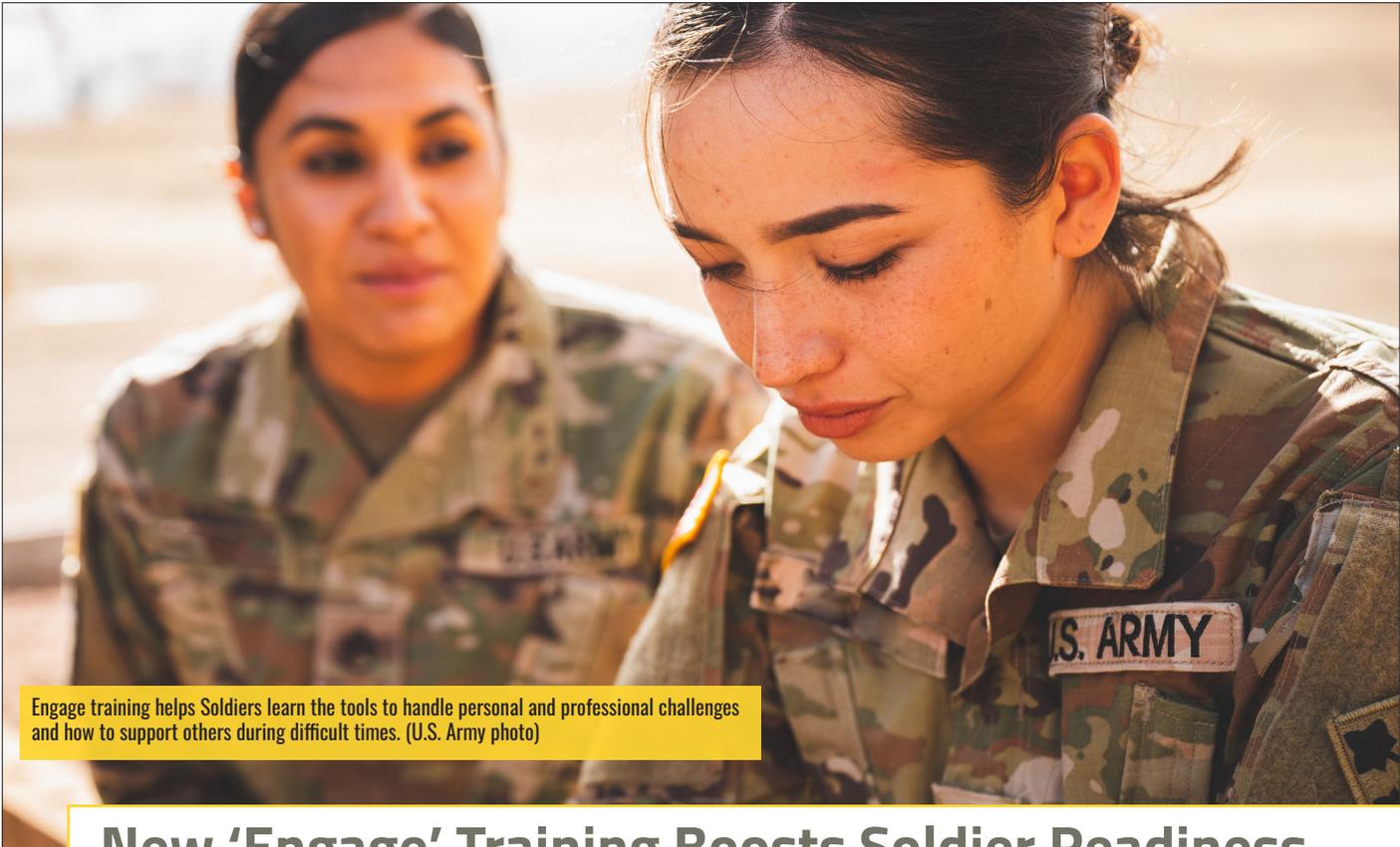




DPRR

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



Engage training helps Soldiers learn the tools to handle personal and professional challenges and how to support others during difficult times. (U.S. Army photo)

New 'Engage' Training Boosts Soldier Readiness

By Tara Davis, Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness

The Army's R2 strategy emphasizes readiness and trust-building. Among its trainings, Engage stands out, teaching Soldiers leadership skills and how to handle personal and professional challenges. Based on extensive research, the training has been updated to focus on real-life scenarios and practical skills, emphasizing the importance of supporting one another during difficult times.

Engage training aims to develop Soldiers' leadership skills and confidence in handling professional and personal confrontations. Engage is based on 50 years of bystander intervention and prosocial behavior (e.g., helping others, kindness) research. "Engage is a workshop that focuses on taking personal responsibility to intervene with friends, Family members or fellow Soldiers before a problem persists or issues escalate," says Liz Beaubrook, R2 curriculum developer. "The training is structured around the three components of Engage: I am aware, I am responsible, and I have a plan."

The training is helpful in cultivating both individual and institutional skills. For the individual, Engage sessions encourage Soldiers to improve their one-on-one communication, to practice confrontations and to recognize their duty to be aware, responsible and have a plan for when a peer doesn't follow Army procedures or is acting out inappropriately. The training boosts institutional skills by fostering trust among Soldiers through strengthening their social connections and encouraging everyone to interact with one another.

"Engage offers crucial prosocial strategies that significantly enhance Soldiers' ability to serve as reliable battle buddies. By teaching them to step up, stand in and make informed decisions when facing potentially hazardous situations, Engage equips Soldiers with essential skills that can make a vital difference," says Leonard Keatts III, an R2 performance expert and Army veteran. "Those who undergo this training undoubtedly gain an advantage over those who do not, as they are better prepared to navigate

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DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

Whether this is your first time relocating or you're a seasoned pro, a permanent change of station is a stressful life event. As you plan and carry out your move, you'll need strategies to manage the practical aspects of moving as well as the ways in which this major life change may affect your resilience.

Practically, you'll need to organize your move and prepare your finances. Know the [resources available for PCS](#):

- Take advantage of [free financial counseling](#) when planning your move. Army Emergency Relief can provide [grants and interest-free loans](#) to relieve financial stress.
- Ensure you have the information needed for [moving your personal belongings](#).

Spouses and children may also struggle with a move, but the Army offers Families [benefits](#) and [resources](#) to help with relocation:

- Spouses can use the career [benefits](#) the Army provides to find [employment](#) at their new location.
- Talk to a military [school liaison](#) to ensure your children are set up for success at a new school.

