



DPRR

COMMUNITYLINK

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



Each year Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month is recognized in April. This year's theme is "Change Through Unity: Empower. Protect. Prevent.," with the goal of building trust in the Army community through the SHARP program restructure. (Courtesy photo)

SHARP Program Restructuring Enhances Victim Support

By Chester Curtis, Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness

As we approach the end of Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month 2024, keeping this year's theme in mind, Change Through Unity: Empower. Protect. Prevent., will remain relevant throughout the year as the SHARP program restructure proceeds. The Army's SHARP program restructure signals the branch's commitment to taking steps to address sexual assault and sexual harassment by enhancing both prevention and response capabilities.

The goal of the SHARP program is to protect Soldiers, Department of the Army Civilians and Family members by fostering a culture free of sexual harassment, sexual assault and associated retaliatory behaviors through prevention, education and training, response capability, victim support, reporting procedures and appropriate accountability.

"The Army is making structural changes to the SHARP program to strengthen our capacity to provide compassionate, victim-centric services to our Army Family," says Jill Londagin, Program Director.

As part of the restructure, the Army is taking steps to reduce dependence on borrowed military personnel and will eliminate most collateral-duty positions within its workforce but expand full-time SHARP workforce positions.

"We will increase the number of full-time sexual assault response coordinators and victim advocates who are thoroughly trained and have the requisite knowledge, skills and experience to effectively support victims of sexual harassment and assault," Londagin says.

SHARP is also building a prevention capability to work with commanders and other prevention teammates to include installations' Integrated Prevention Advisory Groups to partner in primary prevention initiatives to promote protective factors and address risk factors that lead to harmful behaviors such as sexual harassment and sexual assault.

One of the directives was to remove SARCs and VAs from the unit command reporting structure and realign the SHARP program's reporting under the lead SARC.

"We are moving to an installation-based model where everyone, regardless of command alignment or branch of service, will receive SHARP services as a support function of the military installation closest to the victim," Londagin says.

Londagin says that SARCs and VAs will be consolidated at the SHARP Program Office but will remain embedded in their units to provide direct

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DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

Team,
I've decided to bring the concept of a social media takeover to the *Community Link*. For this month's "Director's Column", I've asked Sgt. Maj. Ruben Murillo to share a few words.

Sgt. Maj. Murillo recently joined the DPRR team as our organization's first senior enlisted adviser. We are so happy to have him on board, as he brings years of experience and a keen perspective on quality of life, resilience and prevention programs. Without further ado, I'll turn it over to Sgt. Maj. Murillo.

—Dee Geise, DPRR Director

Sgt. Maj. Murillo:

Team, I'm honored to serve as the first senior enlisted adviser for the DPRR community. I'm using the term "community" on purpose. Although I'm assigned to Army headquarters in Washington, D.C., I believe my mission is to serve and support all members of the Army-wide Prevention, Resilience and Readiness community.

I believe my priority is to advocate on your behalf and ensure you have all of the resources necessary—people, policies and funding—to deliver quality programs to our Soldiers, Army Civilians and Family members. April provides an opportunity to highlight many of these programs through commemorations such as [Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month](#), [Month of the Military Child](#) and [Child Abuse Prevention Month](#). These observances are a reminder of the important work we're doing in fostering healthy communities, developing resilient children and strengthening military Families.

During this time of the year, many of our Army team members are preparing for permanent-change-of-station moves and other transitions, such as retirements and graduations. While joyful and exciting, these events may be a source of stress for you and your Family members. These stressors may be compounded by the loss of social connections you've developed in recent years or over the course of a military career.

Check out the resources available to the Army team to help with transitions, including the [QOL microsite](#), [R2 Performance Centers](#) and [MWR programs](#). In addition, I encourage you to check in on your teammates, co-workers and friends. Sometimes just knowing you're not alone in your experience makes all the difference.

I look forward to traveling around the force and meeting many of you in person. In the meantime, don't hesitate to reach out to me with your thoughts, ideas or questions on how we can move the DPRR mission forward!

Where Hope Can Triumph After Despair

By *Damenica McAlister and Jennika Walton, R2I staff*

After losing a loved one to suicide, people often feel lost and overwhelmed by different forms of grief. Coping with grief can be challenging and result in intense emotions, leaving many with unanswered questions and pain. There exists a beacon of light, however, to navigate through the darkness of grief: suicide postvention.

"Postvention" is a term often overlooked in conversations about suicide and consists of structured activities, after a suicide attempt or death, that promote recovery and healing among those affected. It is estimated that 135 people are affected, to some degree, by every suicide death. Additionally, research has shown that individuals exposed to suicide may be at an increased risk for suicidal behaviors themselves, also known as suicide contagion. Avoiding suicide contagion involves responsible reporting, preventive measures like promoting help-seeking behaviors, providing support to suicide attempters and/or those affected by a suicide loss, [reducing access](#) to lethal means and fostering an environment of empathy, understanding and open communication.

It has been said that good postvention is good prevention. Postvention efforts enhance suicide prevention by encouraging access to behavioral health care and promoting spiritual and community support services to reduce harm and mitigate risk. By combining suicide prevention and postvention strategies, we can work toward a safer and more resilient community.

Postvention has two purposes: to prevent future suicide attempts or loss (e.g., contagion) and to help survivors cope with grief. The [Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors](#) developed three stages of postvention to help people process deaths by suicide: stabilize, grieve and grow. The [Army's Suicide Postvention Handbook](#) details how unit commanders can support Soldiers through each phase. Anyone can engage in postvention. The following are recommended actions for each phase.

1. During the **stabilize** phase, survivors may struggle with guilt and blame over the individual's suicide. Emphasize to survivors that suicide is complex and not their fault,

and address issues specific to suicide to promote healing and minimize risk.

2. Those who are coping with a loved one's death will experience **grief** during the process. It is essential to promote healthy grieving by focusing on the life the deceased lived and their service, rather than on the cause of their death. Grief can arise at any moment, so it's critical to encourage survivors to find a new routine to accept, feel and convey their grief in a productive way.
3. **Growth** after a suicide loss refers to actions and efforts to help survivors move forward, build and sustain connections, and establish a culture that encourages help-seeking behaviors. Actions may include finding meaning through activities such as peer mentoring, developing a deeper appreciation for life and helping survivors re-create their stories using what they've learned since the death.

