication, trust, respect, consideration, honesty, equality and consent. One tool parents and teens can use to help identify behaviors of an abusive relationship is the [Power and Control Wheel](#).

Leggett shares that teens typically do not report the abuse/violence they experience because they are embarrassed, afraid or feel alone. Use February as your time to initiate the conversation with your teen about healthy and unhealthy relationships. Parents can use the FAP resources, such as parenting classes that focus on teens and bullying, to navigate these tough conversations. FAP can also team up with a teen center or school to conduct outreach, seminars and programs on TDV.

For more information on the FAP, visit the [Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness](#).

Harm Reduction: Army Lethal Means Safety Toolkit

By Analise Vazquez, (contractor), Suicide Prevention Program

Firearms are the most common and lethal method for suicide among Soldiers and their dependents. Lethal means safety (LMS) is an evidence-based suicide prevention practice that involves securely storing a suicide method or mean (e.g., firearm, medication, asphyxiation device) to make it less available or difficult to immediately access, therefore less likely to cause harm or death. While there is a significant body of evidence supporting secure storage as an effective way to prevent intentional (e.g., suicide, domestic violence) and accidental (e.g., injury) harm and death, LMS (specifically, firearm safety) continues to be a stigmatized topic and challenging to integrate into Army culture and behavior.

Our own experiences and opinions will primarily inform our rationale for storing personal weapons, and one of DPRR's goals when developing the LMS Toolkit was to provide additional context and information for Soldiers and their Families to consider when making storage decisions. LMS has not always had the best marketing among the Army community, with efforts being conflated with Second Amendment rights and autonomy. This couldn't be further from the truth: Army LMS efforts aim to prevent suicide by supporting

decisions for safe-storage behaviors:

- Easier (e.g., accessible storage devices)
- Normal, or non-stigmatized, similar to wearing a seat belt
- Universal (e.g., modeled by leadership and reviewed as part of general safety behaviors)

DPRR published the Army's LMS toolkit in August 2023 to increase LMS knowledge and share LMS resources with Soldiers, leaders, care providers and Family members to support suicide and violence prevention efforts across our community. The toolkit was developed with input from suicide prevention program managers and coordinators, the safety office, behavioral health, office of the chief of chaplains and command stakeholders. The LMS toolkit includes:

- 1) A catalog of evidence-based LMS resources, broken down by role
- 2) Conversation guides for discussing safe storage in times of crisis and non-crisis
- 3) State maps with off-base firearm storage locations
- 4) LMS communication materials for Army commanders and Family members

In fiscal year 2024, DPRR is partnering with the Defense Suicide Prevention Office and Center for

Naval Analysis (CNA) to evaluate the dissemination and use of the LMS toolkit. In the spring, CNA researchers will conduct interviews with commanders/unit leadership, behavioral health providers, chaplains, integrated-prevention advisory group professionals, law enforcement, safety personnel and suicide prevention program coordinators. CNA will anonymously summarize interview findings in a report to DPRR at the conclusion of the evaluation. DPRR will use the findings to update the LMS toolkit content and dissemination strategy. Further, feedback may also be applied to related LMS and prevention efforts.

If you are interested in participating in this evaluation, send an email to usarmy.pentagon.hqda-dcs-g-9.list.suicide-prevention@army.mil.

For more prevention and LMS information, check out the [DPRR website](#) and [LMS microsite](#).

If you or someone you know is experiencing crisis, including thoughts of self-harm or suicide, call or text **988** to connect with the [988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline](#). The lifeline provides 24-hour confidential support to anyone in suicidal crisis or emotional distress. Support is also available via [live chat](#). Para ayuda en español, llame al **988**.



ASAP Empowers Prevention for Healthier Army Communities

By Rachel Rachfal, Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness

The Army Substance Abuse Program isn't just about responding to substance misuse; ASAP is at the forefront of shaping a resilient Army community through strategic prevention initiatives. Beyond reacting, ASAP is committed to forging a robust and healthy force.

"The Army is actively attempting to eliminate stigmas surrounding help-seeking behaviors, meaning that it is clearly a sign of strength, not weakness," says Polly J. Guthrie, M.Ed., LADC, CEAP, SAP, MAC, ICAADC, ASAP manager at Fort Leonard Wood in Missouri. This ethos is embedded in ASAP prevention initiatives, where seeking help is viewed as a proactive and powerful step toward building resilience.

