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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 resiliency of Sailors and their families. We provide information that can help you meet the unique challenges of the military lifestyle.

For more information about the Fleet and Family Support Program, or to join the conversation about deployments and military life, visit:

[www.ffsp.navy.mil](http://www.ffsp.navy.mil)

[www.facebook.com/Navyffsc](http://www.facebook.com/Navyffsc)

[twitter.com/Fleet\\_Family](http://twitter.com/Fleet_Family)

If you have questions or comments about the content of *Family Connection*, please contact Bruce Moody at [bruce.moody@navy.mil](mailto:bruce.moody@navy.mil).



## Married to the Military – An Individual Augmentee Spouse’s Perspective

Nearly half way through her first deployment, Sondra, a Navy Spouse in Virginia Beach Virginia, shares her experience of being “Home Alone.” Her husband’s deployment began in December 2009 and he is expected to return in about 12 months. Sondra was contacted by the parent command, ombudsman and family readiness group to offer support and information in orderly fashion. However, nothing could have prepared her for what came next.



### Family Connection (FC): What did you do to prepare?

**Sondra:** I didn’t! After my husband received his orders, I immediately went into denial mode. Being familiar with the military structure and lifestyle as a former staff at Fleet and Family Support Center, I thought I would be ok. But the day of his departure, I was devastated.

### FC: How did you feel in the beginning?

**Sondra:** I admit to feeling sad, I never knew I would miss my husband so much. It was hard and I worried. To be honest, I cried a lot. With time, I began to feel better.

### FC: What have you been doing to cope?

**Sondra:** I have a full-time job as a financial counselor and that takes up a great deal of my time. Although very demanding, it provides a distraction during the day. My husband and I have contact almost daily through e-mail or video communication via Skype. It really gives me something to look forward to and I feel connected. To be able to see him and hear his voice, makes all the difference.

### FC: What have you found helpful or would you suggest?

**Sondra:** Surround yourself with a good support system. Having my friends and family to listen is a wonderful comfort. Staying busy and having a daily routine keeps me grounded. I really appreciate the calls from the ombudsman and deployment specialist offering assistance as well. It feels good to know that people care. Get to know what resources are available and ask for help.

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## Married to the Military – An Individual Augmentee Spouse’s Perspective

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### FC: What have you learned?

**Sondra:** Instead of dwelling on where my husband is, I think about how proud I am that he is keeping me and our country safe. Measuring our time apart with the mind set of “one day at a time” makes it much easier to manage.

### FC: How are you doing now?

**Sondra:** Now that I’m at the halfway mark, I’m anticipating his homecoming. I’m getting excited and preparing. There are still some days that are difficult, but I tell myself “it’s all temporary.” My husband will be home soon and I’ll be waiting. I’m so proud of him. Being married to the military has its challenges, but I wouldn’t have it any other way.

Sondra and her husband celebrated their fourth wedding anniversary last month. As there will be more deployments in their future, she knows there are resources and support available and where to seek them.



## Effective Communication is the Key to a Successful Deployment

Communication is important in a relationship and is often tested during deployment. Preparing for the mission, from the receipt of orders to understanding the emotions and hardship often associated with separation, can be overwhelming. Effective listening skills, patience and understanding will prove essential during this time.

The majority of communication is non-verbal (body language, tone of voice, and facial expressions). If you listen with the intent to understand your partner, paying attention to non-verbal cues will decrease the likelihood of miscommunication. When your partner is expressing a feeling, thought, issue, or need, keep in mind that “it’s not about you.” Try to accept your partner’s point of view, even when you disagree.

There are many needs in every relationship and it’s impossible for all of them to be met at all times. As issues arise, consider making requests and focusing on negotiating a “win-win” outcome to resolve conflicts. Softer words are heard much easier and help to grow a loving and stable connection.

Understanding each other’s feelings and keeping the lines of communication open can be challenging during a deployment. Being creative and communicating well under difficult circumstances is hard work – but the reward is a stronger relationship.

Enhance your communication skills by attending a workshop or meeting with a clinical counselor at the nearest Fleet and Family Support Center. Visit [www.ffsp.navy.mil](http://www.ffsp.navy.mil) to find your FFSC.