Finally, it's important to consider the [stress](#) you and your Family will be under during the move and after you relocate. Starting over at a place where you don't know anyone can be lonely for Soldiers as well as spouses and children. While you can use social media to stay in touch with old friends, it is important to also build new relationships:

- Connect with people through shared interests like meet-up groups, volunteering, [MWR](#) or [BOSS](#). Ensure your kids are connected to their

See **DIRECTOR'S COLUMN** on page 10

Strengthening Suicide Prevention: Training Initiatives in the Army

By *Damenica McAlister and Jennika Walton*

Suicide remains a pressing concern within the military community, demanding continuous efforts to enhance prevention strategies and support systems. Among these efforts, training plays a pivotal role in equipping Army personnel with the skills and knowledge necessary to identify risk factors, intervene effectively, and provide support to those in need. The Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness continues to make progress in suicide prevention training efforts, including implementing recommendations provided by the Suicide Prevention and Response Independent Review Committee's 2022 [Report](#).

The committee made several recommendations to the services to improve training efforts, such as:

- Modernizing suicide prevention education.
- Tailoring content to different audiences.
- Delivering training in small groups.
- Varying duration and frequency.
- Offering a variety of training topics to increase engagement.

DPRR prioritizes Soldier and Family support, focusing on genuine care and adhering to the voices of our service members. DRRR has remained steadfast in its commitment to educating Soldiers on prevention skills and concepts and will continue to consult with commanders to assess the gaps in training topics, enhance training with qualified facilitators, and collaborate with researchers to deliver interactive training content.

The latest Army Suicide Prevention Regulation ([AR 600-92](#)) outlines suicide prevention training objectives and emphasizes learning about suicide-related behaviors, stressors, intervention skills and postvention principles. The regulation mandates Ask, Care, Escort as the standard training, which includes a 30-minute base module that covers suicide intervention skills and an additional 30-minute module that commanders can select to tailor suicide prevention training to the needs of their units. Commanders can choose from four new modules: Active Listening, Fighting Stigma, Practicing ACE and Lethal Means Safety, the last of which is still in development.

The regulation also requires that leaders E-5 and above and DA Civilian supervisors are trained in the first tier of the eight-hour Ask, Care, Escort - Suicide Intervention course. It aims to teach attendees how to recognize

early suicide warning signs, combat stigma related to disclosure and seeking help, utilize resources, understand risk and protective factors, and support reintegration and postvention following a suicide loss or attempt. Additional ACE-SI training includes the second tier, which is a Train-the-Trainer model. Tier 2 is a 16-hour course for leaders and prevention professionals that includes the Tier 1 training along with a module focused on small-group facilitation practice. Successful completion involves a teach-back to certify attendees for conducting ACE-SI Tier 1 training.

Trainers are key to ensuring training is effective and well-received by attendees. As such, commanders play an important role in ensuring training effectiveness by vetting instructors. Eligible trainers ranked E-6 to E-8, CW2 to CW3, and O-2 to O-4 must embody key attributes and traits essential for effective training and leadership. Instructors should:

- Be attentive and engaging.
- Be empathetic.
- Be motivated.
- Be flexible and open minded.
- Have positive beliefs about behavioral health and prevention.
- Have a desire to train and develop others.
- Demonstrate compassionate leadership.
- Display an active involvement in Soldiers' lives.

There are misconceptions that suicide prevention training increases thoughts of suicide, but this is untrue. Such training focuses on fostering empathy, understanding and effective intervention strategies, which can ultimately reduce suicidal ideation by promoting help-seeking behaviors and providing support to those in need. It is important to note that subject matter experts hold a firm stance against units implementing suicide prevention training as a postvention response. While it's valuable for proactive measures, it's not appropriate or effective as a reactive response to suicide attempts or death-by-suicide. [Postvention actions](#) should instead focus on immediate support, grief counseling, community building and other strategies aimed at healing and preventing further harm within the affected unit.

For more information on training, visit, [Army Suicide Prevention Program: Suicide Prevention Training and Education](#).

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TOTAL FORCE FITNESS BOOSTS JOB PERFORMANCE



Department of Defense Releases 2023 Annual Report

By U.S. Department of Defense

The DOD released the Fiscal Year 2023 DOD Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military May 16.

This year's annual report shows that the estimated prevalence of sexual assault and harassment declined in the active force, compared with levels last measured in 2021. This is the first time in nearly 10 years that the DOD has seen a decrease in sexual assault prevalence. The report also shows that a greater share of service members reported their incidents of sexual assault and sexual harassment to a DOD authority, which the department says is encouraging.

"Since Secretary Austin's first day on the job, he has made countering sexual assault and harassment a top priority," says Elizabeth Foster, the executive director of the Office of Force Resiliency. "The progress highlighted by this year's report shows the impact of the department's unprecedented efforts and investments. We are

cautiously optimistic that our work to counter these problematic behaviors is having the intended effect. However, to see enduring change take hold, we must sustain our efforts to implement the reforms and initiatives approved by the secretary."

The report includes sexual assault and sexual harassment estimated prevalence data from the 2023 Workplace and Gender Relations Survey of Military Members, sexual assault data, and summarizes efforts to execute secretary of defense and Congressionally-directed sexual assault prevention and response reforms, including the Independent Review Commission on Sexual Assault in the Military.

"In 2023, about 7,000 fewer service members experienced the crime of sexual assault than in 2021," says Dr. Nate Galbreath, the acting director of the DOD Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office. "Progress like this is achievable when leaders align policy, resourcing and the will to

act collectively in the best interest of our people and our nation. It is imperative that this forward momentum continue."

The department continues focusing on expanding integrated prevention initiatives, improving climate and culture, reforming the military justice process and enhancing victim assistance.

In addition to the FY 2023 Annual Report, DOD also released the Annual Report on Sexual Harassment and Violence at the Military Service Academies, Academic Program Year 2022–2023. The department found that the MSAs are in compliance with relevant law and policy.

The FY 2023 Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military, the Annual Report on Sexual Harassment and Violence at the Military Service Academies, Academic Program Year 2022–2023, and fact sheets with the topline results are available at <https://www.sapr.mil/>.



The DOD recently adjusted the codeine level threshold in the Military Personnel Drug Abuse Testing Program to reduce false positives from consuming foods with poppy seeds. (U.S. Army photo)

Department of Defense Changes Codeine Cutoff Rate

By Chester Curtis, Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness

On March 4, the Defense Department's Military Personnel Drug Abuse Testing Program raised the codeine cutoff rate from 2,000 ng/mL of codeine to 4,000 ng/mL to mitigate false positive results for military service members.

