



# DPRR COMMUNITYLINK

THE DIRECTORATE OF PREVENTION, RESILIENCE AND READINESS NEWSLETTER | OCTOBER 2023



October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Domestic Violence is a complex issue that affects millions of individuals and Families worldwide.

## Breaking the Cycle: Understanding Domestic Violence and Intergenerational Trauma

By Tara Davis, Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness

October is [Domestic Violence Awareness Month](#), which focuses on raising awareness of violence that affects millions of individuals and families worldwide. Domestic abuse is a complex issue with far-reaching consequences, extending beyond its immediate victims. It most often is used as a synonym for [intimate partner violence](#) (IPV), but in the broader sense it includes all forms of familial abuse. Domestic violence is not limited to physical abuse or battery but includes sexual, emotional, psychological and financial abuse. It may include tactics like stalking, isolating and using technology to perpetuate abuse and to control victims. Domestic violence is preventable and usually not an isolated incident.

Now what if I told you that the trauma or abuse your parents experienced or that they witnessed affects you? Those experiences can be passed from generation to generation, continuing the cycle of trauma and domestic violence. Frequently seeing your parents use maladaptive coping mechanisms when you are a child—such as excessive alcohol consumption, drug misuse or witnessing a parent use violence against a spouse, sibling or other family member—may become ways that you cope with stressors and affect your overall health.

This continuous cycle is known as intergenerational trauma. Dr. Donna Ferguson of the Department of the Army's Criminal Investigative Division Strategic Initiatives Groups says, "It's actually a phenomenon that happens inside of families and describes traumatic experiences by parents that is adversely transmitted or passed down to their subsequent generations." The resulting effect is that the next generation—i.e., children—are exposed to direct or indirect trauma symptoms, which causes vulnerabilities in their adulthood.

She shares that intergenerational trauma has only recently been discovered within the past 70 years and is also referred to as generational trauma and transgenerational trauma.

Recognizing the urgency of addressing domestic violence and intergenerational trauma, the Army's Family Advocacy Program (FAP) plays a vital role in prevention, intervention and counseling within the military community. Tanya Juarez, FAP manager at Headquarters, Department of the Army, describes "FAP's comprehensive approach as one that operates proactively and reactively to address domestic violence and abuse among Soldiers and their Families."

Before abuse occurs, FAP engages in prevention efforts through

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## DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

Team,

Making the lives of Soldiers, Army Civilians and Family members better is a priority of the Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness and a cause I've been deeply passionate about for many years. Recently, we've made progress in improving the livelihoods and well-being of members of the Army Team through the achievement of several milestones.

The Army Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention, or SHARP, program received approval to move forward with implementation of Fiscal Year 2023 Independent Review Commission hiring actions. This means we will be able to take a major step forward in the transformation of the program to the victim-centric entity that our Army Team members deserve. See the article on page 3.

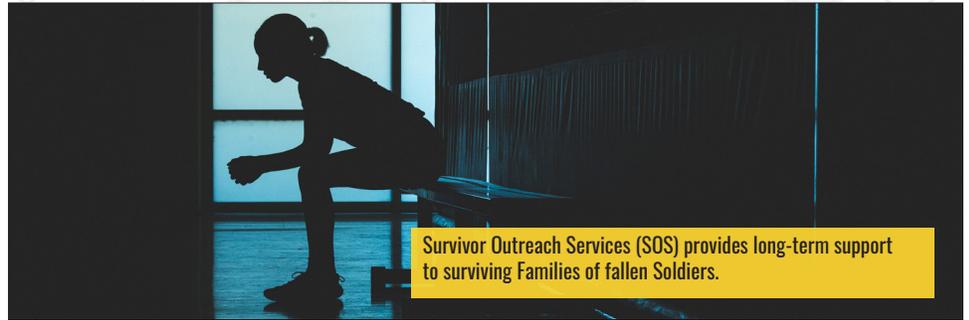
In addition, our efforts to continue scaling the Integrated Prevention Advisory Group, or I-PAG, the Army's prevention workforce, continues full steam ahead. I-PAG Phase II hiring is now underway with two critical continuous job announcement openings now available on USAJobs.gov. I-PAG will assist commanders in creating prevention systems at the installation level, preempting harmful behaviors before they're able to take root.

In September, we published the [Army's Lethal Means Safety Toolkit](#). The toolkit provides guidance on safe storage of weapons and medicine to put more time between a suicide thought and means. This is vitally important as research has shown that oftentimes the act of suicide is attempted within only a few minutes after an ideation. The more time we can put between the thought and the means or methods, the more likely we are to save lives. The LMS Toolkit accompanies the recently published Suicide Prevention Regulation.

When Soldiers serve, their Families serve too. That's why I'm so incredibly pleased that the Army G-9 recently rolled out a new pilot that will expand childcare options for [Soldiers and Families in the Army National Guard and Army Reserve](#).

We are making phenomenal strides in reducing harmful behaviors by strengthening the financial readiness of Soldiers and Army Families. G-9 DPRE is working in coordination with ASA M&RA to increase awareness of the Department of Defense's new Dependent Care Flexible Spending Account,

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Survivor Outreach Services (SOS) provides long-term support to surviving Families of fallen Soldiers.

## Survivor Outreach Services Plays a Vital Role in Supporting Survivors

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

Survivor Outreach Services (SOS) is the official Army program that provides long-term support to surviving Families of fallen Soldiers. This program was designed and developed by survivors.

Jill Knaus, program manager for the Army G-9 Survivor Outreach Services program, explains that the program came about because of the National Defense Authorization Act in 2006. "Of course, the focus was the losses that were occurring across all of the services that were happening in Iraq and Afghanistan. But the Army decided that SOS was going to be an open-arms kind of program."

She continues, "It doesn't matter if the Soldier was lost in Iraq or Afghanistan or how or when the Soldier dies. Any Soldier that we lose, their Family is supported throughout the entire process. We even have some Families that we work with who lost their Soldiers going as far back as the Vietnam era."