ASAP prevention initiatives extend to comprehensive training programs designed to equip Army personnel with the knowledge and tools needed to prevent substance misuse. Guthrie says, "When someone can self-identify issues or needs within themselves, that person comes forward to ask for help." These training sessions, conducted regularly throughout the year, cover a range of topics, from understanding the risks associated with substance use to building resilience against the pressures that military service may bring.

"ASAP partners with other on-post agencies and chaplains to teach help-seeking behaviors through training events and Ready and Resilient resource fairs. We highly encourage all prevention efforts and activities for service members," says Guthrie. Through collaborative efforts, ASAP ensures that Soldiers have access to a network of support, fostering a culture where help-seeking behaviors are actively encouraged and embraced.

Guthrie says, "With the ability to match needs with resources, an individual has a greater likelihood of not only asking for help but to ensure the need is matched with the most appropriate resource. This further strengthens self-efficacy and all prevention efforts." ASAP's commitment to matching individual needs with the right resources strengthens the proactive approach to prevention, creating a culture where Soldiers and their Families feel empowered to address challenges early on.

By embracing ASAP's proactive initiatives, Soldiers and their Families contribute to a community that prioritizes health, well-being and readiness. Through collective awareness, education and support, ASAP continues to be vital in fortifying the Army against the



Col. Kent Park cuts ribbon to open new community park at Joint Base Lewis-McChord to expand the Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation Program by increasing green space. (Photo by Pamela Sleezer)

challenges of substance misuse, fostering a legacy of strength and resilience.

ASAP extends beyond formal training sessions, reaching into the daily lives of Soldiers and their Families. Outreach programs and informational campaigns are strategically deployed to instill a constant awareness of the importance of proactive prevention. By integrating prevention messages into the fabric of Army life, ASAP ensures that the community remains vigilant for pitfalls of substance misuse.

Soldiers actively engaged in ASAP prevention initiatives become ambassadors of resilience within the larger Army community. As they model the importance of proactive help-seeking behaviors, there is a ripple effect across units, creating a culture where seeking assistance is not only accepted but celebrated. This positive shift in mindset contributes significantly to breaking down barriers and reducing the stigma associated with addressing substance misuse.

By embracing a culture where help-seeking behaviors are encouraged, Soldiers and their Families actively contribute to the collective strength of the force. Through ongoing education, collaboration and the strategic deployment of resources, ASAP continues to lead the charge in fortifying the Army community against the challenges of substance misuse. To read more about ASAP and how it can help you and your community, click [here](#).

President Biden Releases Marijuana Pardon

By Tara Davis, Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness

On Dec. 22, President Biden released a [proclamation](#) pardoning all U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents who, on or before this date, committed or were convicted of the offense of simple possession, attempted simple possession or use of marijuana. The proclamation does not cover military drug offenses under 10 U.S.C 112a and therefore does not result in a pardon for military personnel, nor does it apply to the civilian drug-testing program (48 CFR 252.223-7004).

This pardon follows Biden's Oct. 6, 2022, [statement on marijuana reform](#), where he introduced a three-step approach for reforming regulations involving marijuana use and possession. With the issuance of this pardon, the first step is set in motion. The attorney general issues certificates of pardon to eligible individuals, and then Biden urges governors to grant pardons for state-level offenses.

During the final step, the secretary of Health and Human Services and the attorney general review the Schedule I classification under the Controlled Substances Act, which labels marijuana as dangerous as heroin and LSD but with a lower potential for abuse than fentanyl and methamphetamine. However, Biden emphasizes that as marijuana regulations change, federal and state restrictions on trafficking, marketing and underage sales should stay in place.

Biden's goal with this pardon and further evaluation of current marijuana regulations is to help those who may be denied employment, housing or educational opportunities and suffer other collateral consequences that arise from these convictions.