Drug test cutoff levels are set measurement thresholds that determine if a test specimen is positive or negative for a specific controlled substance. For oral fluid or urine drug tests, cutoff levels are expressed using nanograms (ng) per milliliter (mL).

According to a study in the Journal of Analytical Toxicology, poppy seeds used in food products are derived from the opium-producing poppy. Consumption of food products containing poppy seeds—such as poppy seed cakes, cookies, muffins and flatbreads—can result in opiate-positive urine drug test results and may pose challenges in distinguishing poppy seed

consumption from opiate use.

The seeds themselves do not contain opiates, but the latex of the poppy seed contains numerous alkaloids, including morphine and codeine, and the seeds may be contaminated with them via the poppy latex during the harvesting process.

Codeine is a pain reliever that is related to morphine, is addictive and has the potential to be misused.

The Military Personnel Drug Abuse Testing Program suspended codeine reporting on Jan. 20, 2023, following concerns that a substantially lower amount of poppy seed consumption could result in a positive codeine urinalysis.

A listing of cutoff concentrations from the program includes the addition of a reflex screening test for thebaine, an opioid produced by the poppy plant that can be used as a urinary marker of

poppy seed ingestion. Specimens containing 4,000 ng/mL to 10,000 ng/mL of codeine will be reported as negative if thebaine is also present at a concentration of 5 ng/mL or greater. Since Jan. 20, 2023, all pending codeine-positive results are reported based on the new codeine cutoff and thebaine reflex screen.

"These changes will significantly reduce the risk of a codeine-positive result from normal consumption of food products containing poppy seeds," says Carolyn Massiah, substance misuse specialist with the Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness.

While the military drug testing program has implemented measures to distinguish poppy seed ingestion from codeine misuse, including raising the drug cutoff rate for codeine, avoiding foods containing poppy seeds remains the best policy.

ARMY OBSERVES SAAPM 2024

ATEC Hosts Spoken Word Event in Honor of Denim Day

ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Maryland—Hosted by the U.S. Army Test and Evaluation Command, the April 24 SAAPM Spoken Word and Denim Day event at Mallett Training Facility featured theatrical readings of several poems, during which the audience participated.

JBLM Expeditionary Sustainment Command Hosts Its Story Event

FORT LEWIS, Washington—Joint Base Lewis–McChord hosted a powerful exhibition, “Their Story,” to commemorate Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month. Articles of clothing lined a room in a clothesline display next to anonymous stories of sexual assault. Each outfit represented a person, each story was an event, and the exhibit brought a voice to every tale.



Fort George G. Meade Amazing Race

FORT MEADE, Maryland—The 780th Military Intelligence Brigade and Fort Meade hosted a SHARP Amazing Race to educate the community during Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month. Multiple unit teams had two hours to reach seven stations over three miles.



Each year in April, Army installations around the globe observe Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month. This year’s theme—“Change Through Unity: Empower. Protect. Prevent.”—aims to get Army members to work together on eliminating sexual assault and sexual harassment by cultivating a respectful culture for all and by understanding the critical role that each person plays in protecting and supporting others.

ASAP/SHARP Prevention 5K Color Runs in Bavaria

TOWER BARRACKS, Germany—U.S. Army Garrison Bavaria’s Army Substance Abuse Program and Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention program teamed up to host four Prevention 5K Color Runs in April in recognition of Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month. Held at Garmisch, Rose Barracks and Tower Barracks, the 5K events drew 1,900 participants.

Fort Knox Soldiers Dress Down for Denim Day

FORT KNOX, Kentucky—Members of the 1st Theater Sustainment Command donned jeans and SAAPM shirts for Denim Day, an annual worldwide event that draws attention to harmful behaviors and attitudes about sexual violence. Spc. Nadir Bimbo walked away with an award for his creatively decorated jeans.



593rd Expeditionary Sustainment Command Showcases Powerful SHARP Exhibit

FORT LEWIS, Washington—Soldiers are immersed in this exhibition featuring ambient music, poetry and clothing that represent the stories of sexual assault survivors.



AROUND THE FORCE

- ▶ SHARP
- ▶ MWR
- ▶ FAP
- ▶ MRT-PE



Army SHARP Academy SARC/VA Career Course Graduation Awardees

FORT LEAVENWORTH, Kansas—On April 5, the Army SHARP Academy graduated 29 students from the SARC/VA Career Course. During each course graduation ceremony, individuals were recognized by the academy staff and their peers for their exceptional performance. Col. Travis Jacobs, director for the SHARP Academy, personally recognized each recipient from Class 24-003. Sgt. 1st Class Joseph Morrissey, U.S. Army Forces Command, Fort Liberty, North Carolina, received the Academic Excellence Award and Ms. Chaylah Francis, INCOM, Fort Meade, Maryland, received the Jay Lee Hoffman Spirit Award. (U.S. Army photo)



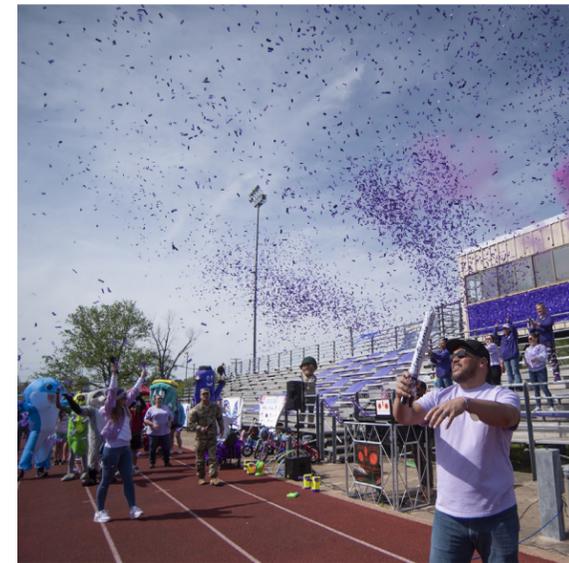
Spiritual Lunch for Students at 7th US Army Training Command Noncommissioned Officer Academy