Postvention is not merely about picking up the pieces; it's about stitching together the broken hearts, fostering resilience and preventing further tragedies. We can make a difference by bolstering Soldiers, promoting mental health awareness and supporting local initiatives. Let's create a world where hope prevails and everyone feels valued and supported.

These resources offer information and postvention support after a suicide attempt or death:

- [988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline](#)
- [Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors](#)
- [American Foundation for Suicide Prevention](#)
- [Defense Suicide Prevention Office \(DSPO\)'s Postvention Toolkit](#)
- [A Manager's Guide to Suicide Postvention in the Workplace](#)
- [Military One Source](#)
- [Give an Hour](#)

If you or someone you know is experiencing a crisis, including thoughts of self-harm or suicide, call or text 988 to connect with the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. The lifeline provides 24-hour confidential support to anyone in suicidal crisis or emotional distress. Support is also available via live chat.

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DPRR CELEBRATES MONTH OF THE MILITARY CHILD



Soldiers Discover the Art of Triumphant Over Adversity

By Kim Ferraro, Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness

We all know the expression “A picture is worth a thousand words,” but Soldiers who participate in the Army’s Resiliency Through Art program truly understand the adage’s meaning. For they have experienced how expressing one’s emotions by creating something can be more effective than trying to find the words to describe the effects of traumatic life-changing events—be it the violence of war or that suffered from a toxic personal relationship.

That’s what makes Resiliency Through Art so potent and why it has flourished at Army bases since Michelle Sterkowicz, supervisory art specialist at Vicenza Arts & Crafts Center, USAG Italy, started it in 2016 as a healthy way for service members to deal with issues like persistent anxiety, rage and depression.

Among the installations with a robust program is Schofield Barracks/Fort Shafter, in Hawaii, where at the Schofield Barracks Arts & Crafts Center, supervisory art specialist Patti Honda and her colleagues provide Soldiers not only with materials to create with but also a welcoming, encouraging environment. As Honda explains, the program doesn’t provide instruction on art mediums or techniques, nor is it a source of professional therapy; rather, participants come to the center and use whatever supplies they choose to create something through which they can express their feelings and, in the process, gain relief from pent-up emotions.

“This is not instantaneous, nor is resiliency through art an immediate cure, but individuals will recognize the benefits over time,” Honda says. She has observed Soldiers who, upon first coming

to the center, are skeptical about the program and tend to focus solely on what to create and getting a project done—and done with a level of technical proficiency. Gradually, though, she has witnessed a change in these same people as they experience the tranquility, the mental relief, that the process of making art provides, regardless of whether they have a flair for it.

To spur their creative mindset, Soldiers can select from a wide array of supplies—paints, colored and graphite pencils, sculpting clay, scrapbooking materials—as well as projects like wind chimes or wallets from craft kits that the organization Help Heal Veterans donates.

Many service members who join the program initially have difficulty with its lack of structure and the complete freedom it gives them— aspects they later find therapeutic. “Soldiers have such a regimented life that it takes time to gain their own selves back,” Honda says. “Always being directed to sleep, eat, rise and do assigned duties at designated times can create a lack of individual thoughts. This program has reintroduced them to their own thoughts and emotions as they work on their projects.” Soldiers who step outside their comfort zone and let themselves go with the artistic flow have experienced relief from symptoms linked to trauma and stressful jobs, everything from racing thoughts and inability to focus to chronic irritability, she notes. “At times, Soldiers who have insomnia have ended up snoring in our protected space provided for them. If this occurs, we have succeeded.”

A powerful testament to the effectiveness of Resiliency Through Art is the gratitude that



Spc. Kevin Taylor uses a pottery wheel during Resiliency Through Art class at Vicenza Family and MWR Arts and Crafts Center. (Photo by James Brooks)

spouses of emotionally troubled Soldiers have expressed, claiming that the program has “saved their Family.” By using art as an outlet, participants gain control over their emotions. “Experiencing difficulties in communicating their thoughts and desires can be a problem for those experiencing PTSD or brain-trauma symptoms,” Honda says. “The program has given them the option to secure themselves in a quiet environment and do art. It may produce a drawing with just black marks over the entire paper; however, the action of drawing or releasing their anxieties on paper has produced a calming effect. Upon exiting the quiet space, the Soldier can now communicate better and be in a positive demeanor.”

And thus, they can replace self-destructive habits with a passion for creation and discover the truth of what the 20th-century French painter Georges Braque said so well, “Art is a wound turned into light.”

Recognizing April As Child Abuse Prevention Month

By Cynthia Bell, Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness

Blue ribbons are worn throughout National Child Abuse Prevention Month, an observance recognized each year in April. This month is dedicated to bringing attention to and preventing child abuse and neglect. CAPM recognizes the importance of families and communities working together to prevent child abuse and neglect, with a focus on increasing awareness.

Child abuse is physical, sexual, emotional or psychological neglect or maltreatment of a child. Abuse can include an act, or failure to act, by a parent or caregiver resulting in actual or potential harm. It can occur anywhere: in a child’s home, organization, school or the communities in which the child interacts.

In 1983, Congress proclaimed April as National Child Abuse Prevention Month. Before then, several important acts were passed to make

children safer and draw attention to the issues of child abuse and neglect. The passage of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act in 1974 marked the nation’s first major step forward in addressing issues related to child maltreatment.

CAPTA established a federal focus on preventing and responding to child abuse and neglect. As a result, states are required to ensure children’s safety and have procedures for receiving and responding to allegations of abuse or neglect. CAPTA has been reauthorized numerous times to improve child protective services, provide grants and contracts for research and demonstration projects and other activities that can better identify, prevent and treat child abuse and neglect. Grants have also been awarded to states to support community-based child abuse and neglect prevention services.

The Family Advocacy Program at Army Community Service provides opportunities for primary and secondary education on child abuse. In addition, the New Parent Support Program offers education and home visits and can provide in-office visits to assist Families with children up to age 3 who are at risk or affected by child abuse and neglect. Several clinical agencies offer services that provide treatment for victims of child abuse and neglect.