R2 program MRT-PEs work with Soldiers to increase their sense of commitment, improve goal setting abilities and help visualize achieving their goals. (Courtesy Image)

Have You Forgotten Your New Year’s Resolution Already? Let’s Keep the Momentum Going With the R2 Program

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

“If we only took action under perfect conditions, we’d never achieve anything,” says Nick Powell, a performance expert and cognitive performance specialist at Rose Barracks in Vilseck, Germany. Powell says a large part of his job is working with individuals on how to increase their sense of commitment, how to set goals in the proper way and how to think about goals.

Goal-setting is at the root of keeping resolutions. Powell says goal-setting as a skill has two phases: the planning phase and the act phase. The planning phase is the fun phase. “This is what I’m going to do and how I’m going to do it,” he explains. The act phase is where you actually do it. The planning phase can last a day or two, a few minutes or even a few hours. But the act phase can last weeks, months and even years, depending on the goal or resolution. Powell says the act phase is not the sexy part of goal-setting; it can be difficult for most people because we’re creatures of habit, and we really like our habits. We fall into these patterns, and they are really hard to change.

The biggest part of goal-setting is figuring out how we can stop doing certain habits that we’ve fallen into. How can we start new habits? Powell says this is really hard for humans to do. “Goal-setting is never going to be pretty.” It’s easiest if we set a goal and then bracket that goal. Give yourself a stretch goal. A stretch goal is what something would look like if it was even better than the original goal.

Motivation is another important component of keeping your resolution or achieving a goal. Powell says motivation can be a feeling as well

as an action. So, when we look at goal-setting, there’s one thing that is important to do: Increase the feeling of motivation on a more consistent basis. For example, your goal is to run a half marathon by the end of the year. If you’re doing really great halfway through the year, make it a full marathon. That would be a stretch goal and at the top of the bracket. If you run the half marathon and accomplish that goal, that’s the lower bracket, and that’s OK. Is there something similar but a bit scaled back that you can do? Powell says this is totally acceptable.

We often use rewards as motivation. For example, if you do a full week of workouts, you may reward yourself with a cheat day. That may work to an extent in certain situations, but Powell says that over the long run, it’s not a sustainable source of motivation.

Goal-setting is stressful because we’re stepping out of our comfort zone. We’re testing ourselves beyond our normal limits. Powell says, “Remember that stress is not a sign that you’re failing; it’s a sign that you’re growing.” Stress isn’t always bad for us.

If you have already forgotten your resolution, Powell’s advice is to commit to performing the action and then do it no matter what you’re feeling. You must do it whether your self-belief is high or low or whether the feeling of motivation is there or not. It doesn’t matter if you missed three days in a row and you’re feeling terrible—you still have to do it. You have to find ways to hop back on the wagon. Commit to the action.

To request training and commit to action, contact your nearest [R2 Performance Center](#)

or fill out the [R2 Training Request Form](#) and email it to [DPRR](#).

Listen in to the monthly podcast series!

ARMY RESILIENCE ROUND UP

This series provides helpful information through casual conversations with experts. Listen to the latest episodes at <https://www.armyresilience.army.mil/ard/podcast.html>.

Episode 15:
Social Determinants of Readiness

Latoya Johnson, prevention evaluation specialist for the Army’s Integrated Prevention division, discusses the social determinants of health and how they affect readiness and health outcomes.

Episode 16:
Building Blocks to Resiliency

Joy Ingram, a RAFT workshop facilitator, discusses the building blocks of resilience, discovering your core values, setting and maintaining boundaries, and saying no in a positive way.

<https://www.armyresilience.army.mil/ard/podcast-gallery.html>

AROUND THE FORCE

- ▶ R2
- ▶ SHARP
- ▶ FAMILY & MWR
- ▶ CYSS



304th Sustainment Brigade Best Warrior Competition

FORT HUNTER LIGGETT, Calif.—Fifteen contestants in the 304th Sustainment Brigades Best Warrior Competition competed in events such as the Army Warrior Task and Confidence Course. The event concluded with a board appearance, where Spc. Andre Goodlaw was named the 304th Sustainment BDE Soldier of the Year and Sgt. Jjobahnjerreau Marimon was named 304th Noncommissioned Officer for the FY24 Best Warrior Competition. Command Sgt. Maj. Elizabeth Kisse is grateful to all cadres and competitors for making their best efforts. Watch a [video summary](#) of the event on YouTube. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Jean-Baptiste Kanangwe)



