

PREVENTION IN ACTION

NAVIGATING STRESS

CHECK OUT THE NEW WARFIGHTER MENTAL READINESS PLAYBOOK

Mental readiness is central and critical to warfighter readiness. Properly caring for Marines guarantees success on the battlefield and in life.

Marines are some of the toughest and most resilient people on the planet. With that said, even superheroes need help at times.

The Marine Corps Warfighter Mental Readiness Playbook, published in May, provides tools and information to help Marines and families strengthen their mental fitness.

Gen Eric Smith, Commandant of the Marine Corps (CMC), and SgtMaj Carlos Ruiz, Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps (SMMC), provided a joint statement to open the playbook.

“SgtMaj Ruiz and I firmly believe that mental readiness is just as critical to our combat readiness as physical fitness. Like so many of you, we have personally seen the



unfortunate consequences that one Marine's mental health tragedy can have on an entire unit—not to mention their friends, family, and local communities,” they wrote. “As a Nation and as a Corps we have made

enormous strides over the past two decades in recognizing and treating mental health. We must remember, however, that mental health crises are not confined to wartime. We must treat it like any other component of Total Fitness—something to be strengthened and honed in peacetime, so that it can withstand the rigors of combat.”

They encouraged leaders to use the playbook to enhance Marines' mental well-being. “Think of it as your go-to resource for fostering a culture where mental health is prioritized,” the CMC and SMMC said. “But let's be clear—this playbook is just one tool in your kit. Nothing beats the power of kneecap-to-kneecap leadership and mentorship.”

To read the playbook, visit www.usmc-mccs.org/wmrp.

Share Interactive Suicide Prevention and Mental Fitness Resource

It's midnight, and you can't sleep because there is too much on your mind.

Maybe it is stress at work, you've been feeling down lately, or your spouse's recent behavior has you worried.

You've also noticed a Marine in your unit seems to have lost interest in just about everything.

What can you do? Where can you turn?

Go online and check out the Marine Corps Interactive Suicide Prevention and Mental Fitness Resource at www.usmc-mccs.org/mfitness, or scan the QR code on the right and click on the Prevention Skills You Can Use button.

- Browse through the sections and find something that grabs your interest.

- Learn about the different levels of stress, which everyone experiences, and ways to cope with stress before it becomes overwhelming.

- Pick up pointers on having open and honest conversations with someone you worry might be having suicidal thoughts, or how to recognize warning signs in yourself and others.

- Learn strategies for problem-solving, tips for managing stress, or important safety warnings about lethal means.

- Build valuable life skills, including healthy relationship

skills. Healthy relationships include boundaries, self-control, communication, and respect.

- Read more about and practice mindfulness techniques, which aids in relaxation and the management of stress, lowers blood pressure, helps to improve relationships, and promotes overall fitness. Mindfulness helps build stronger relationships, both personal and professional.

- Learn about the variety of Marine Corps Community Services (MCCS) programs that assist Marines and their families in navigating life's challenges.

- Use the information as needed to help you help others, maintain your own readiness,

and strengthen your fitness and ability to bounce back from life's challenges.

If you or someone you know is experiencing thoughts of suicide, call 911 for an emergency dispatcher or 988 (press 1) for the Military/Veterans Crisis Line. Text 838255, or chat online at veteranscrisisline.net/get-help-now/military-crisis-line.



PREVENTION SKILLS
YOU CAN USE

WAYS TO REDUCE THE STRESS OF PARENTING

Strong communities strengthen families. Everyone in the Marine Corps community plays a role in fostering strong families and keeping children safe.

Parents play the biggest role, and although it can be stressful, there are steps that you can take to strengthen your ability to handle difficult situations.

1. Take care of yourself. When you board a plane, the flight attendants tell you to put on your oxygen mask first and remain conscious to help others do the same.

Self-care is important to being the best you can be for your kids and helping them be the best versions of themselves.

Do something for yourself, no matter how small, every day.

