



Kitsap Military Family Resource Document

A resource to assist military parents in how to help their kids with challenges such as moving, deployment, and the loss of a loved one.

University of Washington Museology Thesis 2023

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In Partnership with the US Naval Undersea Museum

Table of Contents

Introduction

Letter.....	pg 3
Informing literature.....	pg 4
Process.....	pg 5

Chapter 1: Moving.....	pg 6
-------------------------------	-------------

Chapter 2: Deployment.....	pg 10
-----------------------------------	--------------

Chapter 3: Losing a Loved one.....	pg 14
---	--------------

Chapter 4: Additional Resources.....	pg 20
---	--------------

Addendum for museum professionals.....	pg 24
---	--------------

Reference Articles & Journals	pg 25
--	--------------

Introduction: Letter and Informing Literature

Aloha Parents,

Welcome to the “Kitsap Military Family Resource Document!” I extend a warm Thank You for your service. Beside every service member is a family serving along with them; you are seen and you are appreciated in this space.

As a military child myself, I am familiar with some of the challenges that come with growing up in this unique lifestyle. Though it can be rewarding, it is not without sacrifice. Between nine states, fifteen different homes, and five deployments, my family is just one of tens of thousands who experience the hardships that come with being a part of this community. Military kids are resilient, but taking extra care to be open about their mental and emotional health will benefit them in the future.

Which leads us to the purpose of this resource...This packet was created and assembled with you and your families in mind in order to 1. Quickly and effectively direct you to the many resources available for military families and 2. So that if your child(ren) are struggling with any of the three topics this document addresses, they can get the additional support they need.

Now that we are a retired veteran family and reflecting as an adult, I wish my parents had a resource like this to help my siblings and I better cope with all the changes and stresses we endured growing up. I hope that however this document has fallen into your hands that it provides the help you are seeking or may seek in the future, and if it does, that you share it with your friends and fellow military families.

Mahalo Nui Loa,

Nicole Zitto

Museology Graduate of the University of Washington, 2023

Informing Literature

In “The Mental Health of Military-Connected Children: A Scoping Review” published in 2019, Heidi Cramm and colleagues concluded that “children growing up in military families experience more mental health problems than children in civilian families and use more mental health services” and that the two identifying factors to account for the difference were “family relocation and parental deployment.” They recommend more research to be conducted on other influential factors that affect military children’s mental health, namely high mobility since that topic of research is limited.¹

The results of the survey that was conducted by Sullivan, et al indicates that not all military families are alike in their exposure to resources designed for marital and family support. Their focus was to assess the current risks (ex: deployment, reintegration, family moves, poor parenting behaviors) and protective factors (ex: social support, living on or near a military base, healthy parenting relationships) military families were experiencing. Stressors on military connected youth lead to evidence of “changes in physical health... higher prevalence of diagnosed mental health disorders, increased depressive symptoms and suicidality” (509) and more. The authors urge clinicians to be aware of the “elevated risk of adverse outcomes among military-connected youth but must also be careful to not overpathologize” (519). There are opportunities for the “military hierarchy” to better support preventative and intervention efforts for families, while promoting stronger, healthier marital and family functioning.²

A clinical report by Dr. Huebner in 2019 on the mental health needs of children in military families living in the United States. Out of the 2.2 million members of active duty, National Guard and Reserve 58% have families, 40% have at least 2 children. There are a reported 1.7 million children of active duty and reserve personnel, roughly 38% between the ages of 0-5, 32% between the ages of 6-11, and 24% between the ages of 12-18. The contents of this review are more specifically for clinicians who serve military communities, there are resources listed for families that could offer support when dealing with relocation (moving), deployments, etc. ³

¹Cramm, Heidi, et al. “The Mental Health of Military-Connected Children: A Scoping Review.” *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, vol. 28, no. 7, 2019, pp. 1725–1735., <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-019-01402-y>