FAP managers are charged with educating the Army community by holding outreach events, activities for adults and children, and posting FAP contact information throughout communities during the year, with a more concerted effort during CAPM.

To read the full story on Child Abuse Prevention Month, click [here](#).



Integrated Prevention Advisory Group Reaches New Milestone

By Tara Davis, Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness

The Integrated Prevention Advisory Group, or I-PAG, is the Army's new primary prevention workforce. This workforce, composed of public health and prevention science professionals, will advise leaders in their efforts to create inclusive and protective military communities for their Soldiers, Family members and Department of the Army Civilians. Key activities of the I-PAG include using data and research to understand community needs and the local prevention system, planning and implementing comprehensive approaches to prevent harmful behaviors and evaluating activities to ensure that they have their intended effects. The prevention workforce will not replace current personnel who prevent or respond to harmful behaviors.

The Army has hired just over 10 percent of the total prevention workforce. When hiring is complete, the I-PAG will have approximately 1,200 employees across active duty and reserves who specialize in topics such as public health, health promotion, social science, behavioral science, implementation science, program evaluation and data science.

During fiscal year 2023, the I-PAG began phase 1 of the hiring process at five installations (Fort Riley, Fort Cavazos, Fort Sill, Schofield Barracks and Camp Humphreys) and at the operational (FORSCOM, TRADOC and USARPAC) and strategic levels.

Implementation of the new workforce has reached a major milestone, as phase 1 locations have completed their community needs assessments and comprehensive integrated primary prevention plans.

The I-PAG has begun phase 2 of the hiring process



The I-PAG's goal is to develop and implement a comprehensive prevention strategy that creates a healthy organizational climate and promotes a safe environment for Soldiers, DA Civilians and their Families. (Photo by Pfc. Rebeca Soria)

and has announced hiring for two positions, Supervisory Prevention Specialists (Prevention Leads) and Prevention Specialists (Deputies), at 47 CONUS and OCONUS locations over fiscal year 2024. Dr. Brantley Jarvis, primary prevention research coordinator at the Integrated Prevention Division, says, "This is truly an exciting time for the I-PAG workforce as DPRR's Integrated Prevention Division works with phase 2 locations to hire and onboard their prevention leads."

According to Jarvis, future phase 3 hiring decisions will be informed by data. Prevention leads and their deputies hired during phase 2 will gather data to understand their local community's prevention needs. "This tailored, data-driven approach ensures locations receive I-PAGs based on identified needs. Relying on data for hiring also provides a process to adapt in the future if needs change," Jarvis says.

The harmful behaviors that the I-PAG will work to prevent, such as sexual assault and sexual harassment, self-harm, domestic abuse and child abuse, are complex issues that won't be an overnight fix. Jarvis says: "I-PAG will benefit military communities by working with Army leaders to ensure relevant research and data are used to drive understanding, planning, implementation and evaluation to prevent multiple harmful behaviors before they occur. It's worth noting that the I-PAG's benefit for our military communities will take time to be realized. Harmful behaviors require complex analysis, planning and long-term commitment to prevent."

For more information on the I-PAG, visit <https://www.armyresilience.army.mil/IPAG/index.html> and for current vacancies visit <https://www.usajobs.gov/Search/Results?k=i-pag>.

Resilient and Healthy Defense Communities Memo

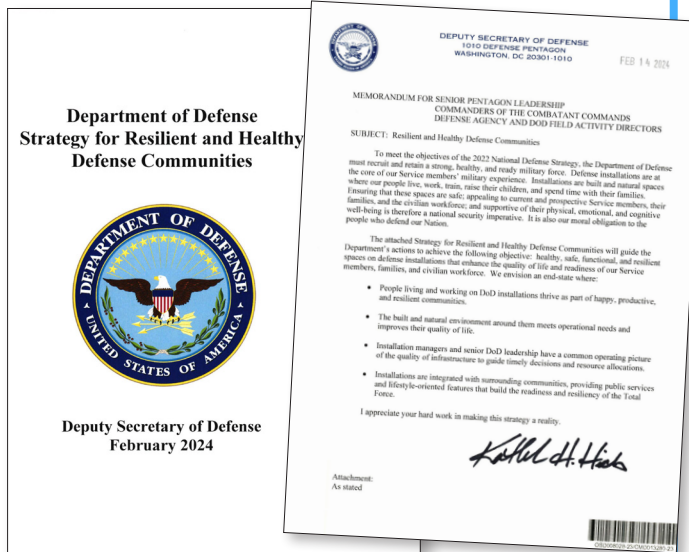
By Tara Davis, Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness

The Department of Defense released its Resilient and Healthy Defense Communities strategy on Feb. 15. This strategy will guide the department's actions in the coming years to improve the constructed buildings and outdoor spaces on installations, with the goal of improving the quality of life of the two million Soldiers and Civilian personnel and their Families at more than 538 installations.

The strategy aims to reduce gaps in quality between present installation conditions and the standards service members deserve by:

- Adopting human-centered requirements to promote purpose, productivity and camaraderie.
- Ensuring that the scale and scope of the infrastructure mission align with the needs of DOD people and their missions.
- Managing the DOD portfolio by adopting a sustainment management strategy to target investments with the greatest impact on DOD facilities' conditions.

Read the full press release and access the memo [here](#).





Army Quality of Life Task Force Expands Portfolio

By Chester Curtis, Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness

The Army Quality of Life Task Force expanded its lines of effort from six to 10 to increase the well-being of its number one asset: its people.

The task force's purpose is to review and combine the full range of Army care, support, "upstream" primary prevention, and enrichment efforts and programs; the initial emphasis was on six lines of effort: housing, health care, child and youth services, spouse employment, permanent-change-of-station moves, and support and resilience.

In March 2023, the Secretary of the Army provided direction and guidance to implement a new process to increase visibility of quality-of-life concerns across our installations, camps and stations using the re-chartered QOL TF.

The Army QOL TF continues to evolve to meet the emerging priorities of Army senior leaders with 10 lines of effort that have a strategic-level view of issues that affect the total Army.

The new lines of effort are the Exceptional Family Member Program, Financial Readiness and Economic Security, Army Community Service and Morale, Welfare and Recreation. "Primary prevention 'upstream prevention' programs like

financial readiness, support for Families with special needs, and other primary prevention efforts to reduce harmful behaviors," Dee Geise, director of the Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness explains.

