

# F★O★C★U★S Project for Military Families

## Program Overview

In the United States today, about 1.2 million children have an active duty military parent. In the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps, about forty percent of service members have at least one dependent child under the age of eighteen. Throughout all the branches of the U.S. military, children are affected by a recent or current deployment of a parent to the combat zones of Iraq or Afghanistan. Wartime deployment takes a toll on both the service member and family members on the home-front, with multiple deployments often causing additional stress.

The growing awareness of the significant challenges of these deployments on military family life and child and family well-being prompted a new initiative by the Department of Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery and United States Marine Corps. As a service project funded through the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery (BUMED), FOCUS addresses these concerns related to parental combat operational stress injuries and combat-related physical injuries by providing state-of-the-art family resiliency services to military children and families.

Headquartered at UCLA, FOCUS works closely with the BUMED office in Washington, D.C. and the Combat Operational Stress Control (COSC) team at USMC headquarters in Quantico, Virginia. Working with the existing teams of dedicated military family services personnel, FOCUS staff assists family members to better understand and manage how combat operational stress affects them and their service family member. FOCUS supports families in identifying and building upon existing strengths within each individual and the family unit.

In Spring 2007 the Defense Health Board Task Force on Mental Health identified a critical need for prevention and intervention services to foster resiliency within military families and provide increased access and continuity of psychological health care for children and families across the armed services. Research on parents with stress reactions has demonstrated that such difficulties interfere with parenting, family life, and child adjustment across a range of contexts, disrupting family roles and routines, and decreasing support within the family. To date, thousands of military service members, their children and families are at risk and stand to benefit from family-centered resiliency services.

### FOCUS (Families Over Coming Under Stress)

is a resiliency-building program designed for military families and children facing the multiple challenges of combat operational stress during wartime. FOCUS is founded on leading evidence-based family intervention models for at-risk families which have demonstrated positive emotional, behavioral and adaptive outcomes over time. FOCUS was developed at the UCLA Semel Institute for Neuroscience and Human Behavior, in collaboration with the National Child Traumatic Stress Network and Children's Hospital Boston/Harvard Medical School.

### FOCUS provides services for families based at the following U.S. Navy and Marine Corps installations:

MCB Camp Pendleton, California  
MCAGCC Twentynine Palms, California  
MCB Camp Lejeune, North Carolina  
MCB Hawaii  
MCB Okinawa, Japan  
MCB Quantico, Virginia  
USMC Wounded Warrior Regiment  
Naval CBC Gulfport, Mississippi  
Naval Base Ventura County, California  
Naval Medical Center San Diego, California  
Naval Station Norfolk, Virginia  
NAB Coronado Island, California  
NAB Little Creek / Dam Neck, Virginia  
NAS Whidbey Island, Washington



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