GRAFENWÖHR, Germany—On April 30, the 7th U.S. Army Training Command Noncommissioned Officer Academy hosted a Spiritual Lunch for Basic Leader Course Cycle 06-24. This initiative, aimed at enhancing future leaders' overall health and fitness, gathered 65 BLC students to listen to Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Lowthian and Chaplain (Maj.) Speight, 7th ATC. Their 30-minute message focused on attendees' leadership growth by blending modern knowledge with insights on the BLC curriculum. The Spiritual Lunch reinforced the NCO Academy's commitment to producing well-rounded, disciplined and confident leaders capable of building cohesive teams and overcoming challenges. By integrating spiritual components into leadership development, the NCO Academy fosters a holistic growth environment. (Photo courtesy of Sgt. 1st Class Daniel Pureco)



Mojave Reception and Integration Program Pilot Launch

FORT IRWIN, California—Fort Irwin and the National Training Center launched the Mojave Reception and Integration Program Pilot. This program was designed to provide an immediate connection among newly arrived Soldiers and their Families, the Fort Irwin Community and Soldier support agencies. Soldiers received a variety of interactive training instruction from the chaplain, military family life counselor and Ready and Resilient performance experts. The training is designed to enhance Soldiers' coping skills and resilience. Agencies from across Fort Irwin participated in a resource fair, giving Soldiers the opportunity to have informal discussions with each representative. (U.S. Army photo)



Palooza Provides Fort Leonard Wood Family Fun

FORT LEONARD WOOD, Missouri—On April 20, Fort Leonard Wood hosted MOMC-Palooza, one of its largest events during the Month of the Military Child. This marks the second year the event was hosted at Gerlach Field, organized by the Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation. The event featured participants from 70 Fort Leonard Wood organizations, offering games, food trucks, static military vehicle displays and operating robots. (Photo courtesy of Master Sgt. Nolayan Herdege)



Fort Jackson Family Advocacy Program Participates in Family Fun Fair

COLUMBIA, South Carolina—The Fort Jackson Family Advocacy Program contributed to the Family Fun Fair by offering program materials and resources to Soldiers and their Families. Attendees had the opportunity to spin a wheel, answer questions about FAP and receive a prize. (U.S. Army photo)



Mindsets Leadership Development Training

FORT LEONARD WOOD, Missouri—Capt. Michael Taylor (left), assistant professor of military science at the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs, and Capt. Justin Hawkins, assistant professor of military science at the University of Colorado, Boulder, participate in a "handcuff" exercise as part of their leadership development training. (U.S. Army photo)



Pinwheels to Promote Prevention of Child Abuse

CAMP ZAMA, Japan—The Army Family Advocacy Program and Army Community Service at Camp Zama hosted a pinwheel-planting event at the Sagamiara Family Housing Area Library to raise awareness of their services and to support Child Abuse Prevention Month. Families enjoyed games and crafts and were encouraged to wear blue on Fridays. Both programs also held game nights to foster connections among Army Families. (U.S. Army photo)



National Guard Expands Child Care Pilot Program

By Sgt. 1st Class Zach Sheely, National Guard Bureau

Army Guardsmen in 20 states now have access to drill-weekend child care after the National Guard's most senior leader signed an agreement with public partners expanding a child care Intergovernmental Support Agreement pilot program.

Army Gen. Daniel Hokanson, chief of the National Guard Bureau, joined Cara Calvin-McFerren, mayor pro tem of West Liberty, Iowa, and Jessica Chang, the chief executive officer of Upwards, a national network of day care and child care programs, for the signing, which took place at a Pentagon ceremony on May 13.

"It is our people—our Soldiers and Airmen—who serve on the front lines, preserving peace and security throughout the world," Hokanson said. "It is our people who respond to disasters in our communities, saving lives and restoring hope in the face of devastation. And it is our people who uphold our American values—democracy, opportunity and the rule of law—and model those values for our allies and partners around the world."

He continued: "But no one who serves in uniform serves alone. Our service is only possible with the support of our beloved Families, who know both the pride and sacrifice of serving our nation."

The Army National Guard Weekend Drill Child Care program enhances unit readiness, supports retention, alleviates financial burdens and harmonizes military commitments with parental responsibilities.

The program provides child care to the dependent children of married Soldiers with spouses working on drill weekends, Families with both parents serving in the Guard, and single Soldiers. The goals are to make the balancing act between service obligations and Family life more manageable and to remove a potential barrier to enlistment and retention.

"Our National Guard Families maintain an intricate balance: a civilian life, a civilian career and military service," Hokanson said. "Complicating this balancing act is the community-based nature of our National Guard. While our Guardsmen live in nearly every zip code, they aren't like active-duty military Families who live on or near a base with a built-in support network. In fact, they might be the only family in their community who serves."

This pilot program pairs the Army National Guard with West Liberty, Iowa, and Upwards to help Guard Families attain stability.

"The partnership with the U.S. Army, the National Guard, the Department of Defense and Upwards

is a valuable resource to help our military men and women," Calvin-McFerren said. "I would like to thank all for choosing West Liberty, Iowa, to join in this innovative program and support the most vital of our country's military Families."

The following states are participating in the pilot program: Arkansas, Colorado, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Ohio, Oregon, Vermont, Virginia, Washington and Wisconsin.

The National Guard is the primary combat reserve of the Army and the Air Force, delivering 20% of the joint force staffing structure.

About 430,000 citizen-Soldiers and -Airmen are in the National Guard. On any given day, about 25,000 are on duty across every overseas combatant command, with another 20,000 typically supporting domestic and steady-state operations.

"When we support our National Guard Families, we support the missions they make possible," Hokanson said. "In taking care of our people, and taking care of their Families, we help them keep our National Guard's promise to the nation—a promise to be 'Always ready, always there.'"

Great Teams Program Enriches Groups That Work Together

By Cynthia Bell, Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness

Teams that work together regularly can benefit from the Great Teams Workshop to help them develop, enhance or solidify their team culture. The discussion-based workshop engages Soldiers and leaders in a collaborative review that examines the group's shared philosophy, vision, values and standards. The result is a more cohesive and well-led team with a focused plan of action for working together.

The Great Teams Workshop is part of the [R2 program](#), which aligns with the Army's strategy for strengthening individual and unit personal readiness and fostering a culture of trust. Great Teams examines concrete experiences of fellow team members so they can build connections, understand their teammates better and develop trusting relationships.

"The Great Teams workshop," says Katie Strokis, master resilience trainer-performance expert at Magellan Federal, R2 Performance Center, Fort Sill, Oklahoma, "is a unique opportunity for teams to come together and take ownership over designing the culture that they want for their organization,"

Using the Great Teams Workshop Facilitator Guide, a performance expert from an R2 Performance Center leads discussions about participants'

past experiences and guides the teams through exercises to help them agree upon key characteristics, define their values and determine how the team will operate.