² Sullivan, K.S., Hawkins, S.A., Gilreath, T.D. and Castro, C.A. (2021), Mental Health Outcomes Associated with Risk and Resilience among Military-Connected Youth. *Fam. Proc.*, 60: 507-522. <https://doi.org/10.1111/famp.12596>

³ Huebner, C. R. (2018). Health and Mental Health Needs of Children in US Military Families. *Pediatrics* (Evanston), 143(1), 1–. <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2018-3258>

Process Section

The host site who kindly agreed to partner with me for this project is the U.S. Naval Undersea Museum located in Keyport, Washington. It is one of ten museums operated by the U.S. Navy under the Direction of the Naval History and Heritage Command and is the only official Navy museum that interprets undersea activities.⁴ Not only does this museum hold the country's most comprehensive collection of U.S. Navy artifacts, documents, and reference material, they also serve a large community of military families located in and outside of Naval Base Kitsap. As the intended audience for this resource document is military families with children and/or teens, and Naval Base Kitsap is the Navy's third largest fleet concentration in the United States, it was not only logical to partner with the host site, but to include available resources in that localized area to better serve their needs.

It is vital to acknowledge that while the included topics (moving, deployment, and losing a loved one) are issues that military children and teens struggle with, these are not the only challenges they face. Issues such as social media, bullying, educational development, risky behavior, and others can affect their mental and emotional wellbeing just like their civilian peers. Resources do exist if parents are seeking help for their children and teens on those additional topics, however, for the case of this document only the three aforementioned topics are discussed, which are also listed in the Table of Contents.

The process by which I located and assembled the following resources was primarily self guided. I was already somewhat familiar with sites like Military One Source, but from there I began to search for resources specifically centered around mental and emotional health for military children and teens. Other sources, like Gold Star Families and the Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) were gleaned through representatives I met at the U.S. Naval Undersea Museum's E-Day for military families. They were extremely helpful in describing the work of their organizations, how they serve military families, and thus have been included.

⁴ About Us. U. S. Naval Undersea Museum. (2022, October 14). <https://navalunderseamuseum.org/about-us/>

Chapter One: Moving

Frequent moving is a way of life for military families and learning how to prepare and adapt to the process is no easy feat. For the purposes of this chapter, the type of move/relocation that will be covered is a Permanent Change of Station or PCS. A PCS is an assignment, detail, or transfer that does not provide for further assignment at a new station, nor direct return to the existing station.⁵ Typically this means that service member and their family will spend an average of 2-4 years at that new station.

With this in mind, the stressor for children and youth is the relocation itself. When looking for signs of that stress, typically it is recommended to notice if your child is behaving out of the ordinary or to extremes.

Symptoms can be: anxiety or excessive worrying, withdrawal from family and friends, destructive behavior, prolonged sadness, changes in sleeping habits, and decrease in school performance. These are but a few symptoms parents can be on the lookout for when preparing, executing, and settling in from a relocation.

Below are many resources readily available for parents who notice their children in need of additional support while coping with this life change.

Kids (6-12)

- **Sesame Street for Military Families** is a free, bilingual (English & Spanish) website for families where they can find information on topics like self-expression and homecomings, as well as utilize their multimedia resources and downloadable content for both parents and children. The attached link will lead you to their Relocation page.

<https://sesamestreetformilitaryfamilies.org/topic/relocation/>

- **Military Kids Connect** is part of the Connected Health branch of the Defense Health Agency (DHA) which is responsible for reviewing, evaluating, coordinating, and integrating healthy technology to

⁵ V, R. (2023, January 26). PCS in military: Here's what it means & what to expect - operation military kids. Operation Military Kids -. <https://www.operationmilitarykids.org/pcs-in-military/>

support Military Health System beneficiaries. This resource is specifically for kids and youth to find connection amongst their peers and learn coping skills to handle stressful situations, such as relocation/moving. <https://militarykidsconnect.health.mil/Military-Life/Moving>

Youth (13-17)

- **Navy Youth Sponsorship Program** for the Kitsap area provides incoming and resident youth with resources, peer, and mentor community programs.