During this three-year period, the QOL TF will review, assess and provide recommendations to inform and influence policies, processes, procedures and funding within the QOL portfolio, with the aims of supporting commanders, identifying gaps and barriers, mitigating challenges and continuing best practices.

"Army Quality of Life programs help promote the health and well-being of the Army's Soldiers, Civilians and their Families," says Geise. "They reduce stress, absenteeism and disengagement. Exceptional Soldier and Family programs engender trust between the Army and its professionals, simultaneously improving talent acquisition and retention efforts."

"The goal is to ensure world-class services promoting talent acquisition and retention while promoting trust between the Army, its Soldiers, Families and Civilians," Geise says. "The QOL TF will identify and provide recommendations on any QOL issue to the Secretary of the Army and Chief

of Staff on emerging requirements and initiatives requiring legislative resolution. This includes providing programs and services at remote and isolated installations."

Examples of enrichment efforts include:

- Standardizing criteria and levels of need for all Exceptional Family Member Program services.
- Improving financial readiness by collaborating with the University of Georgia on a research study on the effectiveness of Financial Readiness Programs.
- Improving financial readiness by collaborating with the DOD and the University of Georgia on a research study on the effectiveness of financial education.
- Incorporating awareness of financial readiness tools and resources to commanders and personnel supporting wellness checks.

"The Army is committed to providing predictable, flexible, adaptable and tailorable QOL programs to Soldiers and Families," Geise says. "Effective, efficient and well-executed QOL programs increase the well-being and readiness of the force."

The Army's EAP is There for Employees in Need

By Tara Davis, Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness

When you start feeling tired or burned-out, getting out of that mindset can be almost impossible when tackling it on your own. The stress of an upcoming busy week at work, long-distance travel or even personal plans can start to weigh on you. That's why the Army has an Employee Assistance Program to help employees during times of increased stress.

Army EAP is a voluntary, confidential work-based benefit to help Army employees navigate life challenges that may adversely affect their job performance, well-being and personal lives. This benefit is primarily for the Army's Civilian workforce. It is the first component of the Employee Wellness Program established by Congress because of the Drug Free Workplace Act of 1988 and Public Law 79-658. DODI 1010.09 further explains how the EAP is executed and delivered to federal government employees.

Dr. Terrence Elliott, substance misuse prevention specialist and EAP services representative at Department of the Army headquarters, DCS, G-9's Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness, says, "The program is available to current Department of the Army Civilian employees, Family members of active-duty

personnel, Family members of eligible Civilian personnel, military retirees and their Family members, and members of the Army National Guard and United States Army Reserve when not on active duty."

Eligible Department of the Army employees are referred to the program in many ways. Eligible employees can refer themselves, or referrals may be initiated by management, unions, Family members, co-workers and other service agencies. Referrals may be made for investigation/apprehension purposes or for medical reasons. Employees seek care from the EAP for many reasons, including stress management, burnout, anxiety, depression, grief, addiction, workplace stress and other work-related issues.

"Normally, an individual will enroll by seeing the EAP face-to-face (have a direct interview for initial screening) and will fill out a client information/intake form, and a Civilian Employee Consent Statement regarding confidential information," says Elliott. "The initial screening identifies, gathers, documents and evaluates the client's strengths, weaknesses, problems and needs, and lays the groundwork for an action plan."

Elliott shares that EAP coordinators are certified EAP professionals and are there to help identify problems, make basic screening determinations and refer help seekers to further care. "EAPCs are not credentialed to provide mental health care and are not clinicians. The EAPC's responsibility is to help identify problems, make a basic screening determination, provide short-term nonclinical intervention counseling and provide indicated referral options."

There are no major differences between Civilian EAP programs and the Army EAP program except for the local on-post resources exclusive to the Army enterprise, which EAPCs may use to refer Department of the Army employees. Army EAPCs serve to help you be the best you can be by mitigating stress and anxiety that may hinder your work performance, mission readiness and professional growth.

EAP resources can be accessed by contacting the Alcohol and Drug Control officer or ASAP manager at your appropriate [ASAP location](#). For more information about the EAP, visit <https://www.armyresilience.army.mil/EAP/index.html> or the [Community Resource Guide](#).

AROUND THE FORCE

- ▶ CYSS
- ▶ EAP
- ▶ IPD
- ▶ MWR



Army SHARP Academy SARC/VA Career Course Graduation Awardees

FORT LEAVENWORTH, KANSAS—At the Army SHARP Academy ceremony on Feb. 16, 31 students graduated from the SARC/VA Career Course. Col. Travis Jacobs, SHARP Academy director, personally recognized each of the class of 2024 award recipients. Sgt. 1st Class Nomi Brown, FORSCOM, Fort Liberty, North Carolina, took home the Academic Excellence Award, and Sgt. 1st Class Hezekiah Jenkins, TRADOC, Fort Eustis, Virginia, walked away with the Jay Lee Hoffman Spirit Award. (Left to Right: Michelle Pressler, Sgt. 1st Class Hezekiah Jenkins, Col. Travis Jacobs, Sgt. 1st Class Nomi Brown)



Eighth Army Commanders Host Leaders From Military and Family Life Counseling Program

USAG HUMPHREYS, KOREA—Military Community and Family Policy's Erika Slaton and Eileen Palma visited with Eighth Army Command teams to gain a deeper understanding of the operational impact of the Military and Family Life Counseling program in Korea. Funded by the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the program provides confidential non-medical counseling services worldwide from licensed counselors. During roundtable discussions at USAG Humphreys, USAG Daegu and USAG Yongsan-Casey, commanders shared the program's positive impact to encourage Soldiers and Families to reach out for help. Leaders also shared best practices and opportunities to enhance Military and Family Life Counseling support in Korea.



Cultivating Quality of Life Through Community Connection

FORT HUNTER LIGGETT, CALIFORNIA—The Religious Support Office celebrated the grand opening of the Lightfighter Chapel's Serenity Garden last August with a garden party. The garden was created as a morale boost for Soldiers, Army Civilians and their Families who are stationed at the remote central California installation and to serve as a community hub for social and recreational activities.