Strokis explains that many teams understand the importance of trust and respect for their success. In the Great Teams Workshop, members discuss the meaning of these qualities and learn how to be accountable for upholding them within their team. And upon completing the workshop, participants will have a better understanding of team dynamics and a clear expectation of team function. As a result, higher levels of accountability to team standards and values are achieved post-workshop.

Great Teams is especially important to military teams, which are constantly gaining and losing members, so the culture of a team can change along with the personnel. According to Strokis, through the Great Teams workshop, members have an active role in designing their culture and laying the groundwork for members to connect over shared values. As a result, teams are more connected and satisfied with their work.

The Great Teams workshops are offered exclusively through the R2 Performance Centers and participants have access to all available

resources. Although R2 performance experts have had conversations and conducted similar exercises for many years, the Great Teams program has operated in its current form since early 2021.

Workshops can last from four to eight hours, depending on the depth of the team's conversations. In the full-day workshop, team-building exercises allow participants to share and test their values to see how well they operate as a team. "There is even an optional final exercise where team members can decide on a team motto or creed that exemplifies and encompasses all that they decided as a group," Strokis shares.

Teams can return for follow-up sessions after the initial workshop. R2 performance experts also follow up with teams to help with implementing their action plans and suggest future opportunities for training through R2 Performance Centers.

By helping groups to identify and define shared values with teammates, the Great Teams program enables participants to optimize their work performance.

For more information, visit https://www.jbsa.mil/Portals/102/Great%20Teams%20Fact%20Sheet_26MAY2021.pdf.



Navigating Barriers for Military Spouses Working Overseas

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

One in five military spouses is unemployed—nearly four times the national unemployment rate—according to data collected independently by the [Defense Department](#) and the [Military Spouses Chamber of Commerce](#).

While many civilians can relocate to take an attractive job offer or gain notice in a more promising market, military spouses must make do where they are—no matter how remote the location or sparse the opportunities. Nearly half of military spouses (45%) consider themselves underemployed, working in professional capacities well below their education, expertise and experience.

For those accompanying their active-duty spouse on a permanent change of station to a foreign country, gainful employment is further complicated by the status of forces agreement. A SOFA defines the legal protections of Soldiers and their dependents in the country where they are stationed. The complexity of the agreement—in which the host country, the U.S. Senate and departments of Defense and State all play a part—can be daunting for military Families facing sudden financial insecurity.

Beth Conlin, chairwoman of the MSCC board, says that SOFA has been a long-standing barrier for military spouses seeking to understand, much less exercise, employment rights in foreign countries. Conlin is now part of a movement gaining steam to speak plainly about the ways SOFAs govern spousal employment in host countries.

“For decades we’ve been told (SOFA) is an obstacle to employment,” she says. “It turns out that isn’t the case; we just didn’t have the right information.”

One misconception is that military spouses must work in a foreign country under their SOFA status. But if a spouse’s employer will sponsor a work visa and can facilitate a transfer overseas, then a SOFA has no bearing on employment. Conlin encourages military spouses to check with current and prospective employers about the potential to work internationally in preparation for a PCS order.

The situation is trickier for self-employed spouses, as the legal requirements vary from one country’s SOFA to the next. The Army Community Service or Judge Advocate General’s office at the installation in the host country would have more information on how to navigate the red tape.

Conlin emphasizes that SOFA operates as a visa, granting permission to reside within the host country; contrary to another long-circulated belief, it does not affect base access, health care and other vital activities.

With the rise of remote/virtual work and an increasing dependence on dual-income households, demystifying SOFA has gained traction in and out of government. In June 2023, President Biden issued an executive order encompassing several initiatives to boost military-spouse employment. Two months later, the American Bar Association adopted a resolution urging the Defense and State departments to provide “clear restatements of the current rules” under SOFAs to make the guidance easier to follow.

“Because of that executive order,” Conlin says, “there is an office right now working on a memo detailing clear guidance so that military spouses can take this guidance to their employers and say, ‘See, the SOFA is not going to affect my ability to work. Can you support me overseas?’”



Beth Conlin,
chairwoman of the board for the
Military Spouse Chamber of Commerce

A model for what clear guidance might look like arose last year in an unlikely place—Italy, which Conlin says had been notoriously difficult about its employment policies for over a decade. An exchange of letters between Italy and the State Department outlined the types of permissible work on the Italian economy and included more than 50 frequently asked questions.

“It’s a fantastic description of how you can work while you’re in Italy,” Conlin says. “What kind of work—consulting, product selling? Can I practice law? Can I do fitness coaching? Everything about taxes, buying supplies. (It has) anything you would ever need to know about working overseas.”

The Italian breakthrough is encouraging to Conlin, whose own painful job-loss experience as a military spouse inspired a commitment to help other military Families.

“I really do appreciate the Army bringing awareness to the challenges of the SOFA,” she says. “I hope conversations like these can help remove this barrier for future military spouses as they head overseas.”

RESILIENCE
Round Up
PODCAST

Episode 19:
Feeling Listened To: Wellness Checks in the Army

Col. (P) Paul Krattiger, distinguished armor officer, and Dr. Amy Adler, senior scientist for the Center for Military Psychiatry and Neuroscience at Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, discuss what wellness checks are and how to conduct them tactfully, efficiently and effectively with Soldiers.

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

Listen in to the monthly podcast series!

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 20:
New Reforms Emphasize the Army’s Commitment to Support Sexual Assault/Sexual Harassment Victims

Col. Robert Rodrigues, acting lead special trial counsel, and Stacy Hale, SHARP Operations and Plans specialist, lead a discussion on the SHARP program restructure and how the Army will evaluate its effectiveness in preventing instances of sexual harassment and sexual assault.



Focusing on Prosocial Behaviors CURRICULUM UPDATE Continued from page 1

challenging circumstances with confidence and effectiveness.”

Engage recently went through a curriculum refresh so that it now focuses on the science of prosocial behaviors, not only crisis or bystander intervention. Although much of the content remains the same, the revised training differs in a few ways. Beaubrook says, “Engage helps to identify how we can build better, stronger bonds within our units so people are potentially more willing to ask for help and Soldiers notice the need to help sooner.”

