



Army Strong Community Center

Connecting Soldiers, Families, & Communities

MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN BRISTOL, CT



JANUARY 2013

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Talking to Children about Violence: Tips for Parents and Teachers

High profile acts of violence, particularly in schools, can confuse and frighten children. Parents and school personnel can help by establishing a sense of normalcy and security, and talking with them about their fears.

Reassure children that they are safe. Emphasize that schools are very safe. Let children talk about their feelings and validate them-help put them into perspective, and assist the children in expressing them appropriately.

Make time to talk. Let their questions be your guide as to how much information to provide. Be patient. Watch for clues that they may want to talk. Some children may need concrete activities (such as drawing, writing, or imaginative play) to help them identify and express their feelings.

Keep your explanations developmentally appropriate.

- Early elementary school children need brief, simple information balanced with reassurances that their school and homes are safe and that adults are there to protect them.
- Upper elementary and early middle school children will be more vocal in asking questions about their safety and their school. They may need assistance separating reality from fantasy.
- Upper middle school and high school students will have strong opinions about the causes of violence in schools and society, and will share suggestions about preventative measures.

Observe children's emotional state. Changes in behavior, appetite, and sleep patterns can indicate a child's level of anxiety or discomfort. Children who have had a past traumatic experience or personal loss, suffer from mental illness, or have special needs may be at greater risk for severe reactions. Seek the help of a mental health professional if you have a concern. ★

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OFFICE HOURS:

Monday-Friday, 8am-5pm

NOTE! Closed 1 January (New Year's Day)
and 21 January (Martin Luther King Day)



Army Strong Community
Center (ASCC) is an
Army Reserve Family Program

The Customer Support Coordinators (CSCs) at the Bristol ASCC want to know: **“How can we help you?”**

Whether you're a Military Member, Veteran or Family Member – Whether you need financial assistance, housing assistance, employment assistance – Whether you're dealing with your first deployment or third, – Or if you're trying to transition back into civilian life – The CSCs can provide assistance. They're just a phone call or visit away. (860) 584-6258 or (860) 584-6257

January Save the Date

Winter Open House for Military Children

THURSDAY, JAN 10, 2013 | 6 PM
BRISTOL ASCC
111 N MAIN STREET, BRISTOL

Games and activities.

Pre-registration is required; please call 860-584-6258.

CT Operation: Military Kids Volunteer Training Session

TUESDAY, JAN 15, 2013 | 5:30 – 7 PM
ARMED FORCES RESERVE CENTER
375 SMITH STREET, MIDDLETOWN, CT

Please contact Lisa Marcinkowski at CT Operation: Military Kids for more information and to register: lisa.marcinkowski@uconn.edu

Soldiers, Sailors, and Marines Fund Presentation

THURSDAY, JAN 17, 2013 | 10 AM – 12 PM
PLAINVILLE SENIOR CENTER
200 EAST STREET, PLAINVILLE

Learn about the SSMF eligibility requirements, application process and guidelines. A special presentation by Fund Representatives will be held at 10 am. *Pre-registration is not necessary.*

Smoking Cessation Seminar

WEDNESDAY, JAN 23, 2013 | 6 – 7:30 PM
BRISTOL ASCC
111 N MAIN STREET, BRISTOL

In partnership with St. Francis Hospital Integrative Medicine

Please call 860-584-6258 to pre-register.

CT Operation: Military Kids Volunteer Training Session

THURSDAY, JAN 24, 2013 | 5:30 – 7 PM
BRISTOL ASCC LOCATED IN CITY HALL

Please contact Lisa Marcinkowski at CT Operation: Military Kids for more information and to register: lisa.marcinkowski@uconn.edu ★

On the Verge

The following article was originally published in The Bristol Press on Tuesday, 11 December 2012, by Diane Church, Staff Writer.

Just a couple of weeks ago, 54-year-old Jonathan Linkletter was on the verge of being homeless.

“I was laid off from my metal stamping job two years ago,” he said. “My unemployment eventually ran out and I had no money. I had to be out of my room by December 10.”

Linkletter had lined up an abandoned garage and was planning to move his stuff there. Although having sold a lot of things and downsized from an apartment to a rented room to save money, he doesn't have much except his fishing gear and his dog, neither of which is particularly valuable.

“I filled out 78 online applications using the computers at the library,” he said.

Desperate, Linkletter turned to Bristol Community Organization for help. They referred the army veteran to the Army Strong [Community] Center, which helps veterans, active service members and their families.