USAG Bavaria Launches Wellness Wednesday

GRAFENWÖHR, GERMANY—USAG Bavaria's new Wellness Wednesday program aims to support the physical and mental health of all community members by offering a diverse range of events every Wednesday during lunch hours. Among the classes available are yoga, Zumba and spin, which are designed for people of all skill and experience levels. To organize and promote these events, the Employee Assistance Program has partnered with local fitness instructors, the American Red Cross and the installation gym.



Integrated Prevention Division Hosts Onsite Training Visit

ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA—From March 11 to 15, the Integrated Prevention Division hosted an onsite training session for prevention leads and program managers. The purpose of the event was to offer capacity building, technical assistance and onboarding support to I-PAG prevention leads and program managers. Lt. Gen. Kevin Vereen, DCS, G-9, and Ms. Dee Geise, DPRR director, also delivered remarks during the event.



Resilience in Military Families

FORT LEONARD WOOD, MISSOURI—Each year during the Month of the Military Child, the Fort Leonard Wood Religious Support Office hosts a learning event for military kids and their parents led by guest speaker, Dr. Becky Powell, training specialist. This year's Military Kids Thrive event is planned for April 27 to highlight the importance of Family bonding and making friends during the stressful time of a permanent change of station. (Photo courtesy of Becky Powell)



Securing Hope: Strategies for Lethal Means Safety, With Emmy Betz, M.D.

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

“Lethal means safety is important because suicide isn’t inevitable,” says Emmy Betz, M.D., MPH, an emergency physician and nationally recognized expert in preventing firearm injuries and suicide. Betz is a professor of emergency medicine at the University of Colorado School of Medicine, where she is the founding director of the Firearm Injury Prevention Initiative. She has been invited to work with numerous organizations spanning the civilian–veteran spectrum.

Betz says that lethal means safety is a bit of a clunky term. But generally, it refers to the role that the method of suicide plays in the likelihood that someone will die and the recognition that we need to take steps to reduce access to those lethal methods. Betz gives a practical example: She says jumping off of a high bridge is likely to be lethal. So, in turn, many communities have put barriers on bridges. These barriers make it difficult for someone experiencing a suicide crisis to jump.

Lethal means safety is also important because we have determined that if someone can’t access the method that they were planning to use, they don’t automatically switch to another method. Betz says this highlights that suicide is preventable. “So there is hope.” She goes on to say that the reason we

know that most people don’t substitute methods is that the period of a suicide crisis can be very brief. “There might be a lot of things leading up to it. But we know from science that the time from deciding to take action to actually doing it can be in the space of minutes to hours. And so, putting time and distance between someone and a lethal method can be lifesaving.” She says that’s why it’s important to really focus on reducing access to the most lethal methods of suicide—to get people through that temporary crisis and get them the help they need. Betz says that this leads to more people surviving.

According to Betz, lethal means safety is just one part of what we think about as a comprehensive approach to suicide prevention. She says that we need to also be thinking about things like encouraging help-seeking behavior and destigmatizing getting help when we’re in a tough patch. We also need to ensure that people have access to effective treatments and that our communities are engaging and more supportive overall—specifically, how we support people after a suicide attempt, as well as those around them.

Betz says there are several misconceptions regarding lethal-means safety, especially as it relates to firearms. “This is not about gun

control, confiscation or legislation. We are talking about voluntary actions that people can take for themselves, their families and their communities.” She equates it to the designated-driver approach. Betz says: “We’re not asking someone to give up their driver’s license. We’re not telling them that they can never drink again. We’re only saying, ‘Hey, we want to keep you safe while you’re not at your best.’ Basically, you do what you can to ensure they get home safely.”

Betz emphasizes that if there is one thing that you can do for your family in terms of suicide prevention, it’s reducing access to lethal means, particularly access to firearms. “This could be the difference between life and death. This is about us supporting cultural changes to prevent the injuries and the deaths that nobody wants to see.” To hear more of Betz’s discussion of lethal means safety, listen to episode 18 of the DPRR podcast or watch the recording of the [Securing Hope: Strategies for Lethal Means Safety webinar](#).

If you or someone you know is experiencing a suicide crisis and needs help, contact the [988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline](#) at 988 and press 1 for the Military Crisis Line.

RESILIENCE Roundup PODCAST

Episode 17:
Navigating Economic Security: A Holistic Approach to Enhancing Financial Well-Being

Robyn Mroszczyk, AFC®, financial education program manager for the Army’s Financial Readiness Program, discusses financial readiness and economic security for Army personnel and what resources are available to help Soldiers, Families and Army Civilians achieve financial well-being.

Episode 18:
Securing Hope: Strategies for Lethal Means Safety

Dr. Emmy Betz, an emergency physician and expert on ways to prevent firearm injuries and suicides, discusses how Army personnel can integrate lethal-means safety into their roles and addresses the misconceptions about suicide and LMS.

<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>.

PERSONAL READINESS: FIVE DIMENSIONS

Remember that resilience is more than just being physically or emotionally strong; it encompasses your social, spiritual and family readiness. Resilience drives personal readiness, and personal readiness depends on your ability to sustain healthy behaviors across these five dimensions. You can strengthen them by:

- Consistently getting enough sleep, eating nutritious foods and exercising.
- Noticing how your emotions affect you in different settings and learning how to regain control when your emotions get out of hand.
- Building new relationships and maintaining old ones in ways such as checking in with others regularly and joining a recreational club.
- Checking in with your chaplain or exploring spirituality through a book or podcast.
- Preparing for permanent-change-of-station moves, long deployments and other transitions by consulting DPRR resources and programs.



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



Enhancing Program Capabilities *SHARP RESTRUCTURE Continued from page 1*

support to commands and victims. SARC and VAs on the installation will be supervised by the installation's lead SARC.

"Not only will this result in an independent reporting structure for SHARP professionals, it will also enable SHARP professionals to provide a more victim-centric response and advocate for victims more effectively," Londagin says.

SHARP is also moving to a Civilian workforce except for the new victim support specialist role and some collateral-duty VAs at remote installations.

Civilian hires will assist the transition of the program from commander oversight to a more technically driven oversight to improve overall compliance with regulatory requirements.

"The new SHARP restructure will have a positive impact in supporting victims," says Kimberly Green, Lead SARC at Fort Liberty, North Carolina.

