

# Wounded Warrior

## FAMILY QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



April-June 2020

As the nation continues to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and our daily routines are fundamentally impacted, Navy Wounded Warrior wants to reassure you that assistance provided by this program will continue. Note the resources listed in this quarterly newsletter designed to provide helpful tools during challenging times.

## Caring for the Caregivers



Family members of wounded, ill and injured Navy and Coast Guardsmen met in Alexandria, Virginia, Feb. 27-28, to participate in respite and resiliency building activities. Caregivers came together from Washington, D.C., Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, Florida, Indiana and Colorado through the generous support of the Navy Safe Harbor Foundation. The event kicked off with a cooking demonstration from the Culinary Cooking School in Vienna, Virginia, hosted by chefs Stephen Sands and Pete Snaith. After watching the chefs prepare a three-course meal and teach cooking techniques, the caregivers enjoyed eating the meal together. The caregivers gained resiliency and problem-solving skills through guided activities led by Families Overcoming Under Stress (FOCUS). One popular tool practiced by the caregivers was the FOCUS “feeling thermometer,” where participants learned how to manage emotions during stressful situations and discern the difference between responding and reacting to those emotions. Ms. Virginia Beeson, BSN, MSN, NEA-BC, led an informative educational session on how to have challenging conversations, build relationships and improve

### In this edition:

- Caring for the Caregivers
- Communication tips from Ms. Virginia Beeson, BSN, MSN, NEA-BC
- Resources



## Caring for the Caregivers (*CONTINUED*)

communication skills in difficult situations. For a summary of her presentation, see below. Other sessions introduced therapies to promote relaxation and wellness. Ms. Claire Schad, MT-BC, a board-certified music therapist, identified ways to self-express, increase focus and increase self-confidence through music and song lyrics. Ms. Eileen Kurtz, founder of Functional Fitness, guided the caregivers through exercises to focus on self-awareness, feeling at ease and creating positive habits for health and wellness. Caregivers who attended the event responded positively. Some of their comments included: “I will use these tools in my everyday life,” “I did not realize how much I needed this,” and “I loved meeting others who are walking similar paths.” Navy Wounded Warrior, in partnership with the Navy Safe Harbor Foundation, hopes to host similar events for caregivers once social distancing restrictions are lifted.



**The following is from Challenging Conversations, an excerpt from the presentation by Ms. Virginia Beeson on Feb. 28**

**Eight ideas to help make your communications more meaningful:**

1. What are you trying to accomplish?
2. What outcome do you hope for?
3. Is it the right time, place, frame of mind?
4. What emotions are involved?
5. Good communication=good listening.
6. Be acutely aware of your non-verbal language.
7. There is more than one right answer.
8. It is not about winning.

*Consider this: Even if you are right, you don't always win.*



## RESOURCES



### **Families OverComing Under Stress (FOCUS)**

FOCUS provides a range of resilience-enhancing services to service members and their families.

FOCUS teaches practical skills to help families meet the challenges of military life, including how to communicate, solve problems and successfully set goals together. During FOCUS, families and couples practice understanding one another's perspective and become closer by developing a shared understanding of their experience.

**FOCUS** is offered in several formats: family consultations, couple- or family-level training, small group training, and workshops. FOCUS builds strong connections with other military family providers to support a network of care for service members, their partners and families. FOCUS training is confidential, free and offers services at family-friendly hours.

FOCUS services are also available via the virtual TeleFOCUS program, allowing families and couples to meet with a FOCUS provider through video teleconference. Families and couples can use TeleFOCUS when in a remote location or for those sessions that are difficult to make.

FOCUS sessions allow families and couples to build their own story about military life experiences.

This helps them to:

Build on current strengths

Feel closer and more supported

Identify, manage and discuss emotions

Use problem solving and goal setting to empower the entire family

Clarify misunderstandings and respect individual points of view

For a full listing of FOCUS sites, visit <http://focusproject.org/contact>.

For more information about TeleFOCUS, visit <https://focusproject.org/telefocus>.



