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CLEARINGHOUSE
FOR MILITARY FAMILY READINESS



Promoting the Mental Health of Military Parents to Prevent Child Maltreatment

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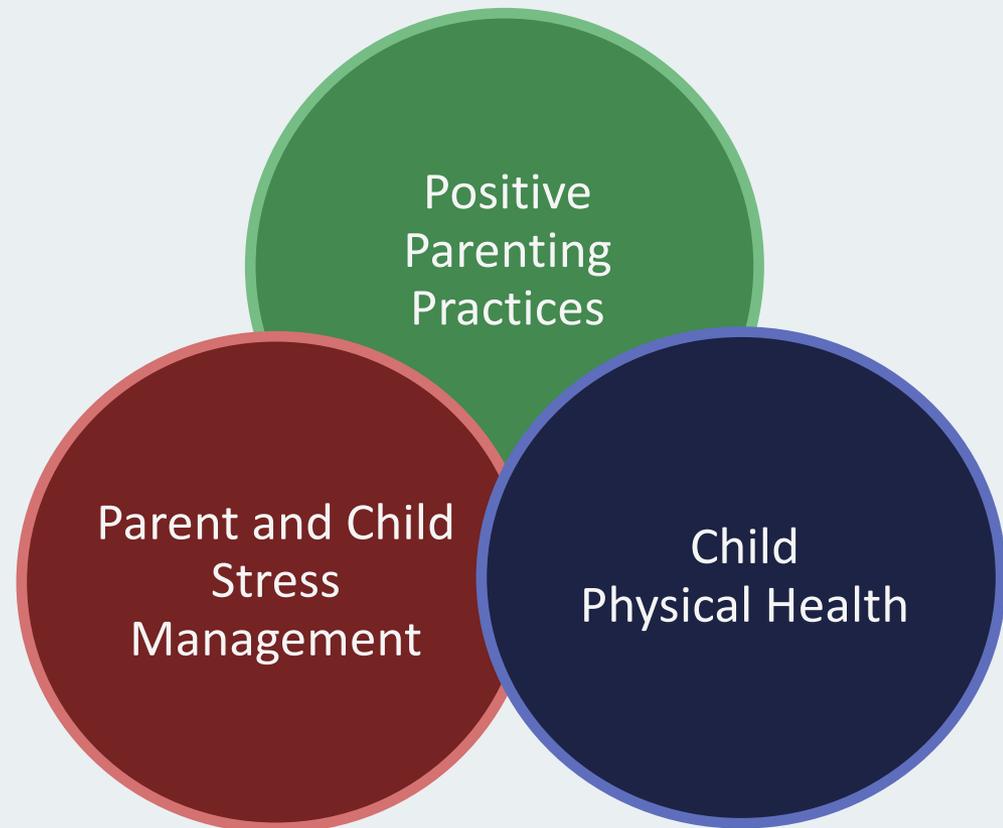
Co-Director, Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness at Penn State

July 11, 2023

What is Thrive?



 take root ages 0-3 years	 sprout ages 3-5 years
 grow ages 5-10 years	 branch out ages 10-18 years
 take root home visitation	 grow safe and secure



CLEARINGHOUSE FOR MILITARY FAMILY READINESS

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<https://militaryfamilies.psu.edu>

Clearinghouse Office Hours



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Open Office Hours

Learn how to tackle real-world problems and challenges through monthly collaborative learning sessions.

Examples of session topics include:

- Learn how to start collecting data.
- Discover how to find a training or program.
- Evaluate whether a training or program is effective.
- Request information on topics of your choice.

What topics or questions do you have that we can help with? **We want to know!**



Get real-time guidance and resources from researchers and implementation specialists at the Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness at **no cost to you.**

Open to anyone supporting military families, attend one or all of these monthly 30- to -45 minute microlearning sessions over Teams.

Upcoming Session:

**Monday
July 31, 2023
3:00 p.m. EST**

<https://militaryfamilies.psu.edu/open-office-hours/>

Today's Presenter



Keith R. Aronson, Ph.D.