Keatts was the instructor for the new Engage curriculum pilot at Fort Eisenhower, Georgia. He says the new focus is on real-life situations and how understanding others gives Soldiers more opportunities to build strong bonds and identify potential crises early. Keatts says, “Soldiers will get better at understanding themselves and their surroundings, communicating effectively and knowing how to help when it’s tough.”

Baubrook highlighted the real-world scenarios rather than lecture learning. Beaubrook says, “The new curriculum has a renewed emphasis on skills rather than didactic content. The new training focuses on equipping Soldiers with self- and situational-awareness skills, communication skills and strategies to overcome resistance to help.”

The components and key teachings from Engage can be used across many settings.



Engage training uses prosocial behaviors to improve connections and trust in others. (U.S. Army photo)

According to Beaubrook, Engage is like a basic training that teaches useful ideas and skills for all sorts of situations, from being proactive and helpful to handling emergencies. It covers three main parts that work in different contexts. It’s a training that helps build important skills and works well with other programs that teach specialized knowledge and skills.

Baubrook and Keatts both shared their key takeaways from the revised training, which include checking in with others, having the courage to speak up when something seems off and being intentional when you offer support to others.

Baubrook’s other takeaways are that it’s good to ask if someone seems like they might need help, even if you’re not sure, and to remember how much you can help just by being there for someone. They might need professional help sometimes, but just knowing you care can really matter.

Engage training can be tailored. Engage is a two-hour workshop that is available at select pilot locations but will soon be rolled out to the entire Army and available at all 32 R2 Performance Centers.

All Soldiers are eligible to participate in Engage training. Soldiers or units interested in receiving

this training or other R2 trainings should contact their local R2 Performance Center. For more information on Engage training, visit <https://www.armyresilience.army.mil/ard/R2/I-Want-to-Build-Unit-Cohesion.html>.

“Soldiers will get better at understanding themselves and their surroundings, communicating effectively and knowing how to help when it’s tough.”

—Leonard Keatts, III, Engage instructor

Choice Point #1: Awareness

*Do I see the alerts?
Do I accept or reject the alerts?*

Choice Point #2: Responsibility

*Do I take ownership of the situation,
acknowledging that it’s my duty to step up?*

Choice Point #3: Plan

Do I know what to do?



To learn more about this proactive model, click the image above to be taken to the Engage training fact sheet.

Using PCS Benefits for Smooth Transitions DIRECTOR'S COLUMN Continued from page 2

community through school sports or extracurricular activities.

- Despite the break in routine, look for ways you can stay physically active within your new community. Staying physically healthy can relieve stress and positively affect your mental well-being.

While PCS can be challenging, it is also an opportunity to [meet new people](#), explore new places and make a fresh start. To all leaders, supervisors and NCOs, let’s ensure we are connecting in a meaningful way with Soldiers and Families. You’re ambassadors to our force, and we need you to spread

the word about [the benefits available](#) to Soldiers and their Families. Having access to these resources can make a move smoother, ensuring our people not only cope with the stress of a move but also thrive at their new duty station. Thank you for your dedication to our Army team!

—Dee Geise, DRR Director



Army Spouses: They Don't Have Uniforms but Wear Many Hats

By Kim Ferraro, Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness

As evidenced by May's celebrations for Military Spouse Appreciation Month, it takes an Army to support our Soldiers—one composed of dedicated spouses who provide 24/7 support by handling tasks from the mundane (keeping stocked up on everyday household supplies, figuring out what's for dinner) to the monumental (overseeing each new home's setup, helping kids adjust to different communities, volunteering for countless activities and committees).

Fort Liberty, North Carolina, and Fort Belvoir, Virginia, are among the installations where spouses demonstrate why they are the best weapon in Soldiers' resilience arsenal.

With more than 51,000 service members, some 71,000 Family members plus a large contingent of retirees, Fort Liberty has a sizable number of spouses who serve the community in many ways, both through on-base activities and those in the surrounding neighborhood. Alice Stephens, Army Volunteer Corps coordinator at Fort Liberty, enumerates an impressive roster of organizations they are involved in: Army Community Service, Family Readiness Groups, youth sports programs, the blood donor center, the American Red Cross and the Armed Services YMCA. Impressively, of the close to 160,000 hours that Fort Liberty residents sacrificed to volunteering over the past year, military spouses put in the majority of that time, which saved the base community thousands of dollars, Stephens says.

Among Fort Liberty's dedicated cohort of volunteers is Kate Dempsey, of California, who is on her second stint at the base with her husband. A self-described "chronic volunteer," Dempsey is a master resilience trainer, a Fort Liberty Spouses Club board member and an instructor for Army Family Team Building—a group she says is vital to newcomers, offering classes that teach Family members the ins and outs of base culture, from basics like Army slang and how to interpret leave and earnings statements to pointers on how to find and use essential resources.

"Volunteering can be a full-time job," she says. "It is a privilege to be able to work for these



These Fort Belvoir service members and spouses nurture nature and their relationships at events like this plant exchange. (Photo courtesy of Stacie Marie Photography)

organizations. It really is about finding ways to make each community a bit better before you move on."

And there's no doubt that these selfless residents accomplish that goal.

"So many of these agencies don't have the budget to pay for the hours military-spouse volunteers put in," Dempsey says. "These organizations can't solely exist without volunteers—they would likely have to scale down services."

Fully aware of how much they depend on this nonmilitary army, Fort Liberty's leaders give spouses the VIP treatment whenever there's an opportunity, such as with May's recognition lunches and awards presentations. Other recent bonding activities for spouses ranged from the physically intense—a paintball tournament pitting teams against one another in a messy battle—to the sedate: a garden party at which attendees flexed their creative muscles by designing floral arrangements.

Over at Fort Belvoir, Brienna Pruce, of Virginia, is among the cadre of spouses who are the driving force behind many social activities.

"Fort Belvoir has the most spouse involvement I have witnessed in nearly 20 years of being in a

military Family all over the world," she says. "Our spouse network is what heavily supports most of the organizations on post that build community and bring meaningful opportunities for connection."

One activity spouses have a big hand in is Family Night, a free weekly dinner that allows Soldiers and their loved ones to get to know their neighbors. And through the chapel, many spouses volunteer for community programs. Pruce herself leads grueling physical training sessions for Soldiers ("usually painfully early in the morning," she says) and a twice-weekly yoga class—a perfect antidote to the physical and emotional stresses of military life.

