

PREVENTION IN ACTION

WELLNESS

STRENGTHENING THE WELL-BEING OF YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Our families can be considered one of our greatest resources.

Whether you're biologically related, friends, or fellow warfighters, a healthy, supportive family system is key to our overall well-being and personal development.

A strong family unit is also crucial to readiness in the home, classroom, and battlefield.

Families provide a primary understanding of how the world works—how to problem-solve, manage finances, express feelings, learn to communicate, and develop relationships with self and others.

We mirror these behaviors and often carry them into adulthood, even those that might be harmful or unproductive.

So how do we build productive life skills to strengthen and maintain overall military family well-being?



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It often happens by adapting to challenges and developing life skills such as assertiveness, boundary setting, gratitude, self-care, help-seeking behaviors, and setting good examples for others. Healthy military families, in turn, can promote a healthy military community.

As military families need help adjusting to parenthood, New

Parent Support provides pregnancy, parenting resources, and home visits from birth through age 5.

To better prepare families and service members for Marine Corps life, Marine Corps Family Team Building provides workshops and resources on deployment, acculturation, and life skills to improve family

FAMILY FUN

Here are other suggestions to strengthen family well-being, build camaraderie, and reduce isolation:

- Set aside time for weekly family dinners. Maintain this ritual during deployments.
- Host a movie night.
- Plan game nights with other military families.
- Schedule routine date nights.
- Seek volunteer opportunities as a family or group of friends to share talents and skills in the civilian community.

functioning and adjustment.

When experiencing marital conflict, FAP offers programs like "Married and Loving It" to keep marriage successfully on track.

For more information and support, contact the Family Advocacy Program or Marine Corps Family Team Building.

Volunteering Allows You to Help Others and Boost Your Mental and Social Fitness

Building connections in your community is essential to enhancing your quality of life and mental and social fitness.

The mobile military lifestyle can add challenges to making social connections and building healthy relationships.

Connections through volunteering are almost automatic. Volunteering brings together people with an altruistic spirit in support of their community.

An afternoon of volunteering can give volunteers a more positive view of themselves and those around them, lift their spirits, and alleviate stress.

Build connections through volunteering by:

- 1. Contacting your installation Volunteer**



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Coordinator. The coordinator knows about opportunities on and off the installation that can help build connection.

2. Volunteering virtually. Although you may not be physically with others, the

connection and joy brought through volunteering remains the same.

3. Just volunteering. Whether once a month or once a week or with friends, family, or by yourself, volunteering will begin connecting you to others, improving your mental and social fitness, and having a positive impact on your community. Some activities also can build physical fitness.

Volunteering can be the first step to an amazing connection within the community and the people who surround you.

You can give back, while receiving the positive benefits of volunteering.

For more information, contact your installation Volunteer Coordinator today.



**IN YOUR OPINION,
HAS SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN
THE MILITARY BECOME MORE
OR LESS OF A PROBLEM?**

**VISIT [DODSURVEYS.MIL](https://dodsurveys.mil)
TO CONFIDENTIALLY
SHARE YOUR OPINION**

Ensure Your Voice Is Heard

Marines live by a set of enduring core values that form the bedrock of their character. These values guide their actions and bolster their resolve.

Honor, courage, and commitment lead them to victory over the physical, mental, and moral battles faced during combat or while serving in their communities.

Marines have an opportunity to complete two surveys that help the Department of Defense (DoD) address issues and shape decisions about programs and policy. By sharing their thoughts and experiences, they can help shape the future of their unit and the Marine Corps as a whole.

The first, the Defense Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS), provides leaders with important feedback about the current climate within their unit or organization.

The second survey, the Workplace and Gender

Relations (WGR) Survey of Military Members, is conducted every two years. The Congressionally mandated survey provides the DoD with estimates of the prevalence of gender discrimination, sexual harassment, and sexual assault in the military.

Both surveys inform prevention activities and efforts to improve the unit's climate. This year, the WGR is available to service members who complete the DEOCS.

Responses will tell leaders what the Marine Corps is doing well, what can be improved, and what needs to be changed.

The surveys will be available through Nov. 30. Commands will let their service members know when their surveys are open. The surveys will be accessed at www.surveysdrc.com/DEOCS.

CONNECTING VIA SINGLE MARINE PROGRAM

What is the Single Marine Program?

The Single Marine Program (SMP) enhances the Marine

experience with comprehensive recreational expertise through individual and group activities targeting active-duty Marines through its core values of Recreation, Quality of Life, and Community Involvement.