## Are We There Yet? Ways to Manage Personal and Financial Stress

Become a tourist in your own neighborhood! Create an oasis at home where you can escape the daily grind by planning the perfect "STAYCATION." A staycation is a home-based vacation where families stay put and enjoy the environment around them. There is no packing, airport delays, or expensive lodging. Fill your staycation with activities like swimming, bicycling, barbecues, outdoor concerts and visits to the museum. Explore the places in your community -- inexpensive and no-cost adventures abound. Not every area offers vacation style activities; however, many attractions can be found just a short drive away.



A staycation can offer a great alternative to a traditional vacation with reduced costs and family fun, but it requires planning and commitment. Just like a regular vacation, logistics include saving the date, establishing a budget and scheduling activities. Solicit ideas from your children and include them in the decision making. Commit to avoid big household chores like cleaning the closets or garage; these activities may translate as "work" not "vacation." Pledge to tame the technology monster -- turn off your mobile devices and limit your computer access. Remember, although you are at home, this time is designed to "vacate" your regular routine.

Staycation activities may include the following:

- **Go cycling or hiking.** Check out the state and local parks for nearby trails.
- **Have a picnic.** Pack a basket and head to the backyard or park for a fun, easy outdoor meal.
- **Fly a kite.** Grab a kite or two and head to your favorite park. Remember to bring snacks.
- **Go green.** Plant a family garden and share a passion for gardening with your kids. Gardening teaches them responsibility and patience.
- **Schedule movie night.** Consider a theme with your favorite actors/characters or sequels.
- **Spend the night in a nearby hotel.** Book a room for the middle of the week as the rates are sometimes lower. Let them know you're local; you may get a discount.
- **Visit a museum or farm.** Cultural educational opportunities are unlimited.



Staycations have become very popular and practical, especially during the current financial crunch. The mental transport from your daily life will relieve stress and saving money has never been so much fun. Your next adventure is as close as your own backyard!

The Navy provides an array of local Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) programs both ashore and afloat. As a Navy member, you and your family can take advantage of these and numerous other MWR benefits offered at Navy installations worldwide. Go to <http://www.mwr.navy.mil/> for further information.

Fleet and Family Recreation opportunities include:

- |                   |                      |                             |
|-------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| ■ Entertainment   | ■ Outdoor Recreation | ■ Gaming                    |
| ■ Crafts & Hobby  | ■ Golf, Bowling      | ■ Cabins & RV Parks         |
| ■ Auto Skills     | ■ Bingo              | ■ Navy Flying Club and More |
| ■ Tickets & Tours | ■ Marinas            |                             |





## Mortgage Scams on the Rise

Unfortunately, there are many unscrupulous people who take advantage of the emotional and financial stress that homeowners go through when they are facing foreclosure. Foreclosure rescue scams claim they will save your home or pay your mortgage -- but they are just money-making schemes.

Because a foreclosure proceeding is a legal process, the names of people who are facing foreclosure are publicly available to foreclosure scammers who then contact potential victims and offer their "help."

Beware of two of the most popular foreclosure scams:

- 1. Foreclosure consultants.** Scam artists offer their services as consultants to help owners negotiate with lenders or file for bankruptcy. They often charge a large fee but rarely deliver results.
- 2. Rent-back scams.** In this scenario, the homeowner signs over the deed to the home to the scammer and then rents the home back. The idea is that the homeowner will be able to buy the home back at a later date. But if homeowners do this, they will have signed over all rights to the home and have no protection should the new owner decide to raise the rent or evict them. And, there's no guarantee the homeowner will ever be able to buy the home back.

If you are facing foreclosure, be wary of any services offered to you through the mail, over the phone, or in person. Remember that you don't need a consultant to negotiate with your mortgage company – you can and should do that yourself. And never sign a legal document without reading and understanding it, and without the advice of an attorney.

For more information and tips to avoid scams and frauds, visit Fleet and Family Support Services /Personal Finances at [www.ffsp.navy.mil](http://www.ffsp.navy.mil) or schedule an appointment with Personal Financial Management (PFM)staff at a center near you.