<https://ffr.cnic.navy.mil/Fleet-Readiness/Child-and-Youth-Programs/Youth-Sponsorship-Program/>

- **Military One Source** is a funded program by the Department of Defense catered to the entire military community spanned across the globe. It is a 24/7 resource designed to navigate the challenges of military life and thrive. Under Military Youth & Teens, parents can find resources on how to connect them to installations and programs both on and off installation.

<https://www.militaryonesource.mil/resources/millife-guides/military-youth-teens/>

In the Kitsap Area

- The official website for the **U.S. Navy Fleet and Family Support Program (FFSP)** which has been providing support to Sailors and their families for over forty years. Based in Washington D.C. FFSP develops resources to ensure quality service for the military community across multiple platforms (in-person, social media, etc). Under **Relocation Assistance** are some additional pages to assist with planning and following through with the moving process.

<https://ffr.cnic.navy.mil/Family-Readiness/Fleet-And-Family-Support-Program/>

- Located under **Resources** on the Home page parents can find **Family Readiness** resources.

<https://ffr.cnic.navy.mil/Family-Readiness/Fleet-And-Family-Support->

Program/Work-and-Family-Life/Relocation-Assistance/

- **Navy Life PNW** is a regional webpage found through MWR (Morale, Welfare, and Recreation), which conducts high-quality activities, events, and services for military communities and installations. For the Kitsap area, this website offers a wide array of resources for families listed under their **Main Menu**, found in section **Fleet Family and Child & Youth**. <https://kitsap.navylifepnw.com/>
- For moving resources from the Navy Life PNW cite, click here: <https://kitsap.navylifepnw.com/welcome-aboard/relocation-support/moving-resources>

Other Resources

- **The National Military Family Association** has spent more than 50 years supporting and enhancing the quality of life for military families through advocacy and innovative programming. Under their **Info + Resources** tab they provide a **Relocation + PCS** page on their drop-down menu. <https://www.militaryfamily.org/info-resources/relocation/>
- **Military One Source** provides downloadable checklists for relocation, as well as additional resources for families that have a child or youth with special needs. <https://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/Factsheets/EFMP-FactSheet-Preparing-for-Your-Move.pdf>
- **Military Family Readiness** system via **Military OneSource** includes services that parents can find and utilize for their families as well as links to installation-based military family centers for Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corp. These resources exist for those in the Reserve force, found on the same page. <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/parenting/family-life/military-family-readiness-system/>

Summary & Action Steps

- Once the PCS orders have been given, sit down with your family to explain where you will be going next, how you'll get there, etc.
- Know that kids and teens will experience stress from the move as well. Sadness, breaks in sleeping habits, acting out, anxiety about friends and moving schools, are all valid emotions and worries. Acknowledge and validate what your child is feeling/experiencing by talking with them and consider taking breaks from packing to do something fun with the whole family.
- Look up where you will be living next with your child. Explore the area online for prospective schools, fun recreational establishments, and activities you can do as a family when you arrive there.
- Utilize your new station's official website to locate community resources available to you and your family (e.g. child care services, kid and teen programs, etc.).

Chapter Two: Deployment

Many families experience deployments of varying lengths of time which can have a stressful impact on the mental health of military kids and youth. Deployment, as defined by the Department of Veteran Affairs, includes any movement from a military Service Member's home station to somewhere outside the continental U.S. and its territories... It is not restricted to combat; units can be deployed for other reasons such as humanitarian aid, evacuation of U.S. citizens, restoration of peace, or increased security. They can last from 90 days to 15 months.⁶

Signs & Symptoms for kids ages 6-12: sad and/or angry with the parent (service member) for leaving, may act out for attention, mood changes, be aware of missed milestones, fluctuation in grades and interest in school activities, anxious and worried about reintegration.⁷

Signs & Symptoms for youth ages 13-17: regression to outgrown behaviors, difficulty controlling the highs and lows of their emotional responses, more protective of at-home caretaker, school grades may fluctuate, may take on more responsibilities, reluctant to give up new-found freedoms, worried about failing to meet expectations of returning parent, aware of returning parents' demeanor or emotional functioning.⁸

Fortunately, there are many resources readily available for parents to help their children cope with this particular challenge.