DISCLAIMERS

- The opinions or assertions contained in this presentation are the private views of the presenter and should not be construed as official or as reflecting the views or policies of the United States Department of Defense or any of its Service branches.
- The presenter has no conflicts of interest to disclose.

AGENDA

1. The military as a greedy institution
2. Stress, hassles, life events, and their impacts
3. Coping
4. Individual, family, and military risk/resilience factors
5. Building resilience and positive parenting
6. Accessing programs from the Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness at Penn State's website
7. Questions/comments

THE MILITARY: A GREEDY INSTITUTION (SEGAL, 1986)

- Difficult job
- Many demands, little control
- Repeated deployments
- Repeated relocations
- New communities, new schools, making new friends
- Family disruptions
- Income is not great for most.
- Injuries, disability
- Psychological challenges
- Miss family events, births, birthdays, weddings, anniversaries
- Children miss their Service member parent; parents miss their children.
- **43% of Service members have children.**

MILITARY PARENT MENTAL HEALTH

Prevalence of military parent mental health problems is not clear, under-researched for sure.

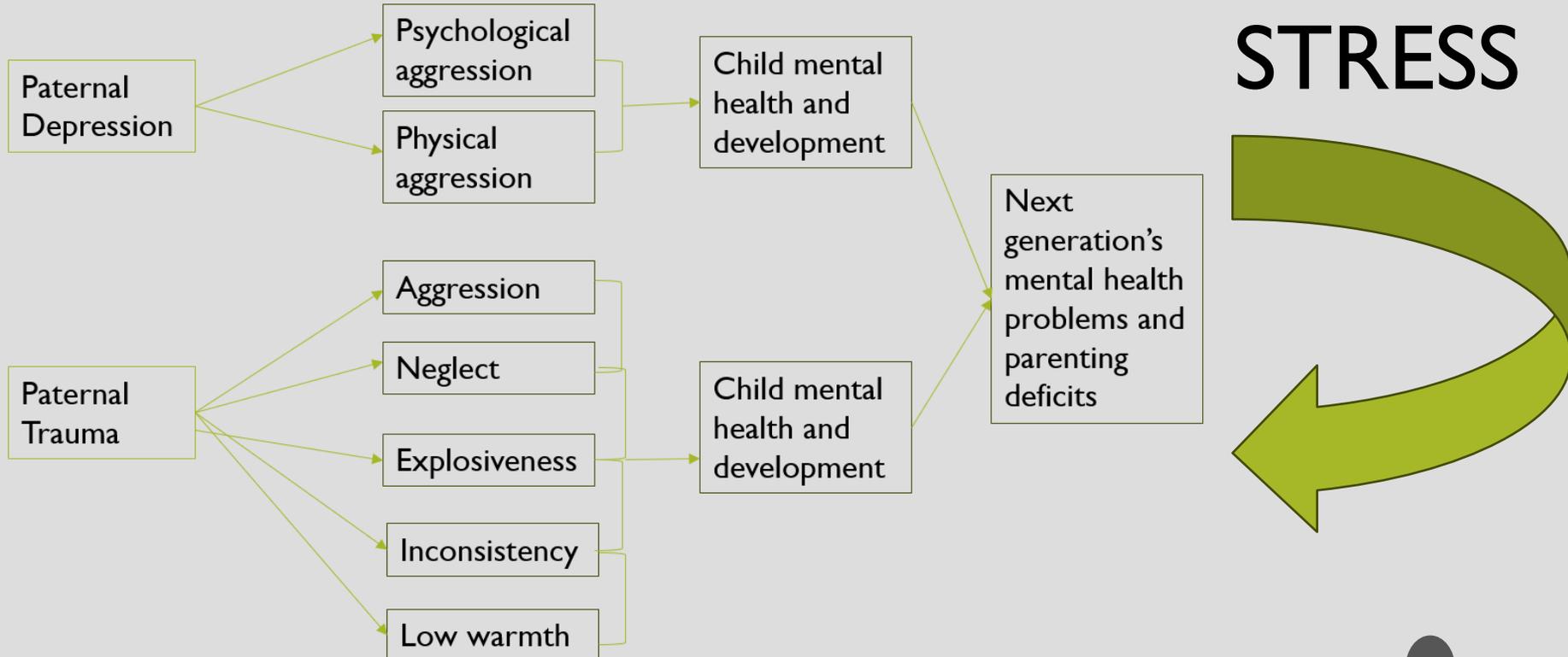
Most research is on military children's or Service member's mental health (no examination of those who are parents).