## Social Media - Tips for Protecting Privacy

The following tips can help protect your privacy when using social media:

- Use different screen names if you have profiles on different social networking sites.
- Do not add names or locations to photos posted online.
- Be careful of images that are in the background of photos you post. Do not post images with Navy equipment or landmarks that could identify your location.



## IA Discussion Group Schedule

Go to [www.ffsp.navy.mil](http://www.ffsp.navy.mil) to view the Fleet-wide list of classes, support groups and events specifically for individual augmentees (IAs) and their families.





## Military Family Award Program

As someone familiar with the military, you know that while one person joins, the whole family serves. The National Military Family Association's Military Family of the Year Award recognizes strong military families who embrace their service to the United States, are role models in their community, and understand that together they are stronger.

If you are one of the millions of military families supporting our nation each day, you are eligible. Any active duty, Reserve Component, or retired family of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Coast Guard, or Commissioned Corps of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, or the Public Health Service, as well as families of fallen service members is eligible for nomination.

Anyone can nominate a family. This is your time to tell your personal story or recognize a special family that you know. It is only required that you be at least 18 years of age to submit a nomination. Military families often feel what they do on a daily basis is nothing extraordinary. The National Military Family Association disagrees. This is your time to boast; don't be modest. Take a look at your family's achievements or those of a military family you know and submit a nomination today!

The National Military Family Association will select one family from each of the following: the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Coast Guard, NOAA and the US Public Health Service. From these seven outstanding families, one family will be named the National Military Family Association Military Family of the Year!

All family finalists will receive an all-expense paid trip to Washington, D.C. for the award ceremony and announcement of the grand prize winner. The recipient of the National Military Family Association Military Family of the Year will also receive a cash prize of \$1,000!

NOMINATE NOW! Go to: [www.militaryfamily.org/our-programs/awards/military-family-award-program/](http://www.militaryfamily.org/our-programs/awards/military-family-award-program/)



**NATIONAL  
MILITARY FAMILY  
ASSOCIATION**



## Returning Warrior Workshops (RWW)

This weekend workshop focuses on making a successful transition from the war zone to the home front. The workshops are expense-paid weekend events, set at four-star hotels, for service members and their spouses or significant others.

For the 2010 schedule, visit the Navy Individual Augmentee website at [www.ia.navy.mil/](http://www.ia.navy.mil/).





## Returning Home – Recovering from PTSD

Returning home after deployment is a happy occasion. Unfortunately, Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) can occur as a result of a life-threatening event such as military combat, natural disasters, terrorist incidents, serious accidents, or violent personal assaults. Over time, most survivors of trauma return to their normal selves; but many times, stress reactions don't go away or may even get worse.

PTSD is documented by symptoms like nightmares, flashbacks, difficulty sleeping, and feeling emotionally numb. It can significantly impair a person's daily life. Other symptoms include depression, substance abuse, problems of memory and cognition, and other physical and mental health issues. Ongoing difficulties of the disorder are occupational instability, marital problems and overall family discord.

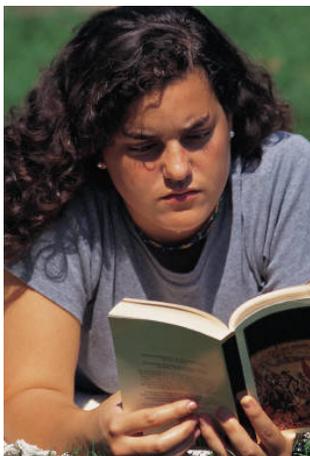
The first step to recovery is seeking help. Efforts by the military are continuing to break down the stigma associated with asking for help. Service members must realize that reaching out is an act of courage and strength.

Ways to help include the following:

- Learn as much as you can about PTSD. Knowing how PTSD affects people may help you understand what your family member is going through. The more you know, the better you and your family can handle PTSD.
- Offer to go to doctor visits with your family member. You can help keep track of medicine and therapy, and you can be there for support.
- Tell your loved one you want to listen, but that you also understand if he or she doesn't feel like talking.
- Plan family activities together, like having dinner or going to a movie.
- Take a walk, go for a bike ride, or do some other physical activity together. Exercise is important for health and helps clear your mind.
- Encourage contact with family and close friends. A support system will help your family member get through difficult changes and stressful times.