10th AAMDC Host Winter Leadership Professional Development Days

MAINZ, GERMANY—On Dec. 7, 10th Army Air and Missile Defense Command (AAMDC) leaders embarked on the fourth day of a leadership professional development event. Ms. Sky Clarke, R2 program manager for U.S. Army Europe and Africa, guided them through a yoga/resiliency session and discussions on holistic well-being, emphasizing physical, emotional and spiritual elements along with nutrition and sleep. Leaders looked at Vantage, the Army's data analytics platform, showcasing its potential for rapid data visualization and informed decision-making in support of Soldiers. Leaders also examined the Fort Hood Independent Review Committee findings, analyzing lessons learned and strategizing how the 10th AAMDC can live its values and enhance its SHARP program. (Courtesy photo)



SETAF-AF Hosts First Lions Legacy Event of 2024

VICENZA, ITALY—U.S. Army Soldiers assigned to U.S. Army Southern European Task Force, Africa (SETAF-AF), pose with a trophy they won in the Lions Legacy competition Jan. 5. Held monthly at Caserma Del Din, Vicenza, Italy, this competition strengthens unit cohesion through team and individual physical fitness challenges. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Samantha Powers)



Commander Visits With Kids at Day Care

FORT MCCOY, WIS.—Col. Stephen Messenger, garrison commander, visits the Child & Youth Services program at Fort McCoy. The base's nationally accredited Child Development Center offers hourly, part-day and full-day care for children ages 6 weeks to 5 years. Military members, DOD Civilians and contractors are eligible to use its services. (Photo by Kevin W. Clark)



Marksmanship Unit Soldiers Earn Spots for 2024 Paris Olympic Games

ANNISTON, Ala.—U.S. Army Sergeants Sagen Maddalena and Ivan Roe earned spots on Team USA after competing in the USA Shooting Air Gun Olympic Trials at the Judith Legerski CMP Competition Center in Alabama, Jan. 5-7. Maddalena and Roe will compete with the women's and men's 10m air rifle teams, respectively. Awards will be announced July 27. (Photo by Lt. Col. Michelle Lunato)



Youth Center Awarded Grant in Recognition of Leadership Program

BAUMHOLDER, GERMANY—The Baumholder Youth Center was awarded a \$5,000 grant in recognition of its high-quality programs and commitment to service, youth learning, character and leadership. The center was recognized for having a top five Torch Club project within the Boys and Girls Club of America for 2023.



Women’s Leadership Conference participants pose for a photo at the Fort Wainwright, Alaska, event, which focused on communication and cohesive teams. (Courtesy Image)

Alaska Soldiers Explore Core Values to Build Stronger Connections

Erik Moshe, (contractor), Ready and Resilient

Soldiers from the 1-25 Attack Reconnaissance Battalion (ARB) at Fort Wainwright, Alaska, participated in a Women’s Leadership Conference, an initiative for the women’s mentorship program. Capt. Mikayla Stewart contacted the United States Army Alaska (USARAK) Ready and Resilient (R2) Performance Center to request a Master Resilience Trainer – Performance Expert (MRT-PE) to conduct a breakout session at the conference to give the women of 1-25 ARB a chance to discover their own values and how core values help build stronger connections.

In the R2 breakout session, MRT-PE Lindsey Hopson guided participants as they selected their core values from a list of 24 character strengths and discussed how those values can help to build new connections and strengthen existing ones. Participants then learned about the meaning of authenticity and how to display it when communicating with others through active constructive responding.

“Character strengths and active constructive responding foster stronger connections and enhance leadership skills by teaching Soldiers that living by their core values and being authentic

to themselves and those around them increases trust, teamwork, cohesion and the quality of their connections made with others,” Hopson says. “Without authenticity in communication, intent can be misunderstood really quickly.”

Hopson mentioned that her favorite aspect of the conference was the discussion on character strengths. “This was my favorite part because, in both sessions, this is where the women really got to reflect and discuss what aspects of themselves reflect their core values.”