The program keeps survivors connected to the Army in every way possible. It also does a lot of referral, networking and liaison work. Knaus says, "For example, maneuvering through the Tricare system can be quite cumbersome. Sometimes, survivors don't know what benefits they're eligible for. We help them with that."

SOS is all-encompassing, as it also covers the extended Family of service members. Most of those receiving services are spouses, parents and children. According to Knaus, "Soldiers' siblings need a lot of support, too. We're there to provide for them, as well. They may need a shoulder to lean on or just a listening ear. We want them to know that we haven't forgotten about them."

There is an intersection between Survivor Outreach Services and the Suicide Prevention Program within the Army. SOS plays a vital role in the mental health of surviving Families, which is

considered post intervention. The Army Suicide Prevention Program is working hard to lessen the need for SOS. Knaus explains, "About three years ago, SOS started to make an effort to look really hard at survivors of suicide. Along with the program we offer, we have an Advisory Council that gets to meet with the chief of staff of the Army."

Surviving Family members make up a part of that council. The organization started examining the number of losses and the types of deaths the Army was seeing. Knaus says, "Overwhelmingly, year after year, a huge number of those were losses by suicide. So, we specifically looked for candidates for that council who were survivors of suicide to help advise senior leaders. We wanted to have a direct correlation, hear their story and make sure that we were supporting them, knowing that the stigma around mental health still exists. We wanted to make sure that we were meeting their needs as well."

She adds, "Our program doesn't care how you lost your Soldier. Their mental well-being, their grief, their recovery is not less because of the manner in which they lost their Soldier." This is why they actively bring suicide survivors into the program to get their feedback, according to Knaus. This enforces the importance of the intersection between SOS and the Army Suicide Prevention Program.

"I am so proud of what the Army does today to take care of Families," Knaus concludes.

If you are a surviving Family member of a Soldier and need help, please visit the SOS website at <https://dcs9.army.mil/safr/sos/sos.html>. You may also contact the Army's Gold Star and surviving Family member representative at 833-313-1960.

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## DOD Recognizes ‘Connect to Protect: Support Is Within Reach’ as Top Suicide Prevention Program

By Antwaun J. Parrish, Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness

Since 2016, the Department of Defense has honored exemplary programs of each military department for their exceptional efforts to increase suicide prevention awareness and community through engagement throughout the month of September—which is Suicide Prevention Month.

This year, U.S. Army Garrison Rheinland-Pfalz was selected as the Army recipient of the 2021-2022 DoD Suicide Prevention Recognition Program. USAG R-P developed events and activities through efforts to promote suicide prevention, education, resources, connectedness and help-seeking among service members and their Families.

“The programs developed by Army installations

worldwide help us to be proactive in our prevention efforts,” says Dee Geise, Director of the Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness. “We value our teams across the Army and want to ensure we do our best to recognize them for their world-class efforts.”

USAG R-P Army Substance Abuse Program facilitated the community ready and resilience (CR2) process, including the use of various forums to prioritize community risks, which are heavily weighted on the proximal factors of suicide.

The USAG R-P CR2 work groups used the prioritized risks to develop mitigation strategies for use at the company level, thus keeping a yearlong

and continuous focus on suicide awareness and prevention. Additionally, ASAP led and participated in six major suicide awareness events while sustaining monthly and quarterly community outreach obligations.

Suicide prevention awareness activities utilized a combination of community activities, targeted trainings, and Soldier/Family-centric events to educate community members on the importance of creating and maintaining strong connections as a protective factor against suicide.

To read the full story visit <https://www.army.mil/article/269880>

## Independent Review Commission Recommendations Implemented

By Chester Curtis, Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness

Two recent actions were taken to implement recommendations from the Independent Review Commission (IRC) on Sexual Assault in the Military.

First, HQDA EXORD 358-23, Implementation of FY23 IRC Hiring Actions to Counter Sexual Assault in the Military, was released August 29.

This EXORD advances phase 2 SHARP hiring actions. During phase 2, supervisory sexual assault response coordinators (SARCs) will be hired to oversee SARCs and victim advocates and assist the installation lead SARC. SHARP Program prevention specialists and program support specialists will also be hired at the installation level during phase 2. Supervisory SARCs, prevention specialists and program support specialists will work directly for their lead SARCs to provide oversight and management of the SHARP Program at the installation.

“It is imperative that we rebuild trust in the SHARP Program,” says Jill Londagin, director of the Army SHARP Program. “This restructuring is a first step in rebuilding the trust. It will allow us to professionalize, strengthen and resource the SHARP workforce at all echelons to best meet the needs of Soldiers, their Families and DA Civilians.”

Effective immediately, senior commanders will establish recruitment plans and initiate hiring actions to recruit SHARP professionals for phase 2 authorizations.

Once the senior commander has hired a full-time Civilian to serve as the lead SARC,

additional full-time positions may be filled. The lead SARC is the designated individual who serves as the senior commander’s principal authority, strategic advisor and advocate for the SHARP Program and for victims of sexual harassment, sexual assault and associated retaliatory behaviors. The lead SARC position should be filled prior to any additional hirings.

All SHARP professionals are required to complete a Tier 3 background investigation with a favorable adjudication.

“While we need individuals with the technical skills to fill these positions, including education, skills and experience, we also need to ensure we are hiring people with a commitment to the victims of sexual assault who understand the ethical responsibility required to ensure that victims receive the care and support they deserve,” says Londagin. “We will need to screen carefully to ensure that we hire the right people for our leadership positions.”

Second, the under secretary of the Army signed the decision memo for phase 2 IRC actions and SHARP restructure August 29.

This decision consolidates SHARP professionals at the installation (tactical level) under the senior commander and will prompt an out-of-cycle TDA update. To ensure coverage for deployed units, the Army is working on plans to provide victim support specialists and emergency essential-coded DA Civilians.