If you are suffering from PTSD, or know someone who is, the following resources will be of help in dealing with PTSD and related conditions.

- Department of Veteran Affairs at [www.ptsd.va.gov/](http://www.ptsd.va.gov/).
- TRICARE at [www.tricare.mil/TRIAP](http://www.tricare.mil/TRIAP).
- National Resource Directory at [www.nationalresourcedirectory.gov](http://www.nationalresourcedirectory.gov).
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at <http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/Veterans/Default.aspx>.
- Fleet and Family Support Centers at [www.ffsp.navy.mil](http://www.ffsp.navy.mil).





[www.tricare.mil/TRIAP](http://www.tricare.mil/TRIAP)

[www.tricare.mil/telementalhealth](http://www.tricare.mil/telementalhealth)

Download a TRICARE Guide: Understanding Behavioral Health  
[www.tricare.mil/tricaresmart](http://www.tricare.mil/tricaresmart)

#### **North Region Contractor**

Health Net Federal Services, LLC  
1-800-555-2605  
[www.healthnetfederal.com](http://www.healthnetfederal.com)

#### **South Region Contractor**

Humana Military Healthcare Services, Inc.  
1-877-298-3408  
[www.humana-military.com](http://www.humana-military.com)

#### **West Region Contractor**

TriWest Healthcare Alliance  
1-888-TRIWEST  
(1-888-874-9378)  
[www.triwest.com](http://www.triwest.com)

## **What's New with TRICARE?**

### **New Behavioral Health Care Options**

With the introduction of two new programs, time and distance are no longer obstacles for active-duty families seeking behavioral health care. The Web-based TRICARE Assistance Program (TRIAP) and Telemental Health Program use telecommunication technologies to bring counseling assistance and behavioral health care to those who need it most.

TRIAP is a demonstration program available in the United States to active-duty service members, those eligible for the Transitional Assistance Management Program, members with TRICARE Reserve Select, as well as spouses of any age and other eligible family members 18 years of age or older.

From the security of their homes, or anywhere else for that matter, beneficiaries with a computer, webcam and the associated software can speak face-to-face with a licensed counselor over the Internet at any time of the day or night. Eligible beneficiaries can link to their regional contractor's TRIAP site.

TRIAP is there to help Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and their family members 24-hours a day, seven-days a week. It augments TRICARE's many existing counseling assistance benefits for service members and their families by providing the support they need, when it's needed.

Telemental health services use medically-supervised secure audio-visual conferencing to link beneficiaries with offsite providers. Available to all TRICARE beneficiaries in the United States, telemental health care falls under TRICARE's telemedicine coverage.

TRICARE's regional contractors have established networks of telemental health originating sites and networks of offsite providers who can evaluate, treat and refer patients as necessary via video. All aspects of behavioral health services are available, including psychotherapy and medication management. While most service members still get face-to-face care in a military treatment facility or through the TRICARE network, the addition of telemental health care enhances access to a variety of behavioral health care services.

### **TRICARE Reserve Select**

TRICARE Reserve Select is a premium-based health plan available worldwide to Selected Reserve members of the Ready Reserve (and their families) who are not eligible for or enrolled in the Federal Employee Health Benefits (FEHB) program (as defined in Chapter 89 of Title 5 U.S.C) or currently covered under FEHB, either under their own eligibility or through a family member.

When enrolled in TRICARE Reserve Select, you may visit any TRICARE-authorized provider, network or non-network. Care at military treatment facilities is on a space-available basis only. You do not need a referral for any type of care, but some services may require prior authorization.

The type of provider you see determines how much you will pay out-of-pocket. If you are visiting a network provider, you will pay less out-of-pocket and the provider will file claims for you.

For additional program information, go to <http://www.tricare.mil/mybenefit/home/overview/Plans/ReserveSelect>.