**Military Caregiver** PEER Forums aim to reduce stress, provide emotional support and be a resource for valuable information through guided discussion among military caregivers, allowing them to share practical, accurate and thorough information based on their personal experiences.

Military caregivers may join their peers virtually in an online forum on the fourth Thursday of every month to discuss topics that they choose, share their expertise and network with others who are experiencing similar challenges. To be included on the Caregiver PEER Virtual Forum information list or to RSVP for a forum, email [OSD.Caregiver@mail.mil](mailto:OSD.Caregiver@mail.mil). Additional resources are available at <https://warriorcare.dodlive.mil/caregiver-resources/>. Caregivers can also contact [OSD.Caregiver@mail.mil](mailto:OSD.Caregiver@mail.mil) to request hard copies of the Caregiver Resource Directory.



# MILITARY ONESOURCE

**Military OneSource** also recommends the following mobile applications to help maintain a healthy lifestyle. All mobile applications are free and available for iOS and/or Android devices.



## **Breathe2Relax**

Trains you on the “belly breathing” technique that has proven benefits for your overall mental health. Use the app’s breathing exercises to learn and practice on your own or as part of a stress management program supervised by your health care provider.



## **Parenting2Go**

Helps veterans and service members reconnect with their children and provides convenient tools to strengthen parenting skills. The app addresses challenges that come with parenting children of all ages and backgrounds. Available on iOS only.



## **Positive Activity Jackpot**

Helps users who may be overwhelmed by depression find nearby enjoyable activities. Can’t decide? Let the app’s jackpot function make the choice.



## **Big Moving Adventure**

With Sesame’s Street’s Big Moving Adventure, your young child can create their own Muppet friend and help him or her through the moving process, including packing, saying goodbye, expressing feelings, traveling and making new friends.



## **LifeArmor**

Touch-screen technology allows the user to browse information on 17 topics, including sleep, depression, relationship issues and post-traumatic stress.



## **Breathe, Think, Do**

Laugh and learn as you help a Sesame Street monster friend calm down and solve everyday challenges. This app helps your child learn Sesame’s Breathe, Think, Do strategy for problem solving.



## **Virtual Hope Box**

Contains simple tools to help users with coping, relaxation, distraction and positive thinking using personalized audio, video, pictures, games, mindfulness exercises, activity planning, inspirational quotes and coping statements.



## **Moving Forward**

Provides on-the-go tools and teaches problem solving skills to overcome obstacles and deal with stress. The app is designed for veterans and service members but is useful for anyone experiencing stress. Available on iOS only.

**Military OneSource Chill Drills** features an overview of four simple drills to help reverse the symptoms of stress. These drills can help slow the heart rate, lower blood pressure and reduce the level of stress hormones in the body. Check it out at <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/search#!/chill%20drills?searchText=chill%20drills>



**Operation Family Caregiver** provides free and confidential support to military families. Coaches create a custom eight-session program that is unique to each family. Together, caregivers and coaches develop strategies to help them get through tough times and make plans for how to manage them over the long term. The website, available at [https://www.operationfamilycaregiver.org/caregiver\\_support/](https://www.operationfamilycaregiver.org/caregiver_support/), also lists military caregiver education and mental health resources.



Active-duty and retired Sailors and their eligible family members who have urgent financial needs can contact the **Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society** for assistance. Several confidential programs are available, including the Quick Assist Loan, which offers up to \$500 in a zero-interest loan. Visit <https://www.nmcrs.org/> for more information.



**Coast Guard Mutual Assistance** offers short-term interest free loans, financial grants and other services to Coast Guardsmen. For more information, log in to [www.cgmahq.org](http://www.cgmahq.org).



**PsychArmor Institute** lists four pages of caregiver resources, with topics covering crisis support; education; exercise; financial support; food insecurity and recipes; fun ideas while at home; health care support; online caregivers support/community; and self-care. The PDF is available at [https://s3-us-west-1.amazonaws.com/psycharmor/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/18181644/Caregivers-Resource-Page\\_-COVID-19.pdf](https://s3-us-west-1.amazonaws.com/psycharmor/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/18181644/Caregivers-Resource-Page_-COVID-19.pdf).