For more information about the Army SHARP Program, go to <https://www.armyresilience.army.mil/sharp/index.html>.

Listen in to the monthly podcast series!

### ARMY RESILIENCE ROUND UP

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

#### Episode 10:

Resilience and Strategic Habits, with Dr. Gabriel Paoletti

Dr. Gabriel Paoletti, a senior mental-fitness scientist at the Uniformed Services University’s Consortium for Health and Performance, discusses strategic habits of mental resilience.

#### Episode 11:

Ethical Practices and Responsibilities in the Advocacy World, with Alejandro Palacios

Alejandro Palacios dives deep into what ethics are and why they are important. He highlights how personal and professional ethics require honesty, transparency and awareness of ethical conflicts of interest.

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



## How to Break the Stigma of Spoken Finances

By Shirley Tien, Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness

If you're struggling to make ends meet, guess what? Your neighbor is living paycheck to paycheck, your colleague can't afford childcare, your sibling was just laid off, and your friend is on unemployment. This may come as a surprise, but no one talks about their finances openly. Let's try to change that.

Robyn Alama Mroszczyk, financial education program manager at HQDA, deputy chief of staff, G-9 says, "There is this great book called *Money Mammoth* by Ted Klontz, Ph.D., that explains our anxiety about money most likely goes back decades and affects all of us individually. One emotion that we are preprogrammed to feel about money is shame. And what do we do with shame? Well, we don't talk about it."

Finances are everyone's concern. According to Karolin Guadarrama, financial readiness education specialist at HQDA DCS G-9, "It is quite normal for the average person to not have a profound understanding of money and how to manage it. We are moving in the right direction with personal finance embedded in high schools; however, the curriculum is not regulated. This has lasting effects as we can see a direct tie to concerns with finances affecting readiness and leading to harmful behaviors." Poverty and unemployment may impact mental and general health, increase risk of child or partner abuse, and even result in death by suicide.

Mroszczyk says, "Credentialed personal financial counselors are at every installation providing free, non-biased confidential counseling services. Visit [financialfrontline.org](https://financialfrontline.org), the Army's official financial readiness website."

Guadarrama adds, "Soldiers and Families should



Robyn Mroszczyk (right) shared information on the Financial Readiness Program during Family Forum 2: Let's Get Tactical. (Photo by Bernardo Fuller)

regularly adjust their spending plan and also get educated on what additional programs and benefits are out there that they can qualify for. Our counselors provide comprehensive educational and counseling programs including developing a spending plan, debt management and planning for those 'out of the ordinary' needs."

However, to really break the stigma of finances, Mroszczyk says, "Start having conversations with leadership and other Soldiers. Make personal finance part of the day in and day out conversation. Don't forget to talk to your

kids about financial matters; they are always watching and observing. Teach them early on that they don't have to have shame surrounding money."

Many people are facing financial problems, but there are tools the Army has that can educate those in need. [Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness](https://www.armyresilience.army.mil) also has lots of [financial tips](https://www.armyresilience.army.mil). Lastly, don't be afraid to get the discussion going. You'll soon realize we're all in the same boat. Not only will we succeed in making the topic the norm, but we'll also find quicker solutions to our problems.

## Dependent Care Flexible Spending Accounts Supporting Families

By Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness Communications & Outreach

WASHINGTON — As part of its obligation to take care of service members and Families, the Department of Defense is implementing a [Dependent Care Flexible Spending Account](https://www.armyresilience.army.mil), or DCFSA.

A DCFSA is a pre-tax benefit account used to pay for eligible dependent care services, such as preschool, summer day camp, before or after school programs, child or adult day care, babysitting and nanny expenses. It's a smart way to save money while taking care of your loved ones so that you can continue to work.

Each family can contribute up to \$5,000 per year to a DCFSA. The benefit of participating in the DCFSA is that contributing pre-tax earnings can lower your taxable income resulting in more take-home pay.

Service members can better budget for dependent care expenses for the year as DCFSA funds will be set aside for use only for dependent care services. By saving taxes, DCFSA will help to reduce the overall cost of dependent care and keep more money in your pocket.

A DCFSA makes it easy to get reimbursed for eligible dependent care services. Simply log in to your FSAFEDS online account at any time to manage all aspects of your DCFSA, such as viewing account balances, submitting claims, viewing claims status, looking up eligible expenses, selecting reimbursement methods and choosing to receive account alerts by email or text.

All DA Civilians as well as Active Guard Reserve on Title 10 orders are also eligible for DCFSA. The

DCFSA benefit is for dependent children under age 13, spouses or other tax dependents who are mentally or physically incapable of self-care.

Eligible individuals can sign up for a DCFSA during the annual federal benefits open season (typically in November/December) or after experiencing a qualifying life event, such as a birth or death, divorce, PCS, deployment or a change in dependent care costs.

Enrollment opens for members of the Uniformed Services in November 2023. For assistance with financial considerations, contact a no-cost, credentialed financial counselor at your installation and visit [FinancialFrontline.org](https://financialfrontline.org). Visit [FSAFEDS](https://www.fsaafeds.com) for more information on the DCFSA and to enroll.



## Army Unveils New Suicide Prevention Products and Resources to Bolster Program Implementation

By Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness Communications & Outreach Division

The Army kicked off Suicide Prevention Month in September by unveiling several important new resources to bolster Army Suicide Prevention Program implementation across the force, including [AR 600-92](#).

The Army's first standalone suicide prevention policy took effect on September 8. The new regulation codifies the public health approach that was first introduced in 2021 and lays a broad programmatic foundation for reducing harmful behaviors across the Department of the Army. The regulation describes the authorities, roles and responsibilities, program goals and objectives designed to enhance protective factors while reducing stressors that may lead to harmful behaviors.

The regulation follows the publication of two handbooks in fiscal year 2022: "[Senior Commander's Guide to Suicide Prevention, Reducing Suicide in Army Formations](#)" and "[Call to Action: Suicide Prevention - Reducing Suicide in Army Formations Brigade and Battalion Commander's Handbook](#)."