Donna Dognin and Peter Coppola, who work at the center, mobilized to help Linkletter. They contacted the Vet Hunter Project, a non-profit that helps homeless and at-risk veterans and got Linkletter funds to cover his rent for two more weeks. With help from BCO, they got him a gently used suit, helped him look for work and drove him to job interviews since he has no vehicle of his own anymore. A person at the library, who wished to remain anonymous, found out about his circumstances and also gave him some money.

Linkletter, who has lived in town for 20 years, is very grateful for the outpouring of assistance. The people who helped him were virtual strangers who felt moved to help one of their unfortunate neighbors in this season of giving.

Coppola said helping veterans like Linkletter is one of the ways the Army Strong Community Center provides assistance to those who have served or are serving their country.

“They come to us with a need and we help them or refer them to other agencies,” he said. “Hopefully Jonathan will become self-sufficient. Homeless veterans are a big concern for us. We're trying to reduce their numbers as best we can.”

If you have a job for Jonathan, e-mail him at jaylinkletter@gmail.com. He checks his e-mail every weekday. ★

Educating Employers on PTSD

The U.S. Army has recently issued an audio news release that discusses the Army's "Hire a Veteran" education campaign, which is designed to discredit myths that prevent the employment of disabled Veterans. The campaign is based on research that identifies several misconceptions about employing Wounded Warriors, including the fear that Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) might have an effect on job performance-related issues. Research also indicates that confusion exists in the employer community that accommodations for wounded Veterans might have associated high costs that would be too expensive for the employer. During the next five years, more than 80-thousand disabled Veterans will be entering the workforce looking for jobs.

For more information about the U.S. Army's "Hire a Veteran" campaign, including a video and online employer toolkit, visit the U.S. Army Warrior Transition Command website at <http://www.wtc.army.mil/employers/index.html>

Contact the Warrior Transition Command for additional information to support this effort.

Phone: (703) 325-8999

Email:

usarmy.pentagon.medcom-WTC.mbx.career-education-readiness-br@mail.mil ★

**For support 24/7,
365 days a year, contact the
Outreach & Support
Call Center at 866-345-8248.**

Employment Resources for Soldiers

Military Members and Veterans seeking employment assistance can visit The Army Career & Alumni Program (ACAP) website <https://www.acap.army.mil>

The Army Career and Alumni Program (ACAP) delivers a world-class transition program for America's Army that ensures all eligible transitioners have the knowledge, skills and self-confidence necessary to be competitive and successful in the global workforce. ACAP helps transitioners to make informed career decisions through benefits counseling and employment assistance. ACAP is responsible for delivering both transition assistance and employment assistance services. While the ACAP Center traditionally has been the principal service provider for these services, now transitioners have the option to use the ACAP On-Line website to receive services from any location with Internet capability 24/7.

ACAP is designed to accomplish several key objectives. ACAP ensures all Soldiers who leave the Army with more than 180 days of active duty comply with legal and regulatory requirements to receive pre-separation counseling on available transition assistance services and benefits as early as possible. This congressionally mandated counseling must occur no later than 90 days prior to separation and be documented on DD Form 2648. ACAP also ensures these Soldiers are offered an opportunity to receive employment assistance. The opportunity to receive employment assistance also is mandated by Public Law. In addition to complying with Public Law, ACAP fosters and promotes Army retention, both on Active Duty and in the National Guard or Army Reserve, and recruiting. ACAP's caring dedication to Soldiers and their Families engenders a positive feeling toward the Army and improves the Army's ability to retain and recruit young men and women.

ACAP provides effective transition and employment assistance services that help transitioners assess their skills and objectives then set goals and achieve them. The ACAP process and individual counseling they receive enable transitioners to overcome barriers. Counseling also engenders individual motivation that encourages transitioners to return for more services. Services provided in a caring manner build trust and result in desired outcomes. Finally, Counselors are willing to stake their professional reputations on their belief clients who complete ACAP are fully equipped to succeed.

Each state Department of Labor employs Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) representatives and Local Veterans Employment (LVER) Representatives who work in the one Stop Career Centers.

To find your local DVOP/LVER, visit the DVOP/LVER locator website, <http://dvoplverlocator.nvti.ucdenver.edu> ★

Hero2Hired (H2H)

The Hero2Hired (H2H) website, <https://h2h.jobs> was created to make it easy for Military Members to connect to and find jobs with military-friendly companies.

The goal of the program is to reduce the number of Reserve Component Members who are unemployed by helping them find jobs. Support is provided through the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program to Reserve Component Combat Veterans who require employment assistance.