But these spouses who fortify so many others need to be propped up, too, while enduring the uncertainties of a nomadic lifestyle, and so they lean on one another. Pruce relishes socializing at the coffee hours and at Zumba and cycling sweat sessions. Other key resources include the Religious Support Office's counseling service and the multiple spouse Facebook groups.

"Spouses are lifelines to each other. We keep our fellow Families uplifted during deployments and hardship. Many of us are overqualified, underappreciated, uprooted too often and thirsty for belonging, so we make our own way."

PERSONAL READINESS: SPIRITUAL DIMENSION

Spirituality is a sense of connection that brings meaning and purpose to life. This strength sustains us in times of stress, hardship and tragedy. You can strengthen your spiritual resilience by:

- Reaching out to your installation's chaplain for religious or nonreligious counseling.
- Identifying and prioritizing your core values.
- Creating your personal philosophy and understanding how it guides you in living your life.
- Practicing meditation to reduce stress and maintain inner peace.



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



Total Force Fitness and How to Make the Best of Stress

By Human Performance Resources by CHAMP at the Uniformed Services University

Total Force Fitness is a framework that enables human beings to get healthy and become high-performing service members. It consists of eight interrelated domains. Together, these domains offer a holistic look at what positively or negatively affects a service member’s health and performance. As a framework for military fitness, TFF suggests that supporting each domain can help service members to enhance their job performance and sustain their health while in the military.

To achieve this, service members need to develop internal resources in each domain that match the demands of their military lives. And they need to have access to tools, services and programs from the Department of Defense, their branch of service and their communities that support TFF. The eight domains are:

- **Physical fitness:** Strength and agility, aerobic capacity, muscular endurance and functional mobility
- **Social fitness:** Family and community engagement, cultural inclusiveness, peer-to-peer networks, leadership skills and unit cohesion
- **Psychological fitness:** Proactive recovery for thriving, cognitive function, mental acuity and self-actualization
- **Environmental fitness:** Heat, cold, altitude, noise, air quality and whole-body vibration
- **Nutritional fitness:** Access to high-quality foods, mission-driven macro- and micro-nutrient requirements, dietary supplement use and healthy dietary choices
- **Financial fitness:** Debt-management skills, responsible money management, insurance and emergency planning, and investment-wealth strategies
- **Spiritual fitness:** Sense of identity and belonging, awareness of meaning and purpose, embracing service core values, and ability to cope

- **Medical and dental preventive fitness:** Health assessments, screening, immunizations and pre-habilitation, which are physical and lifestyle preparations to improve recovery time

Total Force Fitness and Performance

Along with each of the eight individual domains of TFF, the intersections of these domains are critical to understand how you can improve your health, wellness and performance. Take sleep, for example. Sleep is an [important internal resource](#) that affects health and performance. If you’re struggling to sleep well, and you think about the domains of TFF, you begin to see the range of reasons you could have sleep issues. Maybe you’re struggling to sleep because of anxious thoughts (psychological). Or perhaps you stay up late to spend time with your partner because your schedules don’t often otherwise align (social). Maybe you tend to drink caffeine too late in the day (nutritional), and that interferes with your ability to wind down. Or your body is sensitive to exercising late in the day (physical). Perhaps you have a hormonal imbalance (medical or dental) that makes it challenging for you to get into a rest-and-digest state. Or you can’t sleep because your bedroom is too hot or too cold or your partner snores loudly (environmental).

Not only might the individual domains of TFF play a part in your sleep cycle, it’s also possible that the intersection of these domains can have a compounding effect on sleep quality. For example, you had to work late, so you drank some caffeine to stay up, and then when it was time to go to bed your child woke up, so that kept you awake. And after that, you had trouble winding down because you were stressing about finances, and so on. At work the next day, you might be groggy, slow to make decisions, less aware of your emotions and less focused. Addressing only one of these concerns might not get you to a good night’s rest. And your job performance could continue to suffer. Sleep is just one example of how multiple TFF domains can intersect to affect your performance.



To learn more about Total Force Fitness, click the image above. (Photo courtesy U.S. Army photo)

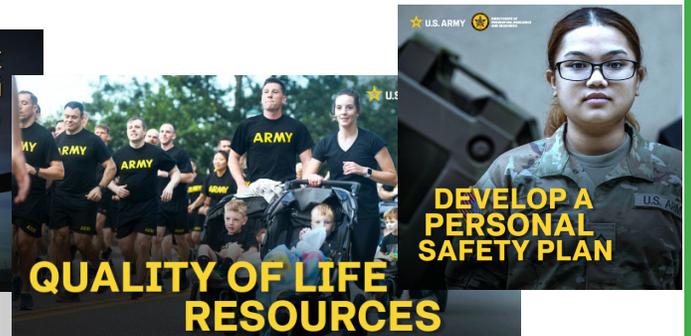
How Total Force Fitness Helps Commanding Officers and Service Members

TFF also has a unique focus on helping service members excel at their jobs. The TFF framework is a way for commanders and service members to think about what helps—and what hurts—their ability to perform their mission-essential tasks. Each military occupation places a unique set of demands on service members. This is based on the tasks they perform as part of their occupation and assigned unit. Some occupations might require a certain number of internal resources from a specific TFF domain. For example, the tasks in some occupations are more physically demanding, such as infantry personnel who maneuver mortars and ammunition. Other jobs are more cognitive, such as intelligence or language analysts. And others have a social focus, such as those in public affairs positions, who conduct interviews, or human resources development personnel, who recruit and train military personnel. Commanders and service members can use the TFF framework to think through how to prioritize services and programs to better support service member performance in these unique roles while still offering opportunities to bolster wellness across all domains of TFF.

Summer Resilience Strengthening Campaign Now Available!

We all need reminders to help us stay resilient. That’s why DPRR has created the Summer Resilience Strengthening campaign, a social media toolkit with sample posts and graphics, for public affairs officers, R2PC and SHARP program managers, SP2 managers and other stakeholders to lead their own social media campaigns. This campaign will also be featured across DPRR social media platforms, including Facebook, X, Instagram and LinkedIn.

Visit the DPRR products on demand site to download this social media toolkit with actionable tips to help Soldiers stay resilient this summer: <https://marcomcentral.app.pti.com/Ironmark/ARDMaterials>.





The Armed Forces Tax Council has determined that the Child Development Center tuition-fee waiver is not taxable. (Photo courtesy of Bianca Sowders)

Child Development Center Tuition-Fee Waiver Not Taxable

By Chester Curtis, Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness

Child Development Center employees have just had a tax benefit confirmed.