Modeled on seven evidence-based prevention strategies recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, or CDC, the regulation and guidebooks recognize that prevention of harmful behaviors depends on the employment of a comprehensive and integrated approach by leaders at all levels.

The seven strategies include: strengthening financial readiness, strengthening access and delivery of suicide prevention care, creating protective environments and healthy climates, promoting connectedness, teaching coping and problem-solving skills, identifying and supporting people at risk, and lessening harm and preventing future risk.

These strategies are intended to work across multiple levels—individual, interpersonal, unit, installation, and societal. However, all levels must be synchronized to address a complex and serious problem.

"Engaged leadership is foundational to the success of the Army's suicide prevention policy," said Lt. Gen. Kevin Vereen, Deputy Chief of Staff, G-9, who leads the headquarters staff that oversees the Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness and its Army Suicide Prevention Program. Vereen says, "the regulation and supporting handbooks and resources will help command teams implement the suicide prevention program in a consistent manner across the force."

"This new regulation is based on the best available evidence in suicide prevention," says Carrie Shult, Army suicide prevention program manager. "It increases emphasis on whole-person and whole-of-community primary prevention approaches before a crisis is reached."

Shult says the regulation addresses requirements and provides implementing guidance on the three components of suicide prevention: prevention, intervention and postvention.

"The prevention section describes actions to inform Command Teams, Soldiers and Family members about risk and protective factors; combat stigma; deliver suicide prevention, resilience and bystander training; provide lethal means safety counseling, education and resources; and encourage utilization of help-seeking resources such as behavioral health, the chaplaincy, or military and family life counselors," says Shult.

"The intervention section includes instructions to facilitate constructive care," says Shult. "Intervention starts with individuals and organizations understanding how to recognize, act and assist Army team members in accessing resources to strengthen personal resilience."

Shult says, "The postvention section describes the structured activities commanders should do after a death or suicide attempt to navigate the grief and loss, and to build back resilience and return the unit to a state of readiness."

Putting time and space between an individual considering suicide and a lethal means, such as a gun, is critical to reducing the risk of intentional self-harm. That's why the Army published a new [Lethal Means Safety \(LMS\) Toolkit](#).

The toolkit is a multilevel guidebook that contains tactics, techniques and evidence-based activities that encourage safe storage of weapons and medication. The toolkit also contains guidance and resources for commanders and leaders on how to integrate LMS in their roles to reduce harmful behaviors and prevent suicide more effectively.

"The toolkit will enable users to expand their understanding of LMS and engage with the Army community to build a more secure environment to help prevent future risk," says Dee Geise, the Army G-9 Director of the Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness.

The toolkit, which includes LMS communication materials and checklists for commanders, Soldiers and Family members, offers practical ways to incorporate LMS at work and home.

To read the full article, visit <https://www.army.mil/article/269690>.

## PERSONAL READINESS: PHYSICAL DIMENSION

Taking care of yourself is the first step in taking care of your squad! Physical health and emotional health are strongly connected. When you don't take care of yourself, you can't be there for others—whether Family members, friends or work teammates. Take care of yourself in the following ways:

### GET GOOD SLEEP



Quality sleep lets the body repair and rejuvenate itself. Aim to get at least eight hours of sleep each night.

### EAT A WELL-BALANCED DIET



Properly fuel your body with meals that include protein, fruits, vegetables and healthy fats (such as avocados).

### HYDRATE WITH WATER



Replace a sugary beverage with a glass of water to stay hydrated. Add a lemon wedge for flavor and absorption.

### EXERCISE EACH DAY



Add moderate physical activity into your day, such as a walk, or opt to take the stairs instead of the elevator.



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

# AROUND THE FORCE

- ▶ SHARP
- ▶ Suicide Prevention Program (SP2)
- ▶ Ready and Resilient
- ▶ ASAP
- ▶ I-PAG



## Army SHARP Academy SARC/VA Career Course Graduation Awardees

FORT LEAVENWORTH, Kan.—On August 18, 32 students graduated from the SARC/VA Career course at the Army SHARP Academy in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. During each graduation ceremony, individuals were recognized by the academy staff and their peers for exceptional performance. Col. Trent Upton, U.S. Army Combined Arms Center chief of staff, and Col. Travis Jacobs, director of the SHARP Academy, personally recognized each of the Class 23-006 recipients. Sgt. 1st Class Perla Zamarripa, U.S. Army Pacific, Fort Shafter, Hawaii, received the Academic Excellence Award, and Shelby Snider, TRADOC, Fort Knox, Kentucky, took home the Jay Lee Hoffman Spirit Award. Congratulations and best of luck to all Class 23-006 graduates!



## Congressional Military Family Caucus Summit Competition

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers (center) and Rep. Sanford D. Bishop, Jr. (left) co-chairs of the annual Congressional Military Family Caucus Summit hosted the event on August 8. Rep. McMorris Rodgers welcomed participants. The theme was “Together We Thrive: Strengthening Resilience and Enhancing Well-Being in Military Families.” The Summit, which was supported by the participation of members of the Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness, addressed the challenges faced by Soldiers and their Families.



## Senior Policy Adviser Speaks at Institute of Violence, Abuse and Trauma Conference

SAN DIEGO, Calif.— At the Aug. 27 conference, Michele Barber, senior policy adviser for the prevention of harmful behavior at the Office of the ASA (M&RA) Quality of Life Directorate, led the team’s presentation “Paradigm Shift From Response to Prevention: The Army’s Approach to Integrated Primary Prevention” as Katherine Schaughency (left) and Sarah Sullivan (right) from DPRR’s Integrated Prevention Division co-presented. The presentation shared information on different initiatives that would focus on reducing risk factors and promoting protective factors.