With H2H.jobs, job seekers get access to great features included, searching for jobs, explore career paths, translate their military skills into matching jobs, take a career assessment that links them to relevant careers and jobs, learn about different industries, find education and training resources, and join communities with similar interests and networking opportunities. ★

The Military Academic Advancement Program: (MAAP)

The Department of Defense (DoD) has joined together with the Department of Agriculture and Kansas State University to provide quality distance education programs to Military Members, their spouses and children, as well as civilian professionals with the Military Academic Advancement Program (MAAP). Through this program, you can obtain an advanced degree in a number of areas and help support the military community. MAAP works through the Great Plains Interactive Distance Education Alliance (IDEA), an inter-institutional academic association of accredited public research universities, to offer quality online degree programs to the military community in an effort to better serve Military Members and their Families who relocate frequently.

For more details please call (800) 342-9647, visit militaryonesource.com, or email alliance@ksu.edu ★

Warrior Care and Transition Program (WTC)

<http://www.wtc.army.mil>

The Army's Warrior Care and Transition Program (WTC) supports the rehabilitation and successful transition of wounded, ill, and injured Soldiers back to active duty or to Veteran status.

The U.S. Army Warrior Transition Command (WTC) is a one-star command under the U.S. Army Medical Command (MEDCOM). The WTC Commander is also the Assistant Surgeon General for Warrior Care and Transition.

WTC serves a vital role, not only in managing the care and recovery of Soldiers evacuated from theater, but also those preparing to deploy and those who have returned from combat and require coordinated, complex care management to help them cope with and overcome the cumulative effects of war and multiple deployments. WTC supports Army Force Generation by ensuring everything possible is done to retain and return to duty Soldiers that are fully fit for duty. This is particularly critical as an Army at war finds itself developing and utilizing an operational reserve force of Army Reserve and Army National Guard Soldiers to successfully take the war to the enemy. Here, WTC plays an important role in ensuring Reserve Component Soldiers also receive the care they require prior to and after deployment to be mission ready and comprise an effective part of the total Army force.

WTC's mission is to develop, coordinate, and integrate the Army's Warrior Care and Transition Program (WCTP) for wounded, ill, and injured Soldiers, Veterans, and their Families or caregivers to promote success in the force or civilian life. ★

Military OneSource Website Updates

The Department of Defense recently revitalized and consolidated the Military OneSource website to better serve Military Members and their Families. Included on the new website are locator and directory widgets, which enable users to type in their installation and instantly connect to local resources and relocation assistance. Military OneSource also provides round-the-clock consultants available worldwide to assist with family life topics ranging from moving to nonmedical counseling referral, including anger management and communication skills.

For more information, visit the Military OneSource website at www.militaryonesource.mil. ★

Family Coping and Resiliency

These tips are to be used as aids for Suicide Prevention for Military Family Members awareness.

Military life can be stressful. Stressors that you and your Family might experience include:

Deployment separation. Separation from a loved one inevitably strains communication, which can affect your relationship. In addition, taking on new responsibilities at home can be challenging and frustrating.

Previous suicide attempts.

Frequent moves. Many of the stressors that Families experience are related to moving.

New schools. Adjusting to a new school and a new schedule can be very difficult.

New jobs. Finding a new job and/or learning the details of a job that you have been transferred to can be exhausting and overwhelming.

Meeting new friends. Both adults and children can have a hard time meeting new people and developing friendships.

Not making the next rank, Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ), or bad ratings.

**Both adults and children can be affected by stressors and can use resilient or negative strategies to cope. Encourage the use of resilient coping strategies.*

Resilient Coping Strategies

ADULT/SOLDIERS:

Breathing deeply. Slow, deep breaths give your body more oxygen and can produce a calming and focused effect.

Church/religious activities. Attending church or other religious activities can provide support.

Cooking. Some find great joy in preparing food. The rhythmic motion of chopping vegetables or the aroma of freshly baked bread can be very soothing.

Exercising. In addition to keeping you fit, exercise can be a great stress reliever and a great coping strategy. When your body is fit and healthy, coping with stressful situations will be easier.

Spending time in nature. Take time to notice the natural beauty around you by taking a walk in a park. Merely getting away from your stresses and finding peace and relaxation, even if only for a few minutes each day, can be beneficial.

RESOURCES FOR FAMILY COPING AND RESILIENCY

U.S. Army Public Health Command homepage
 (Search for DHPW Suicide Prevention) <http://phc.amedd.army.mil>

Army Families Online <http://www.armyfamiliesonline.org>

Family Readiness Library <http://deploymenthealthlibrary.fhp.osd.mil>

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Military OneSource <http://www.militaryonesource.com>
 or 1-800-342-9647

My Army Life Too for Families and Friends
<http://www.myarmylifetoo.com>

Suicide Prevention Action Network (SPAN) <http://www.spanusa.org>

Support groups. You may feel as if you are the only one dealing with stress and depression; however, you are not alone. Look for support in your area. These groups can be formal groups established in the community, informal groups in your neighborhood, or groups associated with the Military via a Family Readiness Groups (FRG).