"Under the new structure, it provides victims more of an opportunity to select an advocate outside their organization," Green says. "They won't have the feeling that they must report within their assigned brigade."

Green adds, "Here at Fort Liberty, the supervisory SARCs have/are establishing relationships within

all their assigned brigades. The end state being our SHARP professionals providing undistracted victim advocate support, and our ability to cross-level cases alleviating one advocate having an abundance of cases whereas another having little to none."

This transition is planned to occur before the end of FY24, with ongoing collaboration with Army leadership and DOD for timeline and resourcing, according to Londagin.

"Remote and isolated installations—as designated by Congress—will be allowed to keep a limited number of collateral-duty personnel. These approved collateral-duty personnel will be aligned to a SHARP Program Office and will be supervised/rated by the lead SARC to ensure professional oversight of victim care," she says.

The timeline for the SHARP restructure is driven primarily by conditions, rather than by strict time frames.

Some installations may progress through subsequent phases earlier than others due to variations in local conditions. For instance, locations that don't need to hire supervisory personnel can initiate consolidation immediately, but larger installations must navigate hiring processes before proceeding.

Phase I of the restructure is complete. This included initial hiring actions for most lead SARC positions as well as for personnel at the operational level.

"In Phase I, we established the infrastructure needed to transform the program," Londagin says. "Lead SARCs were designated or hired to manage and oversee the SHARP program at the installation—tactical—level. They are responsible to ensure that all tenant units are provided SARC/VA coverage, regardless of command or branch of service."

She continues: "In Phase II, which is ongoing, the supervisory structure for the workforce is being established. One hundred sixty-nine new hires will

be onboarded as part of Phase II. The Army has hired 136 of the 360 personnel required in the new model—Phase I and II—to date."

Phase III begins when those in supervisory positions are on board and ends when all SHARP personnel are consolidated at the installation's SHARP Program Office under the lead SARCs. During this phase, all current SHARP personnel will be moved to standardized position descriptions.

In Phase IV, after the new SHARP structure is executed, the United States Army Manpower Analysis Agency, or USAMAA, will conduct a full staffing study to determine if adequate human resource levels were established. Phase IV will begin June 30, and end once USAMAA completes the study to inform adjustments to the workforce. During this phase, collateral SHARP positions will be eliminated.

"Transition is welcoming for most, as they see the opportunity for professional growth," Green says. "Some are territorial and seem reluctant in having to report to someone outside their chain of command; this is due to having no program oversight by their command."

Green says she continues to point out to her SHARP professionals that with the restructure they'll have more time for advocate responsibilities, professional growth, program continuity and the ability to provide self-care to avoid burnout.

HQDA will publish a new SHARP regulation with policy guidance for executing the new program requirements (prevention and response).

"The SHARP Program restructure will improve professional oversight of the program's activities," Londagin says, "and ensure proper, consistent delivery of services and expand our ability to provide compassionate, victim-centric care to the force."

For more information, go to <https://www.armyresilience.army.mil/sharp/pages/SHARP-Restructure.html>.

"Not only will this result in an independent reporting structure for SHARP professionals, it will also enable SHARP professionals to provide a more victim-centric response and advocate for victims more effectively."

— Jill Londagin,
SHARP Program Director

Army EFMP Central Office Will Better Support Soldiers and Families

By U.S. Army Public Affairs

Secretary of the Army Christine Wormuth announced March 28 the establishment of a central office for the Army Exceptional Family Member Program that will improve the stationing process for Families who have members with special medical or educational needs. The single office will oversee implementation of the EFMP and will coordinate health care services, permanent change of station order processing and family support services.

"The foundation of Army readiness depends on taking care of our Soldiers and Families," Wormuth

says. "Each Army Family is unique, and the EFMP Central Office will provide tailored support for over 40,000 Families enrolled in EFMP."

The Exceptional Family Member Program is a mandatory enrollment program that works with other military and civilian agencies to provide comprehensive and coordinated community support, housing, educational, medical and personnel services to Families with special needs.

Soldiers on active duty enroll in the program when they have a Family member with a physical, emotional, developmental or intellectual disorder

requiring specialized services so their needs can be considered in the military personnel assignment process. The overall goal of EFMP is to keep Families together by allowing them to accompany their service member to their duty locations.

Dr. Agnes Schaefer, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, says improving the quality of life of Soldiers and their Families is the Army's top priority.

To read the full article announcing the establishment of the EFMP Central Office, click [here](#).



DPRR Celebrates Month of the Military Child With CYSS and EFMP

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

“Military-connected children live pretty unique lives, as their parents do, as well. These children should be celebrated,” says Patricia Bradley Ewen, Child, Youth & School Services Education program specialist (school liaison) within DPRR.

Month of the Military Child provides an opportunity for the Army to do just that—celebrate military-connected youths around the world and to encourage services and installations to amplify the efforts across all of the ecosystems to support these children. Ewen says that CYSS hopes to have a significant impact on the outreach, support and services, as well as celebrate their contributions to the Family and the Soldier. CYSS provides quality programs and resources that support dependent children of National Guard members. Ewen says, “Peace of mind for the child is a part of the CYSS mission.”

Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger established MOMC in 1986. He was a father of two and a World War II veteran. He recognized the sacrifices that his own children made and the challenges they faced due to his military service. As a result, he signed a proclamation establishing the celebration of the military child.

MOMC includes childcare and all the programs that support non-school-aged children, after-school programs, youth sponsorship and our amazing national partnerships, such as 4-H and the Boys and Girls Clubs of America—all of those wonderful, enthusiastic supports for Army

children and Families that contribute to the entire wraparound support of military-connected children.

Military-connected children have benefits and experiences that are not afforded to others. They have an opportunity to see things and to meet people from all walks of life. They have an opportunity to integrate into other cultures and try things that other children won’t. Ewen says, “If you were born and raised in Nebraska and you never left, you may never get a surfing lesson in Hawaii or see a European cathedral in Germany.” She says that level of exposure and understanding of world cultures is an advantage in this day and age, with this incredibly shrinking world where we are really learning about one another.