Sub-clinical levels of mental health problems are basically ignored.

- **14-25% of active duty Service members may have posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD).**
- **4% of male and 5% of civilian female military spouses diagnosed with major depressive disorder (MDD; Donoho et al., 2018).**
 - slightly higher for spouses of color, < 25 and > 34, deployed, with combat
 - significantly higher for unemployed (9%), 3 + children (6% to 11%), enlisted (4X higher than officers)
- **12% MDD, 17% generalized anxiety disorder (GAD), 4% drinking more than desired among spouses seen in primary care (Eaton, et al., 2008)**
 - few getting appropriate specialty care

PROBLEMATIC PARENTING

- Parental mental health problems associated with parenting deficits (Marcal, 2021).

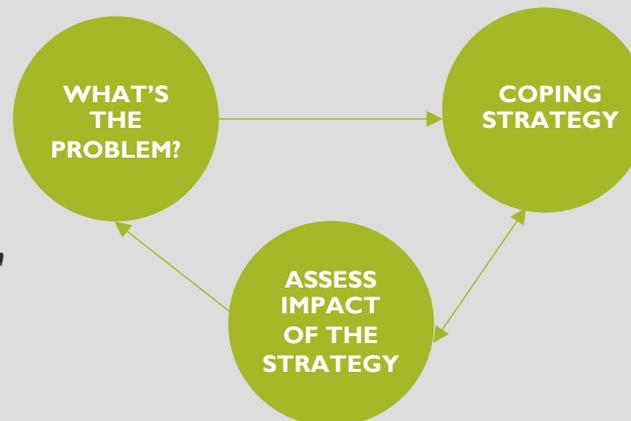


STRESS & EMOTION (LAZARUS & FOLKMAN, 1984)

- Psychological stress occurs when a person appraises their environment as taxing or exceeding their resources (e.g., personal, social) and threatening to their well-being.
- Stress appraisals (harm, threat, challenge) often give rise to negative EMOTIONS/FEELINGS.
- Stress and negative emotions are severe when **(a) primary appraisals indicate high potential harm, threat, or challenge and (b) secondary appraisals conclude a deficit in one's ability to handle the stressor(s).**
- Thus, given the demands of the military on the whole family, psychological stress seems unavoidable.
- **What is coping?**

COPING (CARVER, 2000)

- Strategies and/or actions taken to return to homeostasis in the face of stress
- Help people accurately assess challenges.
- Assess how they typically cope - Ways of Coping Scale (Folkman & Lazarus, 1988)
 - “Took one step at a time.” (problem-focused)
 - “Talked to someone who could help me deal.” (social support)
 - “Hoped a miracle would happen.” (wishful thinking)
 - “Tried to forget the whole thing.” (avoidance)
- Determine, given context, which coping approach is most likely to work?
- Re-assess
- Adjust approach (if needed)



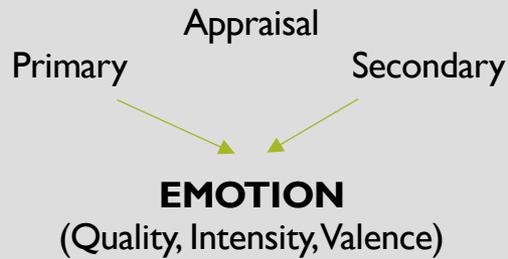
"MY BOSS IS ALWAYS MAD AT ME."