Talking to others. Don't underestimate the power of talk. Talking about your thoughts and feelings can be very useful. Even if the person with whom you are talking cannot fix the problem, the act of putting your emotions into words can be helpful.

Volunteering. When you give back to others, whether you volunteer to work with children, the homeless, elderly populations, or at a local animal shelter, you find out just how strong you are. Visit www.volunteermatch.org for opportunities in your area.

Writing/journaling. Put your thoughts and emotions on paper. Writing can help you to sort out how you are feeling. You don't have to show what you have written to anyone. Keeping a journal can help you track your moods.

CHILDREN/ADOLESCENTS:

Church/school activities. Children are social beings. Involving them in church and school activities feeds their need for friendship, provides them with support, and exposes them to positives influences.

Drawing/journaling. Children can sometimes find it difficult to express their emotions verbally. If so, drawing and journaling can be great alternatives to express their feelings in a personal, safe way.

Reassurance/fun outings. Children benefits from reassurance that they get from individuals who are close to them. Creating fun environments/outings for children reminds them how it feels to be happy.

Sports. In addition to providing an outlet for energy, relieving stress, and improving physical fitness, involvement in sports is a great way for children to improve their self-confidence, make friends, and gain support.

Talking to others. Just as with adults, children benefit when they share their thoughts and feelings with others. It allows them to know that they are not alone. ★



171,000 May Lose TRICARE Prime

According to a recent article by Tom Philpott, Defense officials are expected to soon announce that military retirees and their dependents that live more than 40 miles from a military treatment facility or BRAC (base realignment and closure) site will lose access to TRICARE Prime as early as next April.

This move could force as many as 171,000 retirees to shift to TRICARE Standard, which would mean an increase in out-of-pocket costs – especially those with special needs dependents or other chronic health issues.

Under TRICARE Prime, beneficiaries get managed care through providers in the network. They pay an annual enrollment fee of \$269.28 for individual coverage or \$538.56 for Family coverage. Retirees and Family Members also are charged co-pays of \$12 for each doctor visit.

Under TRICARE Standard, beneficiaries can choose their own physicians and pay no annual enrollment fee. But when they need care, retirees must cover 25 percent of allowable charges. Retirees also have an annual deductible of \$150 for the individual or \$300 per Family. Total out-of-pocket costs, however, are capped at \$3000 per Family.

In most Prime service areas, about half of eligible retirees already choose to use Standard rather than enroll in the network. It is important to note that active duty Members and their Families won't be impacted. However, military retirees and their Families are not the only ones to be hit by the move. In his article, Philpott points out that some drilling Guard and Reserve Members enrolled in TRICARE Reserve Select could also see increases in health costs.

These changes have been in the works for some time. In fact, the new TRICARE support contracts were originally drafted in 2007 (during the Bush administration). These contracts were designed to reduce the cost of providing health care to military retirees by constricting Prime service areas. Contracts for every region are now settled. Health Net Federal Services has been running the North Region under the new contract since April 2011. Humana Military Healthcare Services has operated the South Region under the new contract since April this year. But all Prime service areas have been maintained with contract modifications, awaiting final word from Defense that Prime area restrictions are to be implemented.

Philpott reports that “Congress is not expected to block this long-standing plan to tighten access to Prime if the intent is to hold down costs. Doing so likely would require lawmakers to find equivalent budget savings elsewhere.”

The first round of Prime service changes is “tentatively” planned to go into effect in the TRICARE West region on April 1. The North and South regions will see the plan implemented by October 1, 2013. ★

Tax Time Preparations

Make tax time easier by gathering all the necessary documents and information you will need ahead of time:

- Social security number and date of birth for you, your spouse and dependents
- Childcare, education and adoption costs
- W-2 forms from all employers for you and your spouse
- Form 1099 for independent contractors
- Investment income forms
- Alimony information
- Social security benefits
- Miscellaneous income
- Form 1098-E for student loan interest
- Charitable donations
- Uninsured medical and dental expenses
- Real estate taxes
- Receipts for any deductible expenses

Take Advantage of Military OneSource Tax Services

Military OneSource provides free access to the H&R Block At Home® Basic online tax filing service. The service allows you to complete and electronically file your federal and up to three state tax returns or filings. Your calculations are guaranteed to be 100% accurate or H&R Block pays the penalties and interest. The H&R Block At Home® Basic tax filing service protects the security and confidentiality of your personal information by using industry-recognized security safeguards. You do not have to complete the return all at one time. When you begin, you create a secure user ID and password, which enables you to log on, save, close and return to the program as needed. ★