Children (6-12)

- **Sesame Street for Military Families** is a free, bilingual (English & Spanish) website for families where they can find information on topics like self-expression and homecomings, as well as utilize their multimedia resources and downloadable content for parents and children. The link will lead you to their **Deployments** page.

<https://sesamestreetformilitaryfamilies.org/topic/deployments/>

⁶ Veterans Affairs. Go to VA.gov. (2014, March 26). https://www.va.gov/vetsinworkplace/docs/em_deployment.asp.

⁷

Reactions to deployment school-age children (ages 6 to 12) summary. MilitaryKidsConnect. (n.d.). <https://militarykidsconnect.health.mil/-/media/Files/MKC/SchoolAge-Parent-Summary.ashx>

⁸

Reactions to deployment teenagers (ages 13 to 17) summary. MilitaryKidsConnect. (n.d.-b). <https://militarykidsconnect.health.mil/-/media/Files/MKC/Teenager-Parent-Summary.ashx>

- **Military Kids Connect** is part of the Connected Health branch of the Defense Health Agency (DHA) which is responsible for reviewing, evaluating, coordinating, and integrating healthy technology to support Military Health System beneficiaries. This resource is specifically for kids and youth to find connection and learn to cope with the challenges of deployment.

<https://militarykidsconnect.health.mil/Military-Life/Deployment>

Teenagers (13-17)

- **Military Kids Connect** is part of the Connected Health branch of the Defense Health Agency (DHA) which is responsible for reviewing, evaluating, coordinating, and integrating healthy technology to support Military Health System beneficiaries. This resource is specifically for kids and youth to find connection and learn to cope with the challenges of deployment.

<https://militarykidsconnect.health.mil/Military-Life/Deployment>

- Signs on what to look for in teen behavior.

<https://militarykidsconnect.health.mil/Caring-for-Our-Youth/Parents>

- **Military One Source** is a funded program by the Department of Defense catered to the entire military community spanned across the globe. It is a 24/7 resource designed to navigate the challenges of military life and thrive. The website provides articles by topic, such as how parents can help their youth or teenager to cope with deployments.

<https://www.militaryonesource.mil/deployment/on-deployment/15-tips-for-helping-your-teenager-deal-with-deployment/>

In the Kitsap area

- Naval Base Kitsap is the official Navy website for families stationed there. Under Resources on the Homepage parents can find Family Readiness resources.

<https://ffr.cniv.navy.mil/Family-Readiness/Fleet-And-Family-Support-Program/Work-and-Family-Life/Deployment-Readiness-Support/>

- Under **Family Readiness** click on **Work and Family Life** and you'll find a set of tabs for each step of the deployment for service members who are parents. Provided below is a resource for single parents.

https://ffr.cnic.navy.mil/Portals/Family_Readiness/Documents/DeploymentReturnAndReunionReturningToChildrenStrategiesForSingleParents.pdf

- **The Boys & Girls Club of America** in partnership with the U.S. Armed Forces have two club locations in the Naval Kitsap area. They offer a wide range of programs for youth as well as kids.

<https://www.bgca.org/get-involved/find-a-club?>

Additional Resources

- **American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP)** is an organization to promote the health of children and families. The link here covers the "Coming Home" process for families.

https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/FFF-Guide/Coming-Home-Adjustments-For-Military-Families-089.aspx

- Frequently asked questions pertaining to deployment on AACAP.

https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_Youth/Resource_Centers/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Resource_Centers/Military_Families_Resource_Center/FAQ.aspx#question1

- **Military One Source** provides tips on how to parent through the deployment phases.