STRESS, COPING, & EMOTION (LAZARUS & FOLKMAN, 1986)

Person-Environment Encounter



The Boss



Me



The Meeting



The Vodka

Efficacious,
Strong Me



Re-Appraisal

EMOTION
(Quality, Intensity, Valence)

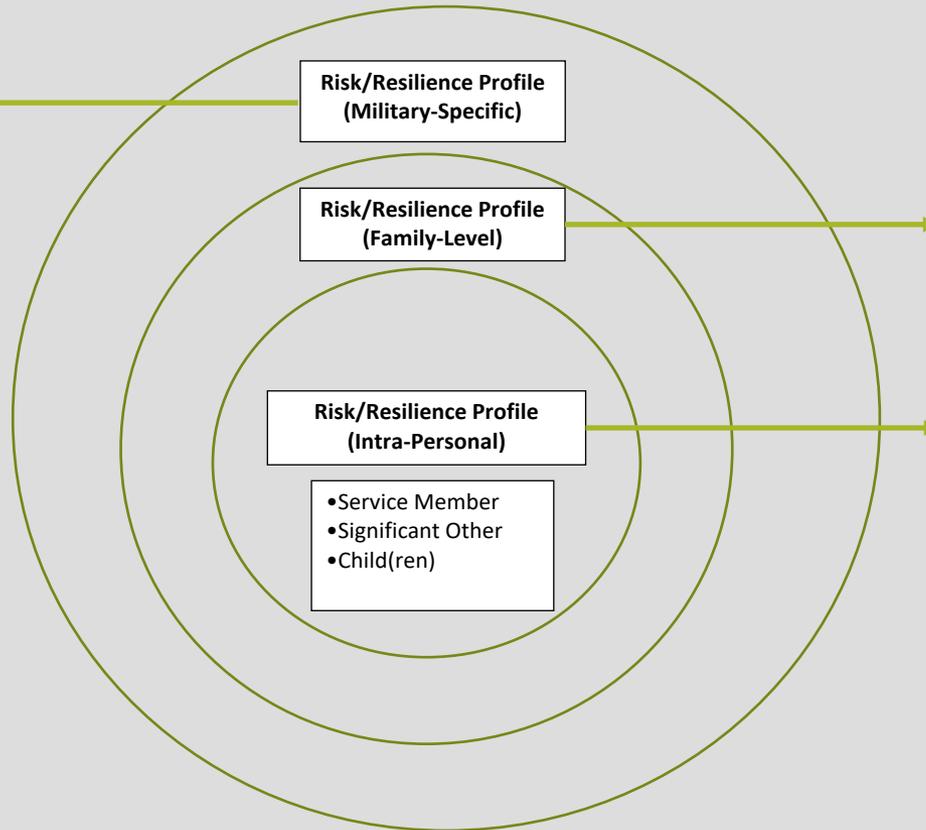


Guilty, Shameful
Me

ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS THEORY (BRONFENBRENNER, 2000)

Risk/Resilience

- Rank/paygrade
- Combat exposure
- Injury/disability
- Healthcare use
- Work/family balance



Risk/Resilience

- Communication
- Warmth
- Values/goals
- Work/family balance

Risk/Resilience

- Socioeconomic status (SES)
- Trauma exposure/Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)
- Coping skill repertoire
- Emotion regulation

Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1977)

RESILIENCE

- Resilience = Recalibrating back to one's original state after encountering hardships



BUILDING RESILIENCE

Based on the ecological model, where can we intervene to build resilience?

Individual Level:

- Build coping repertoire.
- Build parenting skills.
- Address mental health problems.

BUILDING RESILIENCE

Family Level

- Improve family communication.
- Use strategies for division of labor.
- Encourage social connections.
- Increase family warmth.