How does the Single Marine Program help with Marine connectivity?

The Single Marine Program brings Marines together, which can strengthen unit cohesion, reduce stress and anxiety, and promote healthy relationships. Furthermore, connecting Marines can also promote retention, readiness, and resiliency throughout the Marine Corps and give Marines a sense of belonging.

What aspects of Quality of Life promote connectivity for Marines?

Marines can connect to discuss their quality-of-life issues through the SMP Council. The SMP council can help address issues that directly or indirectly influence morale, the living environment, and personal growth.



How does Recreation facilitate connectivity?

Marines can participate in recreational activities through SMP Coordinators, who provide various social, competitive, and educational activities promoting camaraderie. The local Single Marine Recreation Centers facilitate trips and outings in the community to enhance physical fitness, life-skills development, and cultural awareness, bringing Marines together to reduce loneliness.

Where does Community Involvement fall in with connectivity?

Through Community involvement, Marines connect with their surrounding community, which is a healthy alternative for leisure time. Whether blood drives, adopting-a-highway, mentoring, volunteering with Special Olympics, or Toys for Tots, connecting with the community enhances the Marines' leadership skills and qualifies them for recognition from their command.

Connectedness within units and communities is vital and can make a difference in not only Marines' careers but also in their lives. Through the Single Marine Program, Marines can readily find ways to connect and build relationships through endless opportunities to learn, culture awareness, and life experiences that can further expand what's in front of or familiar to them for the rest of their lives.

ABOUT THE NEWSLETTER

The United States Marine Corps' Marine & Family Programs Division publishes Prevention in Action.

The contents of this quarterly newsletter are for informational purposes only and not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment.

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To suggest topics or questions, email hqmcprevention@usmc.mil to

suggest topics or ask questions.

To access hot links, right-click on link, copy link, and paste it into a browser window.

PLAY CAN PREVENT BURNOUT IN ADULTS AND SERVE AS SELF-CARE

Children are always encouraged to have fun, play games, and be creative. In adulthood, it becomes more difficult to relax and plan fun activities due to work and personal obligations.

Burnout occurs when your workload and other stressors become overwhelming.

Burnout affects mood, motivation, and energy. Finding ways to recharge maintains well-being and reduces stress.

Self-care involves prioritizing mental and physical health needs by adopting routine, healthy lifestyle habits and participating in leisure activities. Play is a type of self-care combining mental and physical activities, done individually or as a group, at work or home, for enjoyment, relaxation, and satisfaction.

Work Self-care Examples

- Avoid eating lunch at your desk or computer. Eat outside or in the breakroom.



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- Go for a short walk during lunch or work breaks. Explore your installation’s green spaces.
- Stay hydrated.
- Stand, stretch, and move your body throughout the workday.

Home Self-care Examples

- Exercise regularly. Visit the gym or recreation center.
- Maintain healthy sleep and eating habits.
- Spend time with loved ones,

friends, and pets.

- Engage in hobbies (reading, hiking, cooking).

Workplace Play Examples

- Create an office scavenger hunt or other contest for fun.
- Celebrate birthdays, hail and farewells, and accomplishments.
- Take a break to enjoy a game on your phone.
- Leave puzzles, board games, or coloring pages in the conference

room or breakroom.

How Workplace Play Helps Prevent Burnout

- Improves functioning when experiencing stress.
- Increases mental and physical energy needed to prevent burnout.
- Encourages teamwork and cooperation.
- Inspires creativity and innovation.
- Helps to view and approach work challenges in new ways.

Mental and Physical Health Benefits of Play

- Reduces depression and lowers risk of developing dementia.
- Relieves stress, reduces cortisol, and lowers heart disease risk.
- Improves brain function.
- Stimulates the mind and boosts creativity, learning, and memory.
- Improves relationships and connections with others.
- Keeps you feeling young and energetic.

Don't Sleep on Sleep Continuity

Why does sleep continuity matter?

Sleep continuity is the ability to sleep through the night without waking up and plays a significant role in the ability to cope with stress and regulate emotions. Disrupted sleep continuity is often referred to as fragmented sleep or interrupted sleep. If not feeling refreshed in the morning or experiencing daytime sleepiness, disrupted sleep continuity may be to blame.

What are the effects of sleep continuity disruption?