The Armed Forces Tax Council has determined that the Child Development Center tuition-fee waiver for CDC employees is not taxable.

Section 117(d) of the Internal Revenue Code provides that any qualified tuition reduction is excluded from gross income.

The term “qualified tuition reduction” means the amount of any reduction in tuition provided to an employee of an organization that is defined as an “educational organization” that maintains a regular faculty and curriculum and has an enrolled body of students in attendance at the place where its educational activities take place.

As a result, tuition reduction offered to employees of educational organizations or offered to an employee’s dependent child may be excluded from gross income so long as that tuition is for the education of an employee (or the dependent child) for education provided by an “educational organization” as that term is defined in the Internal Revenue Code.

“This is good news for CDC employees who have children enrolled in the CDC,” says Donna Garfield, senior program analyst at Child, Youth and School Services. “The fee waiver for CDC employees is used to bolster the number of qualified applicants and incentivize current CDC staff to remain in their positions.”

CDCs offer direct-care staff tuition-fee waivers, which discount their own child care from 25% to 100% for their eligible dependents receiving child care at the CDC.

Qualified staff are needed to support the largest employer-sponsored child care program in the United States, serving approximately 200,000 children of uniformed service members and DOD Civilians, and employing over 23,000 direct-care staff. DOD’s child development program includes accredited, installation-based, government-run, full-time preschool and school-age care in its CDCs.

Military service members, surviving spouses and DOD Civilians are generally eligible for CDC services. DOD contractors, military retirees and other federal agency personnel are eligible on a space-available basis.

DOD Approves Breast Milk Shipment Reimbursements

DOD News Release

On May 24 the Defense Department approved a new policy to cover the transportation or shipment of breast milk for service members during a permanent change of station. Service members who are breastfeeding their child up to 12 months old and who are on PCS can be reimbursed up to \$1,000 for commercial shipping, excess baggage fees, and dry ice or regular ice.

This policy supports the Secretary of Defense’s “Taking Care of Our People” initiative by reducing a financial burden service members historically incurred out of pocket.

Authorization must be included on the PCS orders prior to any expenses being incurred by the service member. Receipts must be submitted for all expenses, regardless of the amount (the “\$75 rule,” which allows most expenses to be claimed without receipt for amounts under \$75, does not apply).

The new policy was published in the Joint Travel Regulations on June 1. For more information, [see the JTR](#).

New Army Policy Expands Reimbursement for Spouse Business Costs

By Army Public Affairs

The Army is expanding its financial support for military spouses by enhancing the reimbursement program. The [new directive](#) permits reimbursement of up to \$1,000 for business-related expenses, in addition to the already authorized \$1,000 for relicensing fees resulting from a relocation.

“Army spouses face unique challenges, especially during a relocation,” said Lt. Gen. Kevin Vereen, Deputy Chief of Staff, G-9. “We owe it to them to provide any opportunity to not just have a job but build a fulfilling career.”

This new directive aims to alleviate these barriers, ensure continuity in their careers and enhance the well-being and readiness of Army Families.

Qualified relicensing costs cover exam fees, continuing education, certifications, business licenses, permits and registrations. For business owners, reimbursement is available for equipment relocation, new technology purchases, IT services and inspection fees.

Details on qualifying expenses and how to apply for reimbursement are available on the Military OneSource portal at [Licensure Reimbursement PCS Moves](#).

Read the entire article at [www.army.mil/article/276884/new_army_policy_expands_reimbursement_for_spouse_business_costs](#).



DPRR

DIRECTORATE OF PREVENTION, RESILIENCE AND READINESS

JUNE 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

- Colby Beach, Integrated Prevention Division
- Nicole Guerrero, Integrated Prevention Division
- Heather Hassinger, R2I&T Division
- Renee Johnson, R2I&T Division

Farewell

- Casey Eidemiller, R2I&T Division
- Renee Johnson, Integrated Prevention Division
- Carrie Shult, R2I&T Division
- Dawn Thompson, CYSS Division

DOD Safe Helpline

Sexual Assault Support for the DOD Community

DOD Safe Helpline has updated the international texting number to: **571-470-5546**

This new texting number allows OCONUS survivors to receive referrals to resources in their local community.

CONUS text number: 55247
safehelpline.org | 877-995-5247

UPCOMING EVENTS

JULY

Florida Council Against Sexual Violence Biennial Summit 2024

July 10–12: The biennial summit is hosted by the Florida Council Against Sexual Violence, which serves survivors of sexual violence.

Location: Fort Lauderdale, Florida **Learn more:** <https://www.fcasv.org/2024-biennial-summit>.

Veterans Affairs/Department of Defense Suicide Prevention Conference

July 16–18: The Veterans Affairs Department and Defense Department host the nation's only conference dedicated to addressing the problem of suicide among military members and veterans. The conference brings together professionals to discuss innovative ways to reach at-risk and underserved military members.

Location: Portland, Oregon **Learn more:** <https://department.va.gov/suicide-prevention-conference/>.

AUGUST

National Sexual Assault Conference

Aug. 14–16: The National Sexual Assault Conference brings together over 2,000 advocates so they can develop skills, share information and connect.

Location: Washington, D.C. **Learn more:** <https://www.nationalsexualassaultconference.org/>.

Safe States Annual Injury and Violence Prevention Conference

Aug. 20–22: This annual conference brings together prevention professionals from a variety of disciplines so they can learn from one another.

Location: Portland, Oregon **Learn more:** <https://www.safestates.org/page/AnnualConference>.

TOP-PERFORMING POSTS

FACEBOOK



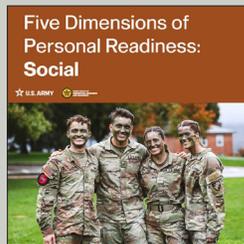
Impressions: 2,470

TWITTER



Impressions: 1,295

INSTAGRAM



Impressions: 439

LINKEDIN



Impressions: 510

SOCIAL MEDIA UPDATE

Follow @ArmyResilience

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

Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness

DPRR COMMUNITYLINK

June 25, 2024, Volume 9, Issue 5

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 walker@strategyconsultingteam.com. This publication is available for download at: <https://www.dvidshub.net/publication/1102/r2-community-link-newsletter>

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Submit articles and photographs by July 15. For any questions, contact the editor in chief at walker@strategyconsultingteam.com.

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



Connect With DPRR!

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