BUILDING RESILIENCE

Military Level

- Family Advocacy Program
- Office of Special Needs
- School Liaison Officers (SLOs)
- Military and Family Life Counselors (MFLCs)
- Military OneSource
- Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness at Penn State

REAL WORLD INTERVENTIONS: LOW BARRIERS/HIGH PAYOFF

- Addressing mental health problems, at the individual level, requires approaches that have:
 - low barriers (easy to do, easy to access, simple, realistic); and
 - high payoff (yield some noticeable change in a short period of time).
- Stressed people hit overload quickly.

REAL WORLD INTERVENTIONS: THE MAIN MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS

- Adjustment disorder
- Depression and anxiety

Exercise:

Think of every kind of intervention you know.

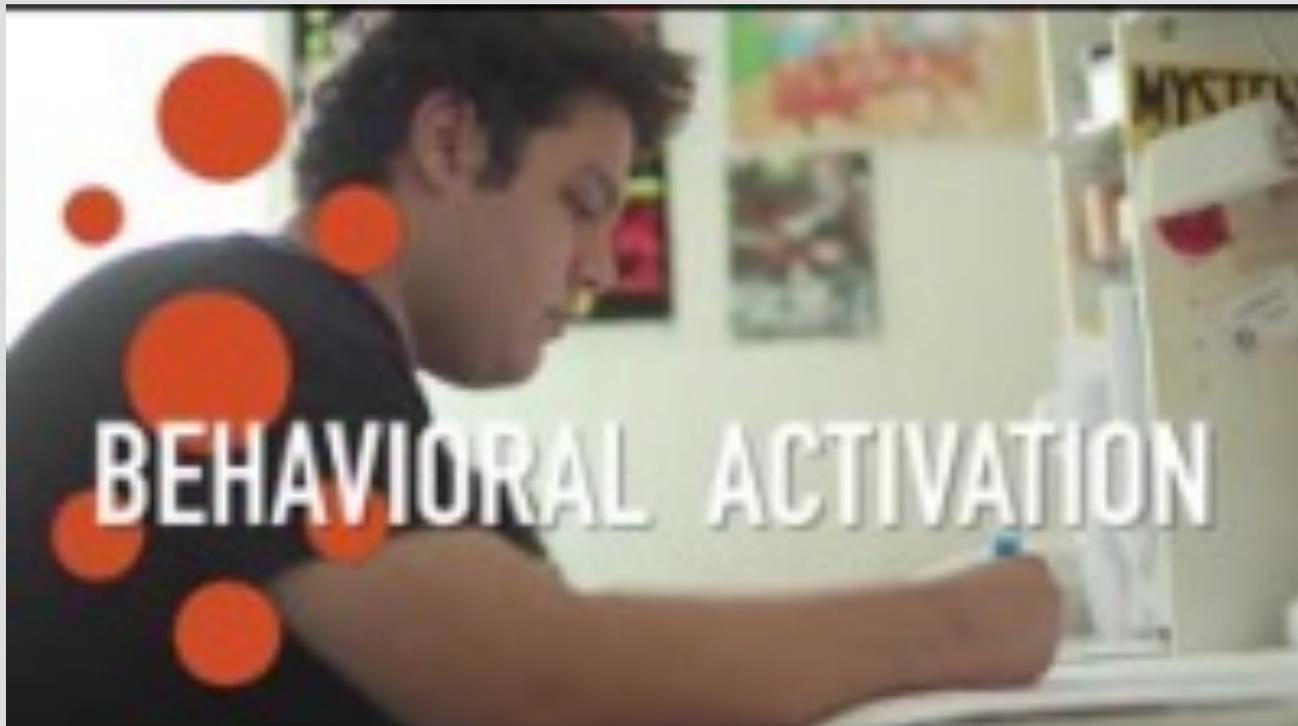
You now have to choose just one approach to help a parent who is stressed, down/depressed, and anxious.

What are you going to choose?