<https://www.militaryonesource.mil/deployment/on-deployment/parenting-through-deployment-the-essentials/>

Summary & Action Steps

- Always tell your child or children when to expect an upcoming deployment.
- Primarily for the stay at home parent, expect your child or children to exhibit signs of prolonged sadness, awareness of important milestones being missed, fluctuations in school participation, worrying about failing to meet the returning parent's expectations, etc.
- During the process of deployment, set aside individual time to spend with each child. Do something within their interests, talk about the deployed parent, encourage them to write and/or send a care-package. Staying in contact can help the reintegration process back into the family for the deployed parent and the child.

Chapter Three: Losing a loved one

In this chapter we will be discussing sensitive information that covers difficult topics such as the death of a family member (whether by illness, suicide, or other causes), how to approach the subject with children and teens, and available resources that can help with the healing process.

“Grief is an organic response to loss and may affect you at many levels: emotionally, physically, mentally, and spiritually” as described in the Navy Gold Star programs resource on how to discuss grief and loss within a family unit. Included are Kubler-Ross’ “stages” of grief:

1. Denial: The survivor imagines a false, preferable reality.
2. Anger: When the Survivor recognizes that denial cannot continue (e.g. “Why me?” “Who is to blame?”)
3. Depression: The Survivor is deeply saddened by the reality of his/her/their loss.
4. Bargaining: The hope that the Survivor can avoid a cause of grief. People facing less serious trauma can bargain or seek compromise.
5. Acceptance: Survivors embrace what has occurred and begin living into their new future.

These “stages” are non-sequential and it may be that you or your family members will return to a certain “stage” more than once. Everyone’s experience will be different and their own.⁹

As for children and youth, how they understand the concept of death and cope with grief will also be very different. Preschool age children tend to view the concept of death as temporary or even reversible. Children between the ages of 5-9 better understand the permanence, but still believe it could never happen to them or anyone they know. According to the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, it is normal for children to feel immediate grief or persist in the belief that the family member is still alive. This behavior long term can lead to more severe problems. Evident signs of children having serious problems with grief and

⁹(N.d.-b). Tips on Coping with Grief and Loss . Retrieved from <https://www.navygoldstar.com/modules/media/?do=download&id=c15aa0f3-97c9-4f3e-a8e9-f4c953adcca4>.

loss are: inability to sleep, loss of appetite, acting much younger than their age, withdrawal from friends, sharp drop in school performance or refusal to attend school, and extended periods of depression. 10

Signs & Symptoms for kids ages 6-12: May ask lots of questions about how the person (parent) died and what death means, display distress and sadness in other ways such as irritability and anger, avoid spending time with others, physical complaints about stomach aches, headaches, etc., trouble sleeping, and problems at school.

Signs & Symptoms for youth ages 13-17: May have similar grief reactions to those of school age children when at home, with friends, and at school. Withdrawal, sadness, or lack of interest in activities, acting out, trouble in school, risky behavior, feelings of guilt and shame related to the death, worries about the future, and hiding their feelings.

For families who have experienced the death of their loved one to suicide or have had a suicide attempt occur, the signs of stress in children and youth are often similar to what has been described above. Both may feel confusion or guilt about the situation and it is important for parents to provide a safe space in order to talk with their child about what has happened.

Kids (6-12)

- **Sesame Street for Military Families** is a free, bilingual (English & Spanish) website for families where they can find information on topics like self-expression and homecomings, as well as utilize their multimedia resources and downloadable content for both parents and children. The attached link will lead you to the Grief page.

<https://sesamestreetformilitaryfamilies.org/topic/grief/>

- **TAPS (Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors)** is a non-profit organization dedicated to assist and share resources for those who are grieving the death of a military or veteran loved one. Under their

¹⁰Grief and Children. (2018, June). *American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*. Aacap.org. https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/FFF-Guide/Children-And-Grief-008.aspx

Programs tab they list youth programs and activities for age groups 4-12.

<https://www.taps.org/youthprograms/activities>

- **Rocky Mountain MIRECC for Suicide Prevention-** Talking to kids (T2K) about Suicide, located on the Department of Veteran Affairs website. This attachment focuses on how parents can talk to their school age child about suicide if an attempt has been made in their family. It includes “what to say examples,” videos, how to give support, and more.

