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Family Connection is a publication of the Fleet and Family Support Program.

The Navy's Fleet and Family Support Program promotes the self-reliance and resilience of Sailors and their families. We provide information that can help you meet the unique challenges of the military lifestyle.

The appearance of external links in this newsletter does not constitute official endorsement on behalf of the U.S. Navy or Department of Defense.

If you have questions or comments, contact the Fleet and Family Support Program, ffsp.fct@navy.mil.

Visit us online at:



Ombudsman Appreciation

This year marks the 45th anniversary of the Navy Family Ombudsman Program (see poster on page 7). Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt could not have imagined how his idea of creating a support system for spouses would grow and evolve. What started out as a procedure that gave spouses the opportunity to present complaints, viewpoints and suggestions to the commanding officer is now the primary resource for command spouses and families.

Ombudsmen are highly trained volunteers who serve as the liaison between the commanding officer and the command family members, providing official command information and resources. The ombudsman lends confidence to both command members and their families by creating an environment where Sailors can be assured that while they are serving, their families are well-supported.

September 14 is set aside by the Navy to express gratitude and to recognize these remarkable

individuals for their service to their commands, to families and to the Navy. This year the first annual Mrs. Sybil Stockdale

Ombudsman of the Year award will be presented to four outstanding Ombudsmen who were nominated by their commanding officers for their dedication to command families.

The awards will be presented at the Armed Services Volunteer Recognition Ceremony in San Diego on September 24. Please remember to recognize YOUR ombudsman for all they do to support the spouses and families at your command.



1 Small ACT – Navy Suicide Prevention Month

September is Suicide Prevention Month across the Navy and Department of Defense. Each member of the Navy team is valued and irreplaceable, and family members are an important part of that team. Strong relationships are protective factors during life's challenges, enabling early intervention when additional support is needed. We rely on our Navy family members to help us strengthen our suicide prevention efforts throughout the year, fostering a culture that promotes physical and psychological health as equal imperatives.

This September, we are introducing a new message within our Every Sailor, Every Day campaign: "1 Small ACT." This message encourages simple actions we can all take to promote cohesion and



inspire hope, based on the Ask Care Treat (ACT) bystander intervention model. We are asking you to think of the small actions you can take to make a difference, and then share these acts with the world in our 1 Small ACT photo gallery. Visit the [21st Century Sailor Office's Suicide Prevention page](#) for more information, including details on how you can participate in the gallery and get involved in local efforts.

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1 Small ACT – Navy Suicide Prevention Month
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As family members, you know your Sailor best and may recognize signs of distress soonest. We need you to break the silence and start the conversation about stress and suicide early to open the door for intervention and support.

Your 1 Small ACT—being there to listen and offer encouragement, or connecting your Sailor with resources to build resilience—can be one big step in the right direction. Your Fleet and Family Support Program staff are here to help, and so is the 21st Century Sailor Office's Suicide Prevention Branch (OPNAV N171).

Together, we can make a difference—1 Small ACT at a time.

Help is always available. Call the Military Crisis Line at 1-800-273-TALK (Press 1), visit www.militarycrisisline.net or text 838255 for free confidential support, 24/7.



Gold Star Families Meet the Blue Angels

The Blue Angels hosted Gold Star families at the Seattle Sea Fair. The day included a close up view of take-off and landing of the Blue Angels' C-130 logistics support aircraft, known as Fat Albert, as well as talking with and getting autographs of the crew and pilots and taking a tour of one of the planes. One Gold Star mom stated, "I see my son in all of them."



U.S. Navy Individual Augmentees



IA Discussion Group Schedule

[View the Fleet-wide list of classes, support groups and events.](#)

Returning Warrior Workshops (RWW)

Returning Warrior Workshop Schedule and IA Family Events — www.ia.navy.mil. Click "Resources" then "IA Services."



Ready and Resilient Videos

The "[Building Ready and Resilient Sailors and Families](#)" videos help Navy families adjust to the challenges of deployment. They encourage Sailors and family members to seek out services and resources to promote family resilience.

Relocation Tip

Your opinion matters!

Score your mover on the [Customer Satisfaction Survey](#) (CSS).



New Spouse Orientation

New Spouse Orientation is offered as an [on-demand course](#) designed to support new Navy spouses. It provides information on benefits, support services, military culture and resources to help spouses adapt to the military lifestyle.



Suicide Risk after a Sexual Assault

After a military sexual trauma (MST) incident, a victim can experience a range of emotions and also thoughts of self-harm. Negative thought processes can reduce our mental well-being. Thoughts of "Why me? What did I do?" or even the fear and pressure of retaliation or ostracism by peers can be immensely burdensome to a victim. Thoughts of suicide can lead to depression and eating disorders, ultimately complicating the process of healing for a victim of MST.

The uniqueness of the military lifestyle can unintentionally create a higher level of

psychological trauma for victims of MST. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is commonly linked to MST and can lead to suicidal behavior.