## Army People Synchronization Conference

FORT KNOX, Ky.—The Army People Synchronization conference, held Aug. 7-10 at Fort Knox, brought together Army leaders, Soldiers and Civilians to discuss ways to improve human resource and talent management processes. Participants, including HR professionals, focused on building a comprehensive plan to shape the future of the force and to provide Soldiers a path for career advancement.



## WVNG Celebrates and Honors Gold Star Families

CAMP DAWSON, West Va.—A Gold Star Family member pets a horse during equine therapy at Camp Dawson’s Gold Star Families’ Retreat. The West Virginia National Guard holds the event each year to honor the service and sacrifices of Gold Star Families.



## G-9 Leaders Film Suicide Prevention Month Public Service Announcement

ARLINGTON, Va.—Lt. Gen. Kevin Vereen, DCS, G-9, and Dee Geise, DPRR director, recorded a public service announcement to raise awareness of Suicide Prevention Month (SPM) and to change public opinion and behavior about mental health. SPM concluded on Sept 30. During this month of recognition, the Army highlighted several new products for senior leaders, Soldiers and Family members, including Army Regulation 600-92, Army Suicide Prevention Program and the Lethal Means Safety Toolkit.



## Soldiers Sharpen Performance Skills at Operation Raider Blast

Erik Moshe, Contractor, Ready and Resilient (R2) Performance Center

The 3rd Squadron, 4th U.S. Cavalry (3-4 CAV) Raiders, collaborated with performance experts (PEs) Fernando Llamoca and Eliza Marks from the Schofield Barracks Ready and Resilient (R2) Performance Center at the Pōhākuloa Training Area (PTA) to enhance their readiness and lethality. First Lt. Matthew M. Griffin requested PEs' support to ensure that Soldiers received mental-skills training during Operation Raider Blast. PEs observed section, platoon and troop live-fire exercises for both Apache and Blackfoot troops and taught attention-control, mindset and confidence-building skills during hip-pocket and individual sessions in the field.

"Soldiers were required to execute their respective roles and take initiative during live fires, which demanded strong levels of focus and discipline," Marks says. "We taught mental skills to Soldiers, who had to juggle a lot of information from different sources, to increase the probability of their success by controlling how the mind works under pressure."

Llamoca highlighted skills such as what's important now (WIN), control the controllables and cues to help Soldiers streamline large amounts of information by limiting distractions that were not in their control and focusing on elements that were.

Llamoca explains, "For example, if a Soldier made a mistake during the live fire, they asked themselves, *What's important now?*, to help focus on the task at hand and not on the mistake, which allowed them to get back into the fight quickly."

A Soldier from Apache troop who used the mental-skills training says, "I tried to flush away the negative thoughts and focus on what

I needed to do as a gunner; it helped me feel more prepared in my role."

"While the ability to control one's own thought process in the moment was essential, other skills like communication and motivation also helped to increase the cohesion of the troop," Marks observes. "Trust was built as Soldiers identified potential areas to improve and sustain and developed a plan to work toward a common goal. Overall, having a more cohesive team led to quantitative and qualitative performance improvements for the Raiders during their live fires."

"I've noticed considerable differences in my team's composure and consistency throughout our lanes after working with the R2PC team," a Soldier from Blackfoot troop notes.

These quantitative and qualitative improvements were measured with the PEs during the Soldiers' After-Action Review (AAR). Llamoca and Marks reflect on how being a part of the AAR process was crucial because it allowed them to reinforce information that company and troop leaders put out.

"Some of the key takeaways from the AARs included how to stay employed during the fight, how to communicate during their iterations and what to work on during the planning phase," Llamoca says. "We used this information to create discussions and give tailored sessions to each platoon. We focused on specific mental skills that could be useful for them and the actions that Soldiers were going to take to incorporate their sustains and improves into the next iteration."

Additionally, during a classroom session with the unit's medics, PEs discussed mindset,

overcoming negativity bias, motivation and the impact the skills can have on readiness. They also attended Dakota troop's M4 and M240 qualification ranges and taught skills to boost focus, attention and readiness in between range iterations. Several Soldiers struggled to qualify on the M4, but nearly all qualified after PEs discussed post-mistake cue words to help them reengage with the target.

"I don't get much practice with my M4," a Soldier from Dakota troop says, "but the R2PC team helped me get over my nerves and I was able to qualify on my second iteration."

"We learned so much through observation and speaking with Soldiers about how they do what they do," Marks says. "Oftentimes, you can see the results after they finish their iteration on the range, which gives you an indication about how they did. However, when you talk to the Soldier about how they think they did, suddenly, the result isn't the only marker for success. We saw some very good scores out there, and Soldiers weren't satisfied with it. They wanted more and sought ways to improve for next time. There was such a hunger to learn and be better individually and as a group, allowing them to push the boundaries of their abilities."

As a Soldier from Dakota troop notes, "I found the information helpful, and I was able to keep distractions out of my mind and keep it blank to focus on the target."

Reach out to your nearest R2 Performance Center to schedule training to increase your team's performance and cohesion. Visit <https://www.armyresilience.army.mil/ard/R2/I-Want-to-Schedule-Training.html>.

**TAKE THE WORKPLACE & GENDER RELATIONS SURVEY NOW AT WWW.DODSURVEYSMIL.**

**RESULTS OF THE WGR WILL AFFECT ARMY PROGRAMS AND POLICIES. SURVEY CLOSSES NOV. 21.**

**U.S. ARMY**



## Breaking The Cycle *PREVENTING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE Continued from page 1*

initiatives like new-parent home visits, workshops and training sessions to educate about healthy relationships, communication, parenting skills and stress management. These services aim to reduce the risk of domestic abuse.

FAP's mission extends to providing services after violence has occurred. This includes intervening when incidents are reported or identified, coordinating with commanders and law enforcement, assisting victims in developing safety plans, offering counseling services for both victims and those who commit acts of abuse and providing advocacy and legal assistance. The program ensures that there are multiple reporting options available, including restricted, unrestricted and confidential channels.