“This discussion brought out the authenticity of each woman. Being able to witness a realization of self, as well as perception of others as the women discussed their values, was beautiful because some women exhibited values that they did not even know they held. I truly enjoy watching people discover their own strengths, but then also being told by others what their perceived strengths are,” Hopson says. The leadership conference was well-received by both presenters and participants. “The Women’s Leadership Conference provided a safe and relaxed space for Soldiers to take the time to refresh and network,” Sgt. Lakayla Hampton says.

“The breakout sessions were really great. I also enjoyed the icebreakers and resiliency training.”

“The Women’s Leadership Conference allowed Soldiers to be authentic and genuine,” Stewart says. “Keynote speakers and breakout group leaders such as Chief Catron, Ms. Hopson and Capt. Goldberg hit on key themes and topics that brought out ways to effectively communicate, build resiliency and build cohesive teams.”

“The 1-25 ARB conference was awesome. It’s so great to see so many women leaders in one room, all working toward a common goal to make the organization better. I loved every bit of it and hope that we get invited back next year,” Amy May, a professor at University of Alaska Fairbanks, says. To schedule training that will increase your team’s performance and cohesion, contact your nearest R2 Performance Center. Visit <https://www.armyresilience.army.mil/ard/R2/I-Want-to-Schedule-Training.html> to schedule training.

If you want to learn about your character strengths, visit <https://www.viacharacter.org> and take the VIA institute on Character survey.

PROTECTIVE FACTOR: SOCIAL RESILIENCE

Strong social bonds are an important part of resilience. Good relationships with work peers help us overcome setbacks, succeed in day-to-day tasks, keep us active, build our confidence and give us a sense of purpose. You can strengthen your social relationships by:



- Offering your full attention when engaging with teammates.
- Expressing interest, respect and concern for others’ well-being.
- Seeking perspectives from different teammates when making decisions.

To Learn more about how to strengthen social resilience, visit <https://www.armyresilience.army.mil/ard/R2/social-resilience.html>.





Strategies for Saving *FINANCIAL PLANNING* Continued from page 1

Mroszczyk explains. The FRP offers this [simple spending plan worksheet](#).

This exercise is a great way to determine if you are overspending on indulgences or nice-to-haves (like that monthly \$200-plus cable package plus subscriptions to streaming services). But keep in mind that while creating a spending plan you should have a family conversation about everyone's needs and wants so that no one is forced to make compromises that are impossible to live with.

"By understanding where their money is going, Soldiers and Families can work to reduce their expenses, if necessary, and ensure they're spending and saving in a way that aligns with their goals," Mroszczyk says. One tool to help start the conversation is the [Financial Values work sheet](#).

Taking charge of your financial situation can be tough at the beginning of the year, especially if you're still in a financial holiday hangover. This kind of stress causes some people to panic and make choices that they later regret with monetary 20/20 hindsight. Mroszczyk warns against making snap decisions and seeking quick fixes when staring down major debt. One example she cites is taking out a payday loan to get cash right away. "These loans," she says, "can put you into greater debt. They charge high interest rates and require quick repayment. This can lead to costly upfront and hidden fees. You may have to take out additional loans or roll over a current loan to cover the previous balance. This can lead to a debt cycle."

"By understanding where their money is going, Soldiers and Families can work to reduce their expenses, if necessary, and ensure they're spending and saving in a way that aligns with their goals."

— Robyn Mroszczyk, AFC®,
Financial Education Program Manager



Dollars and Sense simulation, one of the Financial Readiness Program's many resources, allows Soldiers to test their money skills by following a storyline and guiding character decisions. Click [here](#) to begin.

One solution to get back on track, Mroszczyk says, is to speak with lenders about extending their term or cutting their interest rate so you can have lower monthly payments until you can catch up. She also suggests prioritizing your credit bills by paying off those with the highest interest first (while still making minimum payments on the rest of your accounts) and saving enough so that you have an emergency fund of three to six months or, if that's not possible, at least \$1,000.

"Without an established emergency fund, credit cards and payday loans are two of the most costly options for dealing with unexpected expenses," she notes. "Even if you're able to regularly make your monthly minimum payments, interest rates can keep your debts from decreasing significantly. You may get caught

in a cycle of continuing to struggle to save, and unforeseen costs will continue to come up."