BEHAVIORAL ACTIVATION (KANTER, ET AL., 2010)

- Structured attempts to increase overt behaviors likely to bring patients into contact with reinforcing environmental contingencies.
- Depressed mood is related to decreased positive reinforcement for healthy behaviors and less engagement in pleasurable activities.
- Increase access to pleasant events and positive reinforcers.
- Decrease the intensity and frequency of aversive events and consequences.

BEHAVIORAL ACTIVATION (BA)



COGNITIVE RESTRUCTURING (CLARK, 2013)

- Getting people to look at things differently
- At least help them to challenge the way they currently look at things
- “I never...” - “No one ever....” - “....will never ever change” - “I couldn’t possibly...”
- In the Thrive Initiative's Grow program (for parents of children ages 5-10 years), this strategy is called thought catching and includes recognize, evaluate, refine, and let go.

Date	Time	Thought	Challenge	Belief in Challenge
5/16/23	12:13 pm	This presentation sucks.	There is at least some good content.	20%
5/16/23	1:00 pm	I’m really missing the mark.	People will glean something from this.	30%
5/16/23	3:35 pm	People are going to hate this.	They might, but they might be OK with it.	45%
5/16/23	5:15 pm	I’m going to embarrass myself.	I’ve given many talks and they are never horrible.	50%
5/16/23	6:10 pm	This is going to bomb.	????	

COGNITIVE RESTRUCTURING



THIRD WAVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPIES

Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT; Linehan, 1993)

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT; Hayes, Strosahl, & Wilson, 1999)

Functional Analytic Psychotherapy (FAP; Kohlenberg & Tsai, 1991)

Mindfulness-Based Therapies (MBT; Kabat-Zinn, 1990)

Cognitive Behavioral Analysis System of Psychotherapy (CBASP; McCullough, 2000)

CONCLUSIONS

- Military life is stressful.
- Understand the risk/resilience profile of your families.
- Target what is likely most changeable.
- Help people match an appropriate coping skill to the circumstance.
- Behavioral activation and cognitive restructuring are highly effective in reducing mental health symptoms.
- Use less talk therapy and more skill building (at least in short term).



Q & A





Identifying Mental Health Programs

continuum.militaryfamilies.psu.edu

PennState **CLEARINGHOUSE FOR MILITARY FAMILY READINESS**

CONTINUUM OF EVIDENCE Search About Submit a Program Request Fact Sheet Update Contact Us

Welcome to the Continuum of Evidence

Military families face unique challenges every day. Many programs exist that intend to address the diverse issues military families encounter and seek to enhance military family readiness and resilience. However, the sheer number of programs available make the process of identifying effective programs difficult.

The Clearinghouse serves as a resource for professionals who work with military individuals and families by providing its Continuum of Evidence (Continuum). The Continuum is a repository of programs reviewed by Clearinghouse research and evaluation scientists. Programs are placed on the Continuum based on their descriptions to help individuals who serve military families make informed decisions regarding how to support these unique and valuable families.

GET STARTED

CONTINUUM OF EVIDENCE Search About Submit a Program Request Fact Sheet Update Contact Us

Search

To find a program, type keywords into the search bar and press the Enter key or click the Search button. For additional instructions or help, please contact the Technical Assistance Team by phone 1-877-382-9185, email clearinghouse@psu.edu, or initiate a live chat by clicking on the box that appears on the bottom right of the screen.

depression **SEARCH** [Reset Search](#)

You can use the filter options below to refine your search. Click on the Apply Filter button after making your selections to update your results.

SEARCH OPTIONS

Show only items that match keyword

FILTER OPTIONS

Show only items that match all filters

Placement +

Topic +

Target Population +

Sector +

Military Use +

Facilitator Training +

Implementation +

Availability +

APPLY FILTER **CLEAR**

1 - 10 of 181 results Sort By: Placement (High-Low) ▾

Effective-ECT

Metacognitive Therapy (MCT)

Topic: Anxiety, Depression, Emotional Competency, PTSD
 Target Population: Adolescents, Adults
 Sector: Community-Based

Metacognitive Therapy (MCT), a community-based therapy approach, is designed to help participants alter their beliefs and thoughts to enhance well-being and achieve a more positive, resilient, and balanced approach to life.