2. Attend parent education classes or events. Knowledge is power! Trying to navigate the challenges of parenting can be stressful, but there are several resources available for parents to help answer those tough questions. Your local [New Parent Support Program](#) hosts classes and events that can provide support and education.

3. Stay connected. Being isolated is tough and can make anyone feel lonely or frustrated. Participating in community events is



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important to build and maintain connections. Consider joining a play group with other parents (it's a great chance to vent, too).

Think about other groups that you might join or classes that you might take, like an exercise class. Find ways to stay in contact with friends and family even if you are not located close to them.

4. Be flexible (Semper Gumby). Plan ahead as much as possible but remember you will also have to adapt at times. Use your re-

sources when you must be flexible, and work to build a network locally who can help you to adapt.

The Family Advocacy Program wants to help with parenting stress and has additional resources. Additional information can also be found at Military OneSource's [Military Parents Resource Center](#).

Hold Family Meetings to Maintain Open Communication and Manage Stressors

Open communication is one of the keys to healthy relationships, a component of social fitness. Having regular family meetings is one way to foster honest communication, navigate difficult discussions, and discuss both individual and family goals.

Topics you might discuss in a family meeting include:

Household Chores

Household chores can be a point of contention especially if one family member feels like they are doing all the work.

Dividing household chores among family members is a great topic to discuss during a

family meeting. This is a good opportunity to get aligned on how each family member can contribute to household duties.

Budget

Discussions about finances can be tough. However, having regular finance meetings is a great opportunity to get on the same page regarding the family budget. This discussion can help you avoid financial stressors, build savings, and plan for future events and activities.

Resolving Conflict

Conflict between family members is common. A family meeting to discuss a

conflict that occurred can help open lines of communication and move toward a resolution. The focus of the discussion should be how to attack the problem, not scapegoat or punish.

Regular family meetings can help build emotional connectedness, open lines of communication and help keep your household running efficiently.

Contact the [Family Advocacy Program](#) or [Marine Corps Family Team Building](#) for more information and support.

MCCS SUPPORTS MARINE CORPS TOTAL FITNESS GOALS

Marine Corps Community Services provides a network of programs and services designed to enhance Marine Corps Total Fitness. As a Marine or a family member, this means taking an approach to life that strengthens all aspects of health and fitness. Marine Corps Total Fitness focuses on social, spiritual, mental, and physical domains.

Social fitness is about building and maintaining positive connections with others in all areas of your life. You can make those connections anywhere, including while working out, playing sports, and through the Single Marine Program.

Spiritual fitness involves engaging in life’s meaning and purpose. Chaplains can assist in understanding your purpose and meaning in life and how it connects to your service and serves as a source of support.

For more information about spiritual fitness, visit: www.fitness.marines.mil/Resilience/Spiritual-Fitness.

Mental fitness includes being engaged in healthy thinking and behaviors and building strong intellectual and emotional habits. Resources that assist with mental fitness include chaplains and MCCS services such as [transition readiness](#), [financial](#)



[management](#), [family team building](#), [community counseling](#), and [family advocacy](#).

Physical fitness requires functional strength, agility, aerobic capacity, endurance, mobility, and a well-rounded fitness program. Semper Fit’s strength and conditioning coaches provide unit and individual Marine training.

Fitness and performance centers also include sleep and health educators who provide

sleep health coaching, nutrition education, and small or large group classes that promote and improve physical, mental, spiritual, and social fitness for Marines and family members.

The [Human Performance Branch](#) offers access to fitness programs for combat fitness tests and physical fitness tests, workout of the day, and aquatics conditioning.

The Marine Corps is developing Warrior Athlete Readiness and Resilience Centers that will consolidate health, wellness, prevention, and performance capabilities.