<https://www.mirecc.va.gov/visn19/talk2kids/schoolage.asp>

Teens (12-17)

- **TAPS (Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors)** is a non-profit organization dedicated to assist and share resources for those who are grieving the death of a military or veteran loved one. Under their Programs tab they list youth programs and activities for age groups 13-18.

<https://www.taps.org/youthprograms/activities>

- **Rocky Mountain MIRECC for Suicide Prevention-**Talking to kids (T2K) about Suicide, located on the Department of Veteran Affairs website. This attachment focuses on how parents can talk to their teen about suicide if an attempt has been made in their family.

<https://www.mirecc.va.gov/visn19/talk2kids/teenager.asp>

- **The Military Child Education Coalition** provides a “Military Child Well-being toolkit” on their website which covers the topic of Suicide Prevention and Awareness for youth and teens. Parents can find resources, articles, and strategies on how to identify warning signs and find additional support for their child. It includes “what to say examples,” videos, how to give support, and more.

https://www.militarychild.org/upload/images/WellbeingToolkit/AL_5_0_Suicide_Prevention.pdf

In the Kitsap area

- Listed under **Fleet & Family Support Centers** are both **Gold Star** and **Blue Star** resources for families in the Kitsap region.
<https://kitsap.navylifepnw.com/programs/>
- Also located on the Naval Base Kitsap Fleet & Family Support is a resource page for families and Service Members with suicide prevention resources. <https://ffr.cnic.navy.mil/Family-Readiness/Suicide-Prevention/>
- **Navy Gold Star** is the official website for the Naval Gold Star Program which is inclusive, regardless of your loved one's military branch, location, or manner of death. "Our commitment to you is that regardless of the branch of service, we will provide you with support and help you locate your branch's survivor services." Under **Gold Star Locations** is where parents can locate their regional coordinator. For the **Kitsap County in Washington** the direct link is attached here: <https://www.navygoldstar.com/locations>
- Navy Gold Star home page: <https://www.navygoldstar.com/>
- The Naval Base Kitsap website includes a Navy Gold Star Program page with access to the official Facebook community page for families to join. The website: <https://ffr.cnic.navy.mil/Family-Readiness/Fleet-And-Family-Support-Program/Navy-Gold-Star-Program/>
The Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/NavyGoldStar>

Additional Resources

- **Military One Source** provides a list of bereavement camps for children and teens. Typical activities include swimming, hiking, and games while also providing a safe environment for grieving children to express how they are feeling.
 1. <https://comfortzonecamp.org/>
 2. <https://www.dougy.org/>
 3. <https://elunanetwork.org/>
 4. <https://www.taps.org/GoodGriefCamps/>
 5. <https://www.garysinisefoundation.org/snowball-express>.

- **A Soldier's Child Foundation** is dedicated to serve the children of military personnel who have lost their lives in active duty through three acts: birthday celebrations, mentorship programs, and education scholarships. <https://www.asoldierschild.org/about>

- **U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs - Mental Health - Suicide Prevention:**

https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide_prevention/coping-support/index.asp

If you are experiencing an emergency and at risk of harm or think someone else is in danger, stop and call 911 immediately.

1. **Military Crisis Line:** Free and confidential resource for all service members, including members of the National Guard and Reserve, and Veterans, even if they are not enrolled in VA benefits or health care. <https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/get-help-now/military-crisis-line/>

2. **Counseling, Advocacy and Prevention:** CAP programs provide free individual, group and family. Counseling and support services to those in need. <https://ffr.cnic.navy.mil/Family-Readiness/Fleet-And-Family-Support-Program/Counseling-Advocacy-and-Prevention/>

3. **Military One Source Peer to Peer Support:** offers a Hotline - 800-278-8255 for the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. Speak with a responder using a Lifeline chat <https://988lifeline.org/chat/>.