Effective-ECT **Military Use**

Prolonged Exposure (PE) Therapy

Topic: PTSD, Trauma, Depression, Anxiety
 Target Population: Adults
 Sector: Community-Based

Prolonged Exposure (PE) Therapy is a one-on-one therapeutic treatment for adults who have experienced significant trauma and have consequently received a diagnosis of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Treatment focuses on reducing trauma symptoms, such as hypervigilance, hyperarousal, flashbacks, and related depression and anxiety symptoms.

Effective-ECT **Military Use**

Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT®)

Topic: Child Abuse, PTSD, Parenting, Trauma, Depression, Anxiety, Behavioral Problems, Grief & Loss
 Target Population: Adolescents, Early Childhood, Middle Childhood, Parents
 Sector: Community-Based

No-Cost, Online Parenting Resources



Access resources focused on self-care and supports!



<https://thrive.psu.edu>



Breathe to Thrive
Mindful Strategies for You
and Your Child

 Download



Resources to Thrive
Online Family Support

 Download



PennState

 About • Programs • Modules • For Parents •

Blog

Parenting Stress and its Impacts
Published on June 6, 2023

Stress is part of everyday life, and our bodies can have mental and physical reactions to the stress we feel. When we encounter an event or situation that our body deems as challenging or stressful, our brain responds by perceiving a threat. This response, in turn, initiates several hormonal and physiological changes, such as increased ...

[Continue →](#)



Mental Health Resources

All Ages

Positive Parenting in Everyday Moments

Promoting Healthy Behaviors in Families

Take Root (0-3 years)

Listening to Your Baby

Taking Care of You

adolescent mental health
Parenting to Wellness

A supplemental parent-education module that is designed to offer support to parents and caregivers of adolescents who experience mental health challenges.

[Learn More](#)

adolescent mental health
Parenting to Wellness

Family Safety Plan Template

When a mental health crisis occurs, you and other family members may find it difficult to remember what you are supposed to do to avert or manage the situation. Use the sheet below to prepare yourself for a family member's mental health crisis. Keep the completed form in a place where you can access it easily.

Step 1: Warning Signs

Warning signs (thoughts, images, mood, situation, behavior) that a crisis may be developing. These warning signs become noticeable to others, or, if you are the person in crisis, you begin to feel them.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Step 2: Internal Coping Strategies

Things I can do to calm myself, or things I can do to help calm another person:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

© Resources for Parents and Caregivers © thrive 1

<https://thrive.psu.edu>



Professional Resources

PennState CLEARINGHOUSE FOR MILITARY FAMILY READINESS

thrive About Programs Modules For Parents For Professionals Contact

Resources for Professionals

These resources are intended to provide support to professionals who work with children, youth, and families. Some of our resources require your email address before you can access the download link. We are collecting your information so that we may gauge which resources professionals are downloading for use and so we can continue to provide useful resources.

- Professional Resources
- Hybrid Manuals
- Handouts
- Training Modules
- Thrive Educational Series Presentations

Trauma-Informed Care in Parent Education



thrive

Professional Resource

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Taking Care of Emotions All ages



Taking Care of Emotions

It is important to balance the demands of parenting with personal enjoyment. Releasing emotions regularly—through talking, crying, or the activities below—helps prevent stressful emotions from becoming overwhelming, and consequently, becoming anger. When emotions are avoided or daily troubles are contained, parents can become emotionally numb and find action difficult. The years of child rearing go by quickly; taking care of your emotional health allows you to fully

Pick a strategy

Creative Expre

Artist
fictioner
releas

Physical Activi

Exerc

Postpartum Depression 0-3 years



Postpartum Depression

New moms and dads, adoptive parents, and parents of multiple children may experience the baby blues or postpartum depression.