Marcine L. Best, M.Ed., Exceptional Family Member Program special education specialist within the DPRR, believes that military-connected children have a diverse approach and view of the world because of their vast exposure to multiple countries and ethnicities. She says that diversity, in turn, plays a part in who they are and who they will become. “Diversity is second nature for them, and it changes their outlook on life.” Best says that in her role at Headquarters, Army EFMP she creates tools and programs to aid parents of special-needs children. EFMP is a mandatory-enrollment program that assists active-duty military Families who have a member who has special medical or educational needs.

Another benefit is the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children, which was signed in 2008. The compact ensures that military-connected children receive the same opportunities for educational success as other children and that they are not penalized or delayed in achieving their educational goals. The compact provides protection for military children when they move from school to school. It allows parents to hand-carry records, which expedites class placement. Ewen says that as a result of the compact, military students are being properly



Mrs. Trude Moellmann, Child Youth Services Outreach Director and School Liaison Officer, engages with children during a Month of the Military Child event hosted by Child Youth Services at USAG Ansbach. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Preston Malizia)

placed in classes and programs. She says more students have continuity of education services, including students with disabilities and gifted students. She notes that state education department accountability data for military-connected children shows that generally, these students consistently outperform their peers.

Ewen says, “Let’s purple-up for our military-connected children.” She explains “purple-up” as: “When you hug all of the colors of the military—blue for Navy, red for Marines, green for Army, blue and silver for Air Force—you get purple. And it’s for everybody, including the National Guard and Reserve.”

Ewen concludes: “While we celebrate MOMC, we’re also celebrating the fact that there’s a large repertoire of materials, resources and people to provide you peace of mind while you’re out defending the country. We’re taking care of your children.”

For more information on the CYSS program, click [here](#). For more information on the EFMP program, click [here](#).

“While we celebrate MOMC, we’re also celebrating the fact that there’s a large repertoire of materials, resources and people.”

— Patricia Bradley Ewen, Child, Youth & School Services Education program specialist

CHAMP's Seven Tips for Raising Secure Military Children

By Human Performance Resources by CHAMP at the Uniformed Services University

One way to explain how children interact with others, especially with their parents, is known as “attachment style.” There are two main categories of attachment style: secure and insecure. Children with a secure attachment style are incredibly resilient and function better emotionally and behaviorally than children with insecure attachment styles.

Children with a secure attachment style have high self-esteem and are confident in their

ability to help themselves. They feel safe in their relationships, have strong emotional connections with others, are cooperative and trust others. Ultimately, children with a secure attachment style believe they are worthy of love and that others are dependable.

Focus on sensitive parenting

The best way to protect your child’s resilience to difficulties, such as deployment of a parent,

is to show sensitive parenting. Sensitive parenting is your ability to accurately identify your child’s signals and then promptly respond to those signals. An example of sensitive parenting is noticing your child’s different cries (for example, a cry for hunger) and then quickly responding to that unique cry with an appropriate action (such as feeding the child).

To read the full story click [here](#).



ACE-SI Tier 3 Trainers Receive Unique Skill Identifier

By Ozzie Smith, R2I Staff

As of March 1, the Army now grants all Soldiers who successfully complete the Ask, Care, Escort Suicide Intervention (ACE-SI) Tier 3 a personnel development skill identifier (PDSI) code. This PDSI recognizes the increased capability that qualified Soldiers bring to the service's readiness and resilience requirements.

A PDSI is used in conjunction with a Soldier's military occupational specialty to identify unique skills, training or experience acquired throughout their careers that enhance the Army and their organization's ability to carry out a mission. Establishing a PDSI results in a trackable training resource in the Total Officer Personnel Management Information System and Integrated Total Army Personnel Database. As proponents for the ACE-SI program, HQDA, Deputy Chief of Staff, G-9, Directorate of Prevention, Readiness and Resilience support the necessity of efficiently tracking certified ACE-SI Tier 3 instructors with a PDSI. This enables the Army to effectively utilize certified ACE-SI instructors across the enterprise.

To meet the ACE-SI PDSI qualifications, personnel must be certified ACE-SI Tier 2 instructors, successfully complete the three-day ACE-SI Tier 3 workshop and be assigned duties to support the suicide prevention mission within their organization. Additionally, personnel must host three ACE-SI

Tier 1 workshops to certify ACE-SI Tier 1 instructors.

What Is ACE-SI?

As the Army's enhanced suicide prevention unit training program, ACE-SI empowers service members by providing comprehensive instruction on how to intervene in crisis situations appropriately and deliberately, and how to recognize and assist at-risk individuals who are dealing with challenges. The program teaches participants to remain calm, to ask directly about suicidal ideation, to express empathy and to safely escort at-risk individuals to the appropriate response agency or to remain with them until help arrives. Under ACE-SI, Army members are taught their roles in postvention response after someone dies by suicide, as well as their reintegration responsibilities for individuals returning after receiving behavioral health support.

ACE Base +1 Training

ACE Base +1 training covers risk factors for harmful behaviors and protective (resilience) factors. Certified ACE-SI instructors explain the far-reaching effects of suicide and Army members' prevention and intervention responsibilities. They equip students with conversation tools to promote active listening, ensuring that individuals in crisis feel heard and understood. The Base module is required

annually and includes the steps of "Ask, Care, Escort." It is accompanied by one of three additional (+1) modules selected by unit leadership. The additional modules are Reducing Stigma, Active Listening and Practicing ACE.

Who Can Conduct ACE-SI

Every unit/organization will have an ACE-SI Tier 3 training-certified leader to provide in-person training to certify Tier 2 and Tier 1 ACE-SI instructors. This person could be a Suicide Prevention Program coordinator, chaplain, religious affairs specialist or behavioral health counselor selected by their immediate commanders, Civilian leaders, or component Suicide Prevention Program manager, and certified by attending training workshops conducted by National Guard Bureau Ready and Resilient Schoolhouse, or Headquarters U.S. Army Installation Management Command.

All Army units will have ACE-SI Tier 2 and Tier 1 trainers to support commanders with prevention and intervention. It is recommended that they conduct the annual Personal Readiness Training, ACE Base +1, for their units. Instructors are supported by a behavioral health professional or an on-call chaplain.