Summary & Action Steps

- Every child and parent's experience with the "stages" of grief after losing a loved one are going to look different.
- For school-age kids they may ask a lot of questions about death, the family member, and guilt so it is important to explain that what happened was not their fault.
- For teens, they may exhibit signs of risky behavior or even try to hide their feelings. It is important to check in with your teen about how they are feeling and offer them support.
- Rely on your community. Ask friends and family for help with meals, quality time with your children, and any other tasks that you may feel comfortable delegating.

Chapter Four: Additional Resources and Information

The importance of including locally specific resources in the Naval Base Kitsap area is so that residing military families are aware of what is accessible to them in their community. Just as the U.S. Naval Undersea Museum lends itself as a resource for the military community it serves through its programming and other resources, this document will be an aid to visitors who may be seeking additional support for their families and don't know where to begin their search.

In the Kitsap area

- New families and/or current residents of the Kitsap region should consider joining the **official Facebook page** for additional resources and updates. <https://www.facebook.com/KitsapFFR/>
- On the **Naval Base Kitsap website** there is a page specifically with programs and organizations for military kids and youth. <https://ffr.cnmc.navy.mil/Family-Readiness/Fleet-And-Family-Support-Program/Work-and-Family-Life/Deployment-Readiness-Support/Resources-for-Children/>

EFMP

- “**The Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP)** is a Department of Defense wide program to support retention and career for the Service Member, operational readiness for the Command, and solution focused support customized for the family.” This resource provides support to military families in the state of Washington with additional direction on medical care, community support, child care, and age specific sources for children with special needs from birth to post secondary education. <https://community.apan.org/wg/exceptional-family-member-program/>

- **Navy Life PNW** includes an **EFMP Medical and Family Support** section with the enrollment forms and contact information to the program coordinator at **Naval Hospital Bremerton**.
<https://kitsap.navylifepnw.com/fleet-family/family-assistance/exceptional-family-member-program>
- **The National Military Family Association** has spent more than 50 years supporting and enhancing the quality of life for military families through advocacy and innovative programming. They have information for families with children with special needs, how EFMP works, and how to apply. “Although each Service has its own EFMP, they all serve the same essential function: coordinating the assignment process to ensure special needs families are not sent to locations that lack adequate medical or educational resources. Installation EFMP programs offer support programs and provide families with information about and referral to local services. Enrollment in the EFMP is mandatory for active duty service members who have dependent family members with ongoing medical, mental health, or special educational needs.” <https://www.militaryfamily.org/info-resources/efmp-special-needs/>
- **Military One Source** includes EFMP resources and how military families can determine their eligibility and apply.
<https://www.militaryonesource.mil/special-needs/efmp/>

Professional Counseling

- The Military and Family Life Counseling Program offered through Military One Source. <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/confidential-help/non-medical-counseling/military-and-family-life-counseling>

Program counselors can help you and your family manage issues such as:

1. Stress management
2. Relationship building
3. Moving Preparations and getting settled
4. The grieving process following the death of a loved one or colleague

- To reach a **Military and Family Life counselor** contact your installations **Military and Family Support Center** or use the link below. <https://installations.militaryonesource.mil/?looking-for-a=program/program-service=26/focus=program>
- By contacting your local installations **Military and Family Support Center**, you may also ask if there are child and youth behavioral counselors at any of the following locations near you: Child development centers, Youth or teen centers, Off-installation schools, and Military youth summer camp.
- The **Cohen Veterans Network (CVN)** was launched in 2016 to establish mental health clinics to serve veterans and their families through evidence-based practices, such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy. Today there are 23 clinics across the country who focus their efforts on post-9/11 veterans, active duty service members (with a TRICARE referral), including National Guard and Reserves and military family members.
 - Website: <https://www.cohenveteransnetwork.org/>
 - Care: https://cvn.wpenginepowered.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/CVN_AtAGlance_December-2022.pdf
 - For **Washington residents**, one clinic is located in Lakewood. Contact information here: <https://www.cohenveteransnetwork.org/clinics/>
- The **Military Child Education Coalition** supports all military-connected children by educating, advocating, and collaborating to resolve education challenges associated with the military lifestyle. They have several toolkits available for kids and youth that cover topics of wellbeing and health such as: emotional intelligence, mindfulness, DEI, LGBTQIA+, and more. These toolkits include materials for parents, teens, and medical providers. <https://www.militarychild.org/wellbeingtoolkit>