The [Department of Defense](#) recorded over 40,000 domestic abuse incidents involving military service members, spouses or intimate partners from fiscal years 2015 to 2019, with 74 percent of those incidents being physical abuse. Approximately 17,000 of the domestic abuse incidents involved Army Soldiers, spouses or intimate partners. According to the Government Accountability Office, domestic abuse can result in

devastating personal consequences and societal costs. The DOD also states that domestic abuse is incompatible with military values and reduces mission readiness.

Military Families face unique stressors, including parental deployments, frequent relocations and parental combat exposure. These events can increase stress levels, emotional strain and Family conflicts.

Intergenerational trauma associated with domestic violence often causes chronic anxiety in families. Ferguson says, "Chronic anxiety is rooted in the conflict of attempting to try and maintain yourself while trying to make meaning of the connections of family to the trauma or domestic violence or the pain."

Ferguson further explains that children learn from their families and the physical, social and psychological environment. In the future, they may find themselves wondering why they can't solve problems they are facing effectively or at all. "Not realizing they've normalized the behavior of trauma in their adulthood, they won't understand why they're struggling in relationships, suffer from depression, insecurities and low self-esteem," Ferguson says.

Exposure to domestic violence, whether as a victim or witness, can lead to symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, including intrusive thoughts, nightmares, flashbacks and severe anxiety. Moreover, children exposed to domestic abuse are at risk of [adverse childhood experiences](#) (ACEs), which can cause significant emotional and physical harm. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1 in 6 adults has experienced four or more types of ACEs. ACEs are responsible for five of the 10 top leading causes of death.

To break the cycle of abuse, seeking resources from FAP or Army Community Service (ACS) before abuse occurs is crucial. There are many ways we can prevent abuse, such as seeking counseling services, using available childcare services and educating oneself about the signs of healthy and unhealthy relationships. Juarez says, "We must address domestic violence and abuse before it starts. Building healthy relationships early on is key to prevention. All of us must be united to end domestic violence and child abuse."

Domestic violence is a complex issue with far-reaching consequences, extending beyond its immediate victims. Intergenerational trauma underscores the importance of addressing abuse not only for individuals but also for future generations. FAP plays a central role in preventing and addressing domestic abuse within the Army community. By understanding the potential impact of ACEs and the unique challenges that military Families face, we can work to break the cycle of abuse and build healthier relationships for our community.

If you or someone you know is experiencing domestic abuse, reach out to your installation Family Advocacy Program. You can also contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 800-799-7233 or visit <https://www.thehotline.org/>. The DOD Safe Helpline is also available at 877-995-5247 or <https://safehelpline.org/> for support and to report sexual assault. The Army provides resources like the [Special Victims' Counsel/ Victims' Legal Counsel](#) and the [Office of Special Trial Counsel](#) to assist victims seeking legal action against those who commit acts of violence, maintaining confidentiality and offering legal guidance throughout the process.

**"We must address domestic violence and abuse before it starts. Building healthy relationships early on is key to prevention. All of us must be united to end domestic violence and child abuse."**

— Tanya Juarez, FAP manager at Headquarters, Department of the Army

## Partnerships for Well-Being *DIRECTOR'S COLUMN Continued from page 2*

which allows Soldiers, Army Civilians and Family members to set aside \$5,000 per year for childcare, day care, summer camp, elder care and other dependent care requirements. This benefit, already available to Army Civilians, allows Soldiers to better manage their dependent care funds through pretax dollars. Go to [financialfrontline.org](http://financialfrontline.org) for additional information.

This month, we're highlighting the critical work of our Family Advocacy Program in fostering healthier relationships and preventing violence within a domestic relationship. October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month, and this year's Army theme is "United Against Domestic Abuse: Breaking the Silence." Read more about the Army's efforts to strengthen Families and reduce intimate partner violence on page 1.

Also, DPRR is partnering with the United States Military Academy on the National Discussion on

Sexual Assault at America's Colleges, Universities and Military Service Academies. The event will take place on Oct. 24 at West Point, New York, and virtually. The event features thought leaders from academia, the Army and the DOD and reconfirms the Army's and USMA's commitment to the prevention of sexual violence on military and civilian campuses across the country.

As we head into the winter months, the holiday season and pending winter permanent changes of station may result in additional stressors and opportunities to strengthen social connections, a key protective factor in reducing harmful behaviors. Be on the lookout for awareness materials highlighting Military Family Appreciation Month in November and our Winter Resilience social media campaign. These initiatives are designed to highlight Army efforts to build healthier communities, buffer against stressors, facilitate engagement and encourage

help-seeking behaviors.

Since becoming director of DPRR, I've had the opportunity to visit with some of the amazing people in the field who are providing programs, services and other support to the Army team across the globe. Those folks include the cadre at the Army SHARP Academy at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and the staff at the R2 Performance Center at Fort Carson, Colorado.

It was a pleasure meeting and learning about the incredible contributions of these team members to the overall DPRR mission. I look forward to meeting more of our extended DPRR family in the months to come.

Thank you for all that you do in support of DPRR's mission, our Soldiers, Army Civilians and Family members. Your support is greatly appreciated!

Dee Geise, DPRR Director



## A Soldier's Life: Maintaining a High Quality of Living

By Mavia Hanson, Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness

"We believe that Soldiers and their Families are entitled to the same quality of life as is afforded the Americans they are pledged to defend, and that's why we're working every day as their advocate to make that a reality," says Dee Geise, the Director of the Army's G-9 Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness.

The Army's number one priority is Soldiers and their well-being. That's why four years ago the secretary and chief of staff of the Army directed the creation of the Quality-of-Life Task Force. The task force's charter was just renewed for another three years this past March.

The task force's mission is to holistically review the full range of Army care, support and enrichment programs, with an initial emphasis on housing, health care, childcare, spouse employment, PCS moves, and support and resilience. The Army is taking care of military Families so Soldiers can take care of the mission.