Where to Find ACE-SI Educational Materials

Materials for the program can be found at: <https://www.armyresilience.army.mil/suicide-prevention/pages/about.html>

Honoring Legacies: SOS Ensures Continued Support for Survivors

By Rachel Rachfal, Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness

In the heart of every military Family lies a story—a narrative of service, sacrifice and resilience. For those who have lost loved ones in the line of duty, this story takes on a new chapter, one marked by grief but also by the enduring legacy of their fallen heroes. As we commemorate Gold Star Spouses Day on April 5, it's a poignant reminder of the sacrifices made by Army Families and the unwavering support they deserve.

In these moments of profound loss, the Army's Survivor Outreach Services ensures that no survivor walks alone in their journey of healing and remembrance. SOS serves as a lifeline for surviving Families, offering a comprehensive network of resources, guidance and compassionate care. From the moment survivors connect with the program, they find themselves embraced by a community dedicated to honoring their loved one's memory and supporting their ongoing needs.

"Our mission at Survivor Outreach Services is deeply rooted in the commitment to honor the sacrifices made by our fallen service members and to provide steadfast support to their Families,"

shares Ms. Joey Miranda, Survivor Advisory Working Group/Survivor Outreach Services Program Manager, DPRR, Headquarters, Department of the Army, DCS, G-9. "Every day, we strive to ensure that survivors feel empowered, respected and cared for as they navigate the complexities of grief and loss."

One of the key roles of SOS is to assist survivors in navigating the myriad resources available to them, from financial assistance to counseling services. By providing personalized support and guidance, SOS empowers Families to access the benefits and support they deserve.

"Our goal is to be a trusted ally for survivors, helping them navigate the road to accessing benefits and resources," explains Miranda. "Whether it's assistance with paperwork, connecting with grief counseling services or accessing educational benefits for children, we are here every step of the way."

In addition to practical assistance, SOS fosters a sense of community and connection among

survivors. Through various events, support groups and outreach programs, survivors have the opportunity to come together, share their stories and find solace in the company of others who understand their journey.

"We understand that the journey of grief can feel isolating at times, which is why we place a strong emphasis on building a supportive community for our survivors," says Miranda. "Whether it's attending a memorial event, participating in a support group or simply connecting with fellow survivors over coffee, these moments of connection can be incredibly healing."

For many survivors, the support provided by SOS goes beyond practical assistance—it becomes a lifeline of hope and resilience. Through the darkest days of grief, they find strength in knowing that they are not alone, that their loved one's legacy will be honored, and that their Family will be supported for years to come.

To continue reading about how the SOS program supports survivors, click [here](#).



DPRR

DIRECTORATE OF PREVENTION, RESILIENCE AND READINESS

APRIL 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

- Ms. Melanie Arce, Exceptional Family Member Program
- Dr. Hai-Wen Chu, Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention Program
- Mr. Logan Cobb, Child, Youth and School Services
- Ms. Andrea Donoghue, Army Substance Abuse Program
- Dr. Meredith Farnsworth, Integrated Prevention Division
- Ms. Leanne Knop Lemons, Family Advocacy Program
- Mr. Ousman Kondeh, Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention Program
- Ms. TaKiesha Shropshire, Resource Management
- Mr. Marcus Smith, Exceptional Family Member Program
- Ms. Corissa Yahnke, Child, Youth and School Services

Farewell

- Mr. Andrew Hicks, Exceptional Family Member Program
- Mr. Joseph Pettoni, Morale, Welfare and Recreation
- Mr. Carson Phillips, Assessments Division

Military Spouse Appreciation Day

May 10 is Military Spouse Appreciation Day! Remember to celebrate and honor those who serve and strengthen our Army members by recognizing the contributions, support and sacrifices they have made.

<https://www.military.com/spouse/military-spouse-appreciation-day>



UPCOMING EVENTS

MAY

10th U.S. Naval War College 2024 Women, Peace and Security Symposium

May 2–3: This symposium brings together experts to examine women’s roles in promoting peace and security. This year’s theme is “Advancing Gendered Security in a Complex World: Hard Power, Smart Power, Soft Power.”

Location: Newport, Rhode Island **Learn more:** <https://usnwc.edu/News-and-Events/Events/US-Naval-War-College-2024-Women-Peace-and-Security-Symposium>

National Association of Addiction Professionals

May 19–21: The 45th annual National Conference for the National Association of Addiction Professionals brings top organizations, leaders and other professionals to discuss topics and issues impacting the field.

Location: Denver, Colorado **Learn more:** <https://naatpnational2024.eventscribe.net>

19th Annual Conference on Crimes Against Women

May 20–23: The CCAW educates and trains first responders and community stakeholders on best practices for identifying, investigating and prosecuting crimes against women.

Location: Dallas, Texas **Learn more:** <https://conferencecaw.org/registration-2024/>

JUNE

National Alliance on Mental Illness Convention

June 4–6: NAMICon’s annual convention brings together mental health professionals to share knowledge on topics during 50 sessions. This year’s theme is “Elevating Mental Health.”

Location: Denver, Colorado **Learn more:** <https://convention.nami.org/>

TOP-PERFORMING POSTS

SOCIAL MEDIA UPDATE

Follow @ArmyResilience

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

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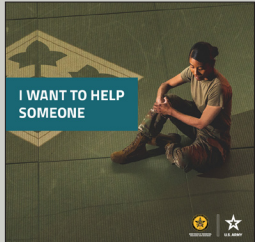
Impressions: 5,663

TWITTER



Impressions: 302

INSTAGRAM



Impressions: 6,500

LINKEDIN



Impressions: 190

Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness

DPRR COMMUNITYLINK

April 30, 2024, Volume 9, Issue 4

The DPRR Community Link newsletter is an authorized bi-monthly publication produced by the Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness for the Army community. The contents of the DPRR Community Link are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense or the Department of the Army. The editorial content of the DPRR Community Link is the responsibility of the Communications & Outreach Division at DPRR. For questions, or to subscribe or submit articles and photographs to DPRR Community Link, please contact the editor at Tara.Davis@mat-inc.net. This publication is available for download at: <https://www.dvidshub.net/publication/1102/r2-community-link-newsletter>.

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

Submit articles and photographs by May 15. For any questions, contact the editor at Tara.Davis@mat-inc.net.

Connect With DPRR!
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