- **Operation Purple Camp** is a free week of camp for military kids to connect with other children just like them. Their goal is to support and uplift military kids' well-being and mental health needs through programs informed by research and outreach centered around the challenges military kids experience in their daily lives.

<https://www.militaryfamily.org/programs/operation-purple/operation-purple-camp/>

- **Bloom: Empowering the Military Teen**, a website for teens to connect with and read about other teens' experiences while growing up in a military lifestyle. <https://www.bloommilitaryteens.org/>

- **The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry** is another military family resource that offers assistance in difficult topics such as stress management and teens, children and grief, anxiety, depression, as well as resources for the mental health of parents. If you are seeking a child and adolescent psychiatrist, this site can help locate one for your families specific needs.

https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_Youth/Resource_Centers/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Resource_Centers/Military_Families_Resource_Center/

- **U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs** offers are source on their site dedicated to mental health, exploring topics such as:

1. Anxiety
2. PTSD
3. Depression
4. SubstanceUse
5. SuicidePrevention

If you are seeking assistance for yourself or a family member, additional resources are here: <https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/families/index.asp>

For locating a Vet Center: <https://www.va.gov/find-locations/>

Addendum for Museums who serve a Military Community

For museums who are located near or on a military installation and serve a military community, this resource document may be adapted and customized to that specific area. As there are sections in each chapter of this toolkit that are specified to the Kitsap area for the Kitsap Naval Base located in Bremerton, WA, so can other museums include resources from their own area into those sections to provide access for their military community families.

Timeline: During Fall quarter of 2022 (Oct-Dec), I solidified my thesis project and intended deliverable with my Thesis Chair. In November I met with Valerie Johnson with the USNUM and confirmed the museum's partnership for the project as well as secured my third committee member James Mazza with the College of Education at the University of Washington. In December the first committee meeting was held to discuss the plan for Winter quarter (Jan-Mar).

During Winter quarter of 2023 (Jan-Mar), I sought to assemble an advisory board of two mental health professionals who had expericnes working with military families, but unfortunatley that plan was unable to come to fruition. I focused on assembling the materials and resources, as well as searching for journals focused on the mental and emotional health of military kids and families.

On April 1st, the start of Military Child Awareness Month and the U.S. Naval Undersea Museum's E-Day for military families, I attended in order to present my rough draft to parents and receive feedback. I provided short, five question surveys that roughly eleven parent(s) filled out where they could include their thoughts and any suggestions. The feedback that was specifically implemented in the document was the inclusion of EFMP resources and links to calendar activities for families in the Kitsap area.

Further drafts were developed and sent to the committee for review during Spring quarter of 2023 (Apr-Jun). Committee meetings two and three were held to review progress and discuss further revisions as necessary.

Recommended actions:

- Utilize the military installations specific website. Ex: Naval Base Kitsap- <https://cnnw.cnic.navy.mil/Installations/NAVBASE-Kitsap/>
- Know what activities are going on in the community for military families, on and off the installation.
- Collaborate with local mental health professionals on up-to-date information on what resources are available for kids and youth.
- Make sure the resource document remains **free** and **accessible** to parents and families. Include a digital copy on the museum website, have clearly marked flyers in the lobby, etc.
- Let this be a living document. If adapted to your local area, this resource should never remain stagnant. Only museum professionals should have access to their copy of the toolkit to update and add information as their communities and their needs change over time, to ensure that any and all information added is vetted by mental health professionals and used by accredited organizations.

Creator: Nicole A. Zitto

Date: June 6th, 2023

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