Baby Blues

Stress Management 3-5 years



Stress Management

Stress is a feeling that can arise when you deal with situations that you feel are positive or negative. Stress is individual and unique—circumstances that cause stress in one person may not cause stress in another. Small stressful events can also cause stress.

You can control your stress by learning to manage it. Remember, stress is a feeling.

General Tips for Stress

Take care of your physical health. Get enough sleep, eat healthy meals, exercise, and drink plenty of water.

Make time for you. Schedule down time, and make it a priority.

Engage in positive self-talk and look at things from a positive point of view.



Man



Remember to breathe in your muscle

...to health is to recognize the signs early. Usually last a week or two after bringing

...rying/Weepy
...oughts That You Feel Off
...nable Sleeping

Conflict Resolution 3-5 years



Conflict Resolution

Conflict is a normal part of life and something that children will experience with siblings, peers, parents, and other adults. As parents, we can help support our children when they experience conflict and teach them the skills they can use to resolve conflict, now and in the future. Below are some tips to help you coach your child through a resolution process.

Learn to Identify and Manage Emotions

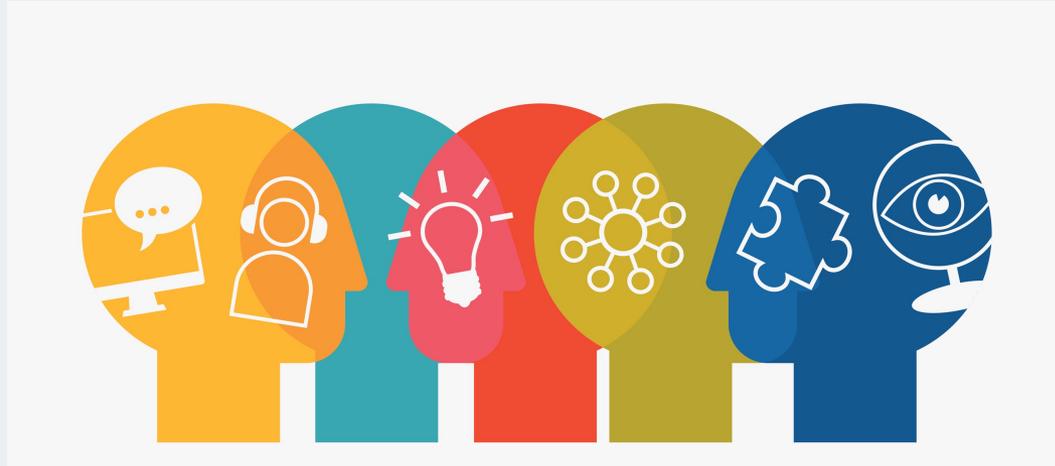
If your child is experiencing a conflict with someone, be prepared to help them manage strong emotions. When working with your child to identify feelings, you should recognize and name feelings and teach them it is okay to say how they feel. Children ages 3-5 years old need help linking the emotion they are feeling with feeling words. In addition, you should teach your child that it is not okay to hit, kick, or use physical force against themselves or anyone else.

Listen to Understand

Check in with your child and ask them, "What happened?" Listen to your child. Help them understand



Your Presentation Experience



**Please complete the presentation survey.
Share your topic interests.**

We Value Your Response!

<https://bit.ly/psuthrivementalhealth>

Professional Development



The Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness at Penn State is approved by the American Psychological Association to sponsor one hour of continuing education for participation in today's training.

- Attendance has been tracked.
- Within one month, certificates of completion will be sent to those who indicated a desire to receive credits at registration.
- For more information, contact Kristi Brawley: kkb18@psu.edu.

One Hour of Credit



Trauma-Informed Care for Helping Professionals



October 17, 2023
12:00 p.m. EST

Presenter:
Tara Saathoff-Wells, Ph.D., CFLE

<https://bit.ly/register4thrivesession2>



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Thank You



Contact Us



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1.814.865.7412

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