With all the crises Soldiers confront in a world of constant conflicts, they shouldn't have the added burden of figuring out alone how to combat debt creep. The good news is they don't have to, since military members and their Families are eligible for free financial counseling from the government. Find a credentialed counselor in your area by visiting <https://finred.usalearning.gov/pfcMap>.

If you are in financial distress, you may be eligible for an interest-free loan or grant through Army Emergency Relief. To find out if you and your Family are eligible, go to <https://www.armyemergencyrelief.org/>.

Wellness Check Initiative *DIRECTOR'S COLUMN* Continued from page 2

The Army's Family Advocacy Program achieved a significant milestone in January: the formalization of a partnership with the National Children's Alliance. Through a memorandum of understanding signed with the NCA, the Army is ensuring a coordinated community response for children and Families who require support due

to child abuse, neglect or problematic adolescent sexual behavior.

In the coming months, we are scheduled to implement an Army-wide wellness check initiative to increase visibility of Soldiers who may be struggling with thoughts of self-harm

or other issues. The wellness checks will help commanders link Soldiers to non-clinical counseling services and resources. We will highlight this initiative as well as a lethal-means-safety pilot through webinars, podcasts and other strategic communication channels.

Dee Geise, DPRR Director



DPRR

DIRECTORATE OF PREVENTION, RESILIENCE AND READINESS

FEBRUARY 2024

HAIL AND FAREWELL

We invite the DPRR community to join us in welcoming new members and extending a fond farewell to outgoing members.

Hail

- Maj Matthew Tullia, Assessments Division
- Sgt. Maj. Ruben Murillo, DPRR Senior Enlisted Advisor
- Robin Sherrod, Family Advocacy Program
- Monique O'Neil, Exceptional Family Member Program
- Dr. Janel Perkins, Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention
- John Housein, Resource Management Division
- Frank Hawkins, Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention

Farewell

- Lt. Col. Sumesh Sagar, Assessments Division
- Walter Wood, Resource Manager
- Stacey Van Linde, Operations
- Dr. Jenna Newman, Prevention Science and Research
- Kevin (Gil) Gilbert, Family Advocacy Program
- Karolin Guadarrama, Financial Readiness Program
- Jana Helton, Child Youth and School Services
- Gary Cunningham, Employee Assistance Program
- Helen Roadarmel, Child Youth and School Services
- Thomas Gilliard, Army Substance Abuse Program



UPCOMING EVENTS

MARCH

International Association of Chiefs of Police Officer Safety and Wellness Conference

March 1-3: This symposium for law enforcement professionals will feature experts presenting resources and best practices for developing comprehensive officer safety and wellness strategies.

Location: Louisville, Ky. **Learn more:** <https://www.theiacp.org/OSWConference>

Society for Public Health Education 2024 Annual Conference

March 19-21: The theme of this year's conference is "Gateway To Health Equity: Global Solutions to Strengthen Health Education and Promotion Capacity." The conference offers learning experiences and opportunities to connect with colleagues in the field.

Location: St. Louis, Mo. **Learn more:** https://www.sophe.org/professional-development/conferences_events/2024-annual-conference/

APRIL

End Violence Against Women International Conference

April 1-3: The annual conference focuses on sexual assault, intimate partner violence, stalking and human trafficking.

Location: San Diego, Calif. **Learn more:** <https://web.cvent.com/event/b6f982b2-92c3-4177-8991-1082d74f67b3/summary>

Anxiety and Depression Association of America

April 11-14: The annual ADAA conference will bring together clinicians and researchers to present on this year's theme of sex and gender.

Location: Boston, Mass. **Learn more:** <https://adaa.org/conference>



Financial Readiness Toolkit

The Financial Readiness Toolkit is now available on the [Products on Demand](#) site!

TOP-PERFORMING POSTS

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.

FACEBOOK



Impressions: 3,949

TWITTER



Impressions: 299

INSTAGRAM



Impressions: 2,233

LINKEDIN



Impressions: 65

Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness

DPRR COMMUNITYLINK

February 20, 2024. Volume 9, Issue 3

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 Tara.Davis@mat-inc.net. This publication is available for download at: <https://www.dvidshub.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 March 15. For any questions, contact the editor at Tara.Davis@mat-inc.net.



Connect With DPRR!

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