Geise shared that the core pillars making up a high-quality life for Soldiers are a multidimensional, multi-domain concept that looks at the standard of health, comfort and happiness by an individual group or individuals.

**"Quality and affordable childcare is necessary to allow Soldiers to focus on their mission without worrying about the safety and security of their children."**

— Dee Geise, Director, Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness

"Broadly speaking, the domains such as health, housing, employment, schools and neighborhoods are important to quality of life, but so are the aspects of spirituality, relationships and one's personal values and beliefs—so it is a complex subject," says Geise.

"I think we are absolutely focusing on the right pillars of housing, healthcare, childcare, spouse employment and PCS moves. As we move into the next three years, we will incorporate those other aspects, including social services, financial readiness, support for Families with special needs, finances, etc.," says Geise.

So, what are some of the correlates to achieving optimal quality of life in the Army?

"Quality and affordable childcare is necessary to allow Soldiers to focus on their mission without worrying about the safety and security of their children," says Geise. "Childcare also plays an important role in spouse employment and that leads to financial security. So that one program is

such an important puzzle piece to quality of life and overall readiness."

Geise says the Army is trying to recruit and retain more child and youth care professionals by enhancing pay and staffing childcare providers.

"We've increased entry-level, direct childcare staff compensation from \$16.70 to \$17.39," Geise says, "and our staffing for direct care is currently at 76 percent across the force. As we continue to build more CDCs, they will fill a critical need for parents and provide more job opportunities for providers, especially military spouses."

Another important correlate to quality of life happens during a PCS move. "We know this is typically a very stressful time for Soldiers and Families, so investing and improving the move process is paramount," says Geise.

But there is also a link to spouse employment, because as a Soldier and Family move, the spouse often must stop working and find new employment.

"It is important we have resources on both sides of the move to help make this transition as easy as possible," she adds. "The goal is to ensure Soldiers are aware and have access to all resources at their disposal so they and their Families can thrive."

One of the initiatives the Army introduced to assist military spouses is the Civilian Employment Assignment Tool, or CEAT.

"CEAT enables current non-appropriated fund employees to voluntarily request a noncompetitive transfer from one Army installation to another where the same position is available," says Geise. "This is very important for our child and youth program professionals."

According to Geise, the Army is also increasing readiness by implementing innovative initiatives to increase spouse employment opportunities throughout their Soldier's military career. The Army is working through the DOD's Military Spouse Employment Partnership to connect military spouses to over 610 U.S. employers committed to recruiting, hiring, promoting and retaining military spouses.

Armed with the knowledge of what makes for a high-quality life and the obstacles that prevent Soldiers from achieving it, many Army members may wonder where that leaves them for next steps.

"Everyone has a standard of quality of life, but it is different for everyone, and it changes over time," she says. "I think people would agree that a person's measure of the quality of their life at 20 is much different than it is at 40 or 50. It's not necessarily better or worse, but it is different.

"Understanding that quality-of-life aspects may change over time is the first step in addressing



In August, the U.S. Army showed its commitment to improving quality of life across the three components by expanding access to quality childcare by establishing a childcare pilot program aimed at improving access for Army Reserve members and their Families.

obstacles that may get in your way."

Geise says, "One of the common obstacles that I hear all the time is awareness and knowledge of available programs and services. The Army provides a lot of great resources for our Soldiers and Families, but I so often hear, 'I wish I would have known about that when I was a private' or, 'I wish I would have taken advantage of that earlier.'"

That is why the Quality-of-Life Task Force takes advantage of technology with the following resources:

- **The Digital Garrison app:**
  - o Provides facility and quality-of-life services specific to each garrison. It puts real-time installation information in everyone's pocket.
  - o Is customizable to meet individual needs and includes an installation directory, gate locations/hours, fitness and recreation options, shopping, weather, event information and more.
  - o Features push notifications for emergencies where installation officials can send notifications.
- **My Army PCS app:**
  - o Is a knowledge-based app designed to enhance the relocation experience.
  - o Is an organized hub of information on entitlements, types of moves, how to plan/schedule a move, claims, etc.
  - o Helps educate users regarding allowances and responsibilities in the event a claim for loss and/or damage needs to be filed.
- **Advancements in virtual health**
  - o Virtual health allows patients to connect to a medical provider no matter where they are.

These are just a few of the ways the Quality-of-Life Task Force brings together different efforts to improve personal readiness and quality of life.

To learn more about quality-of-life resources and programs, visit QOL Task Force [here](#).



## It Takes an Army Village to Support Military Kids

By Kim Ferraro, Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness

Growing up in a military Family is exciting: living in different parts of the country and exotic locales around the globe, meeting people of diverse backgrounds, seeing your parents doing a heroic job. But it has significant drawbacks, too: moving frequently, being in a regular cycle of making friends and then separating from them, and losing access to certain freedoms of the ordinary world. That's why it is paramount that kids of all ages get the social and emotional support they need to thrive as they go through different life stages in the atypical environment of a military base.

Like all parents, service members struggle to find enough time to spend with their kids while working in demanding careers, says Kristy Trahan, a program analyst for the Army's Child, Youth and School (CYS) Services. But they have the added burden of long deployments away from their children, who worry about them suffering physical harm or dying in the line of duty. To make parenting easier for Soldiers, the Army offers wide-ranging resources, Trahan says. She cites CYS offerings that keep kids engaged, such as free youth centers, with features including a technology lab and homework assistance, and programs centered on STEM (science, technology, engineering and math), leadership, arts and culture, and health. "Our older students have peer-support groups in schools with highly connected military student populations [and] youth centers on installations. For our youngest students, Sesame Street has excellent resources to support Families who may have a member raising their child while they're deployed. Those resources include separation, staying connected while apart and reconnecting upon return."