Seven Tips for Budgeting Effectively as a Family

Budgeting as a family is essential for financial fitness, stability, and success. Here are some tips on how to effectively budget as a family:

- 1. Set goals:** Determine what your family’s financial goals are, prioritize them, and write them down. Having clear goals will help keep you motivated to stick to your budget.
- 2. Track your expenses:** Keep track of all your family’s expenses, from groceries and bills to entertainment and other discretionary spending.
- 3. Create a budget:** Once you have a good understanding of your family’s expenses, create a budget that outlines how much you will spend in each category.
- 4. Involve the family:** Budgeting is a team effort, so involve your spouse and children in the process. This will help everyone work together toward your goals.
- 5. Reduce unnecessary expenses:** This could include eating out less, canceling subscription services you don’t use, or finding cheaper alternatives for everyday items.
- 6. Save for emergencies and the future:** Having a financial cushion will help protect your family in



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case of unexpected expenses or financial setbacks.

7. Review and adjust regularly: Review your budget to track your progress toward your goals and adjust as needed. Budgeting may require some time and effort, but the benefits of a secure and stable future for your family far outweigh the challenges.

Assistance is available from your installation, through the [Personal Financial Management Program \(PFMP\)](#), or the Command Financial Specialist in your unit. The PFMP is free and confidential.

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.

Visit <https://www.usmc-mccs.org/news/prevention>



or scan the QR code to sign up for our mailing list or view past issues.

Your email address will only be used to deliver the newsletter. Unsubscribe at any time by responding to the sender.

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

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

PREVENTION RESOURCES

CDC Violence Prevention: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention established the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (NCIPC) as the lead federal organization for violence prevention in 1992.

The Division of Violence Prevention within NCIPC focuses on preventing violence and its consequences so that all people, families, and communities are safe, healthy, and free from violence.

For information and tools, including the Connecting the Dots, visit www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention.

DoD resources and tools: Check out the Department of Defense’s integrated primary prevention website at www.prevention.mil. It includes information about resources, tools, research, and policy.

Marine Corps Interactive Suicide Prevention and Mental Fitness Resource: This online resource provides suicide prevention and mental fitness skill-building information for all Marines and their families.

This is a resource users can come back to as often as they need it. Scan the QR code and click on the Prevention Skills You Can Use button, or go to www.usmc-mccs.org/mfitness.



PREVENTION SKILLS YOU CAN USE

KEY PROGRAMS SUPPORTING MILITARY FAMILIES

TRANSITION, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, AND CAREER ADVANCEMENT



These resources are tailored to bolster the resilience and professional growth of service members and their spouses. Each program is a testament to the dedication of the well-being and success of military families, embodying a comprehensive approach to support and appreciation.

TRANSITION READINESS PROGRAM (TRP)

TRP provides comprehensive support for service members and families transitioning to civilian life, with services like transition counseling, career workshops, and job search assistance. Connect with your TRP office to learn more at: www.usmc-mccs.org/trs.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Volunteer opportunities strengthen community ties and support personal and family growth. For opportunities tailored to military families, contact your installation Volunteer Coordinator.

FAMILY MEMBER EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (FMEAP)

FMEAP is dedicated to aiding military spouses in overcoming employment challenges, FMEAP offers career guidance, workshops, and more, highlighting the value of military spouses. For more information, spouses can visit: www.usmc-mccs.org/fmeap.

SKILLBRIDGE

Skillbridge extends training and employment opportunities to transitioning service members and their families, promoting professional development. For more information, visit: skillbridge.osd.mil.



MCCS website: Visit the Marine Corps Community Services website (www.usmc-mccs.org) to find information about programs and resources and read articles that offer skill-building information.

OSCAR/COSC: The Operational Stress Control and Response

(OSCAR) teams and Combat and Operational Stress Control (COSC) representatives promote prevention and help-seeking behavior in their units.

Prevention in Action— Stakeholders Training: Visit www.marinenet.usmc.mil and search Prevention in Action. This

self-guided online training is designed for Marines, attached Sailors, and civilians who engage in prevention activities. In this course, participants learn more about how and why to champion prevention activities within their sphere of influence.