Sexual assault erodes trust, unit cohesion, and personal and fleet readiness. The effects of sexual assault are far reaching. However, there are a variety of rich resources and compassionate support available for commands and victims such as FFSC counselors, Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) Victim Advocates and SARCs. The SAPR Program provides services to active



SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION & RESPONSE

duty and adult dependent victims. For 24/7 confidential support, visit the DoD Safe Helpline <https://www.safehelpline.org/> or call 877-995-5247.

Are You Prepared For a Natural Disaster?

If a natural disaster such as an earthquake or tsunami were to occur, would you and your family be prepared? Where would you

go? Would you know where to reunite with your family? These are important questions to have answers to before a disaster occurs.

September is National Preparedness Month, which makes now the perfect time to learn about the potential hazards in your area, and what you need to do to be prepared.

First, take time to find out what disasters are most common in your area. Contact the nearest emergency management office to help you identify potential hazards, provide an outline of local plans and make recommendations for you and your family. Emergency management representatives can also give you information on evacuation routes and procedures.

Along with learning your community's emergency procedures, it is important

for you and your family to discuss what actions to take if there is a disaster. Make a plan that includes how you will communicate with your family and designate a place to meet. You should also list one or two out-of-state contacts with whom you can "check in" after an event. If you have young children and are concerned that discussing disasters might frighten them, visit <http://www.ready.gov/kids>, for disaster information specifically designed for kids.

Finally, ensure you are prepared by building an emergency supply kit for your home and vehicle. This collection of items will help you evacuate more quickly and will help ensure that you and your family can meet your basic needs in the days immediately following a disaster.

The time and effort you and your family invest in preparedness will make a difference in your ability to handle emergency situations and will help each of you to stay safe. Be informed. Have a plan. Make a kit.

For more information on disaster preparedness visit www.Ready.Navy.mil or www.Ready.gov.

SEPTEMBER
is National Preparedness Month

DON'T WAIT!

COMMUNICATE

Make your emergency communication plan today with the help of tools available at WWW.READY.NAVY.MIL.

READY NAVY
BE INFORMED • MAKE A PLAN • BUILD A KIT

CNIC
FLEET • FIGHTER • FAMILY

THE NAVY'S EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PROGRAM

What's Your Earning Potential?

Are you within a year of separating or retiring from the Navy? Interested in going to college, starting a second career or starting your own business? There is a way to make your transition a little easier! By now you may have heard about Transition GPS, and if you are leaving the Navy within the next year, you are making plans to attend. But did you know that in addition to the mandatory five-day core curriculum offered, you can enroll in a specialized career track geared toward higher education, technical training or entrepreneurship? Whether your goal is to attend college, pursue a technical career or start your own business, the additional tracks can provide you with the tools that you need to get started.

Why should you consider enrolling in the career tracks? Research shows that there are three significant strategies that can help you increase your lifetime earning potential:

starting a new business, getting college degrees or credentials, and getting specialized training. Consider these benefits:

Accessing Higher Education - The Accessing Higher Education career track can help you identify your educational goals, review funding sources, and research and compare institutions that you may be interested in attending.

Technical Training - The technical training career track can help you customize a plan to assess your existing credentials and identify those that may be required for your new career. Enroll in the Technical Training Career Track today and plan your next step.



Entrepreneurship - This specialized course can guide you step-by-step through owning your own business. Topics include: financing, growing your business, finding opportunities and so much more.

So, what are some ways that you can increase your lifetime earning potential? Choose a career track today and get the answers you need to help you get started. To learn more, visit your local Fleet and Family Support Center or go to <http://www.ffsp.navy.mil/TransitionGPS>.



Gold Star Mothers and Families Day

Since 1936, the last Sunday in September has been designated as "Gold Star Mother's Day." On this day, the nation takes time to honor the men and women who gave their last full measure of devotion to this country, as well as to hold close the families left behind. We seek to remember our commitment to the Gold Star mothers and families who carry on despite unthinkable loss.

So this year, on September 27, we continue to ensure the lives and sacrifices of our fallen service members are honored and that the strength and perseverance of those they left behind is recognized.



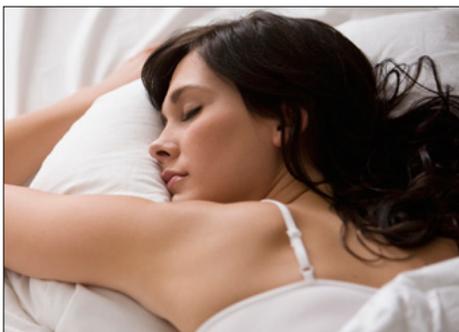
Good Sleep Leads to Good Health

Recent research studies strongly suggest that a good night's sleep helps foster both mental and emotional resilience. Behavioral health clinicians historically viewed insomnia or lack of sleep as a 'symptom' of problems such as depression, but now it is increasingly being viewed as an underlying cause for depression, anxiety and stress.