Parents can make the transition to new surroundings easier—and even something for kids to be enthusiastic about—by exploring neighborhoods near the base with them, suggests Patricia Ewen, a school support specialist with the Department of the Army. "Each community has something unique to offer—fresh peaches in Georgia, surfing lessons in Hawaii, Christmas markets in Germany, languages, architecture, music, food, historical and cultural sites. It's important that military-connected children see themselves as children first, living in a military-connected Family where their parent happens to be a Soldier and they relocate. From there, children learn they're part of a family, a bigger family and a community."

Xavier Branch, 18, a student at the Fort Campbell Bastogne Teen Center, in Kentucky, has clearly flourished in the demanding Army-base atmosphere, having earned the title of Midwest



Xavier Branch was recognized in a ceremony at the Grand Hyatt in Washington, D.C., and named the BGCA 2023 Military Youth of the Year. He is from the USAG Fort Campbell Bastogne Teen Center.

Military Youth of the Year in the Boys & Girls Club of America's regional competition. Branch, who first moved to Fort Campbell at age 6 and returned four years ago, also spent two years at Kadena Air Base, in Japan.

Among the rewards of military life he mentions is the diversity of people and cultures. "My time at Kadena exposed me to a new world," he says—recalling jaunts to cities around Japan, France, Singapore, China and Puerto Rico—"while my time at Fort Campbell helped me learn the importance of community, especially my time at Taylor Youth Center." But he admits that getting used to a different language and culture is tough, remembering his introduction to Japan: "Experiencing new foods and learning new cultural expectations required some time." As a result, he tries to be a friendly guide to kids who join the culture of Fort Campbell. "I am committed to helping youth feel at home at Taylor Youth Center. I encourage them to be themselves. The center is a no-judgment zone that gave me a feeling of freedom, which I now promote and share with prospective members." Branch is also exuberant about another lifeline that he readily throws out to newcomers: Homework Club. "It kept me focused academically and provided me with an opportunity to mentor younger members who needed to sharpen their focus in a relaxing, fun and welcoming environment."

Despite plentiful avenues of support, some kids

still have trouble adjusting to the turbulence of military-Family life. Lt. Col. Melissa Boyd, a clinical psychologist at the Defense Centers for Public Health-Aberdeen, says: "Understanding emotions plays a major part in a child's ability to cope and regulate stressors. Because military children often experience unique stressors, recognizing the effects of stress can be challenging and can subsequently impact asking a parent for help with managing what they are experiencing." Boyd points to signs of distress parents should watch for, such as sudden changes in behavior, eating habits and sleeping patterns; physical symptoms like headaches and stomachaches; and a drop in grades.

Trahan advises: "Carve out space and time to connect with your teen. During a PCS move, it can get hectic. Take time to check in with your teen within a few days of arrival, again at about a week or two, and again at a month. Listen for signs of improvement or where they may be struggling to engage. This is where a parent can help open doors and make others—teachers, counselors—aware of a need to support."

As Branch notes, "Moving is one of the hardest things to deal with. Even when a move is expected, it is still a challenge for military youth." His advice? View each new place as an opportunity to acquire more friends, unique experiences and life skills—wise words we should all heed.



# DPRR

DIRECTORATE OF PREVENTION, RESILIENCE AND READINESS

OCTOBER 2023

## HAIL AND FAREWELL

We invite the DPRR community to join us in welcoming new members to DPRR headquarters. Congratulations to current members on taking new positions and a fond farewell to outgoing members departing the directorate.

### Hail

- Col. Marcus Matthews, Deputy Director for Operations
- Lt. Col. Xavier Allen, Plans and Operations Division Chief
- Lt. Col. Lucas Harris, Plans and Operations Division

### Farewell

- April Plumley, Family Advocacy Program
- Diane Osborne, SHARP (retired after 39 years of federal service)
- Nicole Roberts, SHARP
- Regina Moore, SHARP
- Dr. Eric Standard, Child and Youth Services



## UPCOMING EVENTS

### OCTOBER

#### National Discussion on Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment at America's Colleges, Universities and Military Service Academies

Oct. 24: The 2023 National Discussion brings together experts from public, private and government-run educational institutions to understand and address the challenges of eliminating sexual assault and sexual harassment on college and university campuses across the nation.

**Location:** West Point, N.Y. **Learn more:** [https://www.westpoint.edu/nd2023?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=govdelivery](https://www.westpoint.edu/nd2023?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery)

### NOVEMBER

#### American Public Health Association Conference

Nov. 12-15: "Creating the Healthiest Nation: Overcoming Social and Ethical Challenges" is the theme of the APHA annual conference, at which participants will explore ways to address social and ethical injustices.

**Location:** Atlanta, Georgia. **Learn more:** <https://www.apha.org/Events-and-Meetings/Annual>

#### National Association for Behavioral Intervention and Threat Assessment

Nov. 12-17: This conference will give professionals insights into the field of behavioral intervention, threat assessment and case management.

**Location:** West Palm Beach, Fla. **Learn more:** <https://www.nabita.org/conferences/15th-annual-nabita-annual-conference/>

### DECEMBER

#### Army Profession Forum

Dec. 6-7: The APF gives senior leaders the opportunity to discuss topics relevant to military professionals. **Location:** Alexandria, Va.



## The Lethal Means Safety Toolkit is available for Soldiers, Families and Civilians.

To learn more visit [https://www.armyresilience.army.mil/suicide-prevention/pages/pdf/Lethal%20Means%20Safety%20Toolkit\\_FINAL\\_25%20Aug%2023.pdf](https://www.armyresilience.army.mil/suicide-prevention/pages/pdf/Lethal%20Means%20Safety%20Toolkit_FINAL_25%20Aug%2023.pdf).

## TOP-PERFORMING POSTS

## SOCIAL MEDIA UPDATE

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

### FACEBOOK



Impressions: 2,969

### TWITTER



Impressions: 879

### INSTAGRAM



Impressions: 456

### LINKEDIN



Impressions: 89

## Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness

### DPRR COMMUNITYLINK

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