If you have questions regarding your TRS eligibility, please contact your National Guard or Reserve point of contact at <http://ra.defense.gov/html/tricare.html> or visit the Guard and Reserve Web portal at <https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/Guard-ReservePortal>.





## National Resource Directory – Wounded Warrior Website Upgraded

The US Departments of Defense, Labor and Veterans Affairs have introduced the re-designed and enhanced National Resource Directory (NRD) website for wounded, ill and injured service members, veterans, their families and those who support them. The site recently received a comprehensive system upgrade to provide users with easier access. The National Resource Directory provides access to over 10,000 services and resources at the national, state and local levels to support recovery, rehabilitation and community reintegration.



This website is a collaborative effort between the Departments of Defense, Veterans Affairs (VA) and Labor (DOL), and compiles federal, state, local and non-profit resources for wounded warriors, veterans, family members and caregivers in a single, searchable site.

The upgrade makes the latest wounded warrior and veteran resources easier to locate and follow. A new “bookmark and share” application helps visitors alert others to the content they’ve found most helpful through social bookmarking, Facebook, Twitter, and other social-networking tools. Visitors can also subscribe to Really Simple Syndication (RSS) or e-mail updates to receive new content, events and features based on their specific interests and needs.

The faster, enhanced search engine ranks information based on the popularity of the sources among other site users, so the most valuable resources rise to the top of the search results. Visitors can tailor searches for resources in specific states and territories, and apply filters to narrow their searches.



The redesigned site also highlights resources to assist homeless veterans. NRD users can also recommend additional resources. All resources are thoroughly vetted prior to inclusion. As always, content is updated and reviewed daily by a content management team which includes veterans and subject matter experts.

Go to [www.NationalResourceDirectory.gov](http://www.NationalResourceDirectory.gov).



## Navy Family Accountability and Assessment System (NFAAS)

NFAAS allows Navy Personnel to manage the recovery process for personnel affected by a wide-spread catastrophic event. It is also helpful in providing commands with information to support IA family members while their sponsors are deployed overseas. Log on to NFAAS at <https://www.navyfamily.navy.mil>.

## Blue Star Museums

More than 600 museums across America to offer free admission to all active duty military personnel and their families from Memorial Day through Labor Day 2010. The complete list of participating museums is available at [www.arts.gov](http://www.arts.gov).





## DoD Military Outreach Initiative

The Armed Services YMCA and the Department of Defense have launched the YMCA Military Outreach Initiative to address the needs of families of deployed military personnel who live far from a military installation and require access to child development, family strengthening, and health and well-being programming. This Outreach Initiative offers YMCA memberships to eligible military families and personnel who may not have access to a nearby military facility. Eligible military families and personnel include:

- Family members of deployed National Guard and Reservists.
- Active-duty and independent-duty personnel and their families as approved by their military service headquarters.
- Relocated spouses and family members of deployed active-duty personnel.

In addition, the Outreach Initiative offers respite child care services for children whose parent or guardian needs temporary respite from their role as primary caregiver in the absence of a deployed spouse.

To get started:

1. Contact Military OneSource at [www.militaryonesource.com](http://www.militaryonesource.com) or 800-342-9647 to confirm eligibility and receive an eligibility form.
2. Find a participating YMCA. Go to [www.ymca.net](http://www.ymca.net) to locate your YMCA.
3. Fill out and bring your eligibility form, military ID and any other required documentation (generally your deployment orders or Military Service Headquarters approval letter) to a participating YMCA for verification.

For more information and to learn about other Armed Services YMCA programs visit [www.asymca.org/](http://www.asymca.org/).



## Skype - Free Calling

Talk face-to-face with friends, family and colleagues. Share a smile, blow a kiss, explain an idea or just gaze longingly – free video calls with Skype are the next best thing to being there.

Speak to anyone in the world for free. Invite friends to join Skype and you can chat to them for as long as you like, wherever they are, for free. Say goodbye to quick catch-ups, say hello to free Skype calls.

Like the sound of free Skype-to-Skype calls when you're not at your computer? Get Skype on your mobile and you can take Skype with you wherever you go.

Get more information at [www.skype.com](http://www.skype.com).