Sleep continuity disruption has been found to affect mood and ability to regulate emotions more so than partial sleep loss (delaying sleep). Also, inadequate sleep may lead to changes in sleep architecture (stages and cycles), which evidence suggests

increases the risk for depression.

Looking to improve sleep continuity?

Not all causes of interrupted sleep are under our control, but the below sleep hygiene habits and routines may reduce the number of common causes associated with both falling asleep and staying asleep.

- Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day; this includes weekends.
- Follow a pre-sleep, nighttime routine.
- Avoid alcohol, nicotine, caffeine, and large meals too close to bedtime.
- Avoid screens (tv, phone, pad, etc.) in and before bed.
- Use blackout curtains or a sleep mask.
- Wear ear plugs or use a white or brown noise machine or app.
- Bedding should be clean and comfortable.
- Keep bedroom temperature comfortable; a cooler setting is recommended.
- Talk with partner or roommate about



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snoring or other causes of potential sleep interruptions.

- Journal or write out a to-do list.
- Get outside, open blinds, and get daily exposure to sunlight.
- Find time to be physically active every day.

To learn more about sleep continuity, talk with your local Semper Fit Sleep Coach. Additional information pertaining to sleep health can be found at [newsinhealth.nih.gov/2021/04/good-sleep-good-health](https://www.newsinhealth.nih.gov/2021/04/good-sleep-good-health).

NINE STRATEGIES FOR COPING WITH STRESS WITHOUT TURNING TO ALCOHOL

1 Get moving. Light exercise is great for stress. It eases muscle tension and induces positive feelings. Go for a walk, run, or stretch daily. Different forms of exercise provide different results, so try different activities to see what works best.

2 Connect with others. Seek support from peers, mentors, or trusted family members to talk through the stressful situation with. Sharing the details of stressors can eliminate some of their burden. If feeling overwhelmed by stress and self-medicating with alcohol, reach out for help and get support to make healthier life choices.

3 Breathe. Using deep breathing techniques can help ease the physiological changes experienced when stressed. Most people are more focused and able to think clearer when the

body is calm. Even the simplest five-breath focus effort can yield incredible results.

4 Listen to music. Many people have go-to songs for stress relief and zoning out. No matter what songs or style you find relaxing, listen to music for 20 minutes.

5 Sleep. A good night's sleep enables people to cope with stress while poor sleep has the opposite effect. Incorporate good sleeping habits such as noise reduction, going to bed and waking at the same time daily, and avoiding caffeine, nicotine, alcohol, or napping.

6 Give back. Volunteer to help others. Research shows that altruism improves mood and takes our focus away from our own struggles. It can be as simple as helping a fellow Marine at work or volunteering for a nonprofit.



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7 Practice mindfulness. Try a mindfulness technique to ground you by activating all senses. Here's one: focus on five things you can see, four things you can touch, three things you can hear, two things you can smell, and one thing you can taste.

8 Meditate. Meditation involves deliberately focusing attention inward, either with or without specific guidance. It can provide

a sense of calmness and a new perspective on a stressful situation.

9 Express your gratitude. Spending five minutes a day journaling about what you're grateful for can change your perspective for the better. Try it every morning to help prepare for the day and shift your thinking toward gratitude instead of resentment or anxiety.

Carve Out Time in Your Schedule to Connect with Nature

Did you know time and nature can improve your physical, emotional, and mental well-being?

The link between health and connecting to nature includes better attention spans, lower stress, and reduced risk for psychiatric disorders. Those who participate in outdoor recreational activities also have lower levels of stress, better conflict resolution skills, and improved anger management skills.

Access to outdoor recreational activities occurs in green spaces and blue spaces.

Green spaces are parks, trails, and sports fields. Marine Corps Community Services has recreation and equipment rental services on Marine Corps installations for green space activities, such as mountain bikes, camping gear, and sports equipment.



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Blue spaces are bodies of water, such as lakes, oceans, and rivers, as well as outdoor pools.

Blue spaces have a calming effect on the mind; it is why people say the ocean speaks to us and sometimes feel a spiritual

connection with the water.

Marine Corps Community Services offers blue space equipment and services that vary at the installation based on the environment. Some of the items you can check out or rent include watercraft, surfboards, paddle boards, and, in some places, snorkeling equipment.

Other recreational services supporting connectedness with nature include campgrounds, ropes challenge courses, golf courses, fishing excursions, marinas, and paintball parks.

Contact your local Marine Corps Community Services Recreation and Fitness Programs for more information about available recreation options.