If you struggle with getting a good night's sleep, you are not alone. Thirty-five percent of Americans report their sleep quality as 'poor' or 'only fair' in the 2014 Sleep Health Index conducted by the National Sleep Foundation. The recommended number of hours of uninterrupted sleep for adults is seven to nine hours, which can dramatically improve your overall quality of life and health, and not just mental health.

What does this mean specifically? Here is a breakdown of the benefits of good sleep hygiene:

- Helps repair your body and strengthen your ability to fight infection.
- Helps keep your heart healthy.
- Reduces stress. Your breathing slows down and becomes more regular which causes your blood pressure to decrease.
- Improves memory.
- Helps control body weight. People are more likely to eat more when they cannot sleep.
- Reduces chance of diabetes.
- Helps prevent depression and anxiety.



So, what can you do to improve your sleep? Here are some tips from the National Sleep Foundation:

- Stick to a sleep schedule of the same bedtime and same wake up time. (Even on weekends!)
- Practice a relaxing bedtime ritual or 'wind down' before bed. This helps to separate sleep time from activities that keep you awake and helps your body shift to sleep mode. (Watching TV in bed does not count.)
- Avoid naps.
- Exercise daily. Whether it is light or vigorous, exercise at ANY time of day will help.
- Arrange your bedroom so it has the optimal conditions for sleep. For example, cool temperature, free from noise and light.
- Manage your circadian rhythm. Avoid bright lights in the evening and expose yourself to sunlight during the day.
- Avoid alcohol and cigarettes in the evening.
- Avoid heavy meals two to three hours before bed. If you are hungry before bed, try a snack that will actually induce sleep. A snack that contains both carbs and protein (like cereal and milk) will help you sleep because it will produce a sleep inducing amino acid called Tryptophan.
- If you are unable to sleep, do not stay in your bed. Go to another room and do something relaxing until you get tired. This will help stop your body from associating your bedroom with anxiety.

If you want to read more about sleep hygiene, [Sleep.org](http://www.sleep.org) is a good resource to start with.

If problems persist, you may want to talk to a counselor. FFSC clinical counselors can work with you and help you develop ways to cope with sleep problems or any other stressor of daily life. Call your [local FFSC](#) to make an appointment.

The Not-So-Secret Shopping Scam

The offer may come in the mail or through an unsolicited phone call: Become a



"secret store evaluator." Recipients are told that this is similar to a secret shopper job and that they will be paid a very generous salary in advance. If you receive this offer, and are considering it seriously, you may want to reconsider. The BBB says, the secret is out – it's a scam.

The letter or call invites the recipient to be part of a team of "secret store evaluators." The invitation details what the team is to do and then asks prospective team members to complete a follow-up survey. However, before completing the survey, team members are required to load \$500 onto reloadable gift cards at several different stores using an enclosed \$3,700 check which they deposit into their private account.

While there are legitimate secret shopping companies out there, BBB recommends consumers take time to check the company out before seriously considering the offer presented to them. As for the check that comes along with the offer, it is likely to be phony. Scammers will often send counterfeit checks in hopes no one will notice until after they are deposited. Unfortunately, the bank account holder is then responsible for the insufficient funds or other charges that pile up once the fake check is discovered.

So, if you receive a job offer that looks too good to be true or there are a few details that sound a little suspicious, look for the BBB seal of an Accredited Business before applying.

For more information on this and other scams, visit: <http://www.bbb.org/blog/2015/06/a-not-so-secret-shopping-scam/>.

Military Kids, Teachers Find Back-to-School Help Online

By Myron Goodman and Beth Schwinn, DCoE Public Affairs

Two of the middle-school boys in the focus group kept refilling their drinks. Others fidgeted. Chairs scraped and voices rose in multiple conversations. But when one boy said he was afraid that his father would not come home from his deployment, the room grew silent and the other boys focused on him.

"I heard about the fear directly from the little boy, and I observed the immediate

connection," said psychologist Kelly Blasko, who led focus groups as the National Center for Telehealth and Technology (T2) set out to create a website for military kids. "Our mission was clear: connect these children so they can support each other and not feel alone."

The T2 Military Kids Connect (MKC) website has received more than a quarter of a million hits since it launched in January

2012. Teen and tween avatars in camouflage gear share tips about coping with deployments, siblings or moving, and teen-created videos offer introductions to new military bases.

[Read more.](#)



LearningCounts @SECO

LearningCounts™ can help you get your degree faster and also save time and money. Validate what you have learned through your life and work experiences!

LearningCounts™ for the Department of Defense Spouse Education and Career Opportunities program (SECO) helps military spouses earn undergraduate college credit for knowledge and expertise gained from volunteer and community service, work experience, training programs and independent study.

Find out how to get started [earning college credit for what you already know and earning your degree faster!](#)

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