



# Family CONNECTION

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Questions?



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## Teen Dating Violence Awareness: What Adults Need to Know

February is Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month. A time to shine a light on an issue that often goes unnoticed but affects millions of young people each year. Teen dating...



## Your Virtual FFSC Webinars

See the full list of webinars available on [www.MyNavyFamily.com](http://www.MyNavyFamily.com) this month. Topics include Deployment, Employment, Finance, Life Skills, Parenting, Relocation and Transition...

# February is American Heart Month; Make Heart Health a Mission

February marks more than cold weather and Valentine's Day. Red appears everywhere in ribbons, heart-healthy recipes and a surge of advice to protect the body's most vital organ, the heart. For the military community, American Heart Month is a crucial reminder to pause, evaluate routines and prioritize cardiovascular health. A strong heart safeguards your family, your future and your service. Take action, as heart health demands urgency.

## **Why heart health counts, especially in military life.**

"Mission-ready" is more than a phrase, it is a mandate. Regardless of skill or motivation, readiness begins with health and the heart is central. Heart disease remains the leading cause of death in the United States and the military population is not immune. Irregular schedules, deployments, relocations and persistent stress elevate risk factors. Military spouses, contractors, civilian personnel and those living near military installations also face these challenges. Physical fitness and resilience do not replace taking care of your heart.

## **Heart health is more than calories and cardio.**

Standard advice, such as eating balanced meals, exercising and monitoring health metrics, only scratches the surface. True heart health involves optimizing sleep, proactively managing stress and seeking support when necessary. These foundational habits are often underestimated.

Self-care is not a trend; it is an essential practice that may require difficult choices, such as replacing screen time with physical activity or scheduling long-overdue medical appointments. Recognize that everyone has limits, and requesting assistance is a proactive strategy to safeguard your health and sustain your ability to support others.

## **EFMP: The military's support for heart health.**

The military provides specialized resources for families managing complex health needs through the Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP). If you have not used the EFMP, consider exploring its benefits. The program supports military families facing ongoing health challenges, including cardiac conditions, by facilitating access to specialized medical care. Cardiac issues can complicate routines, relocations and deployments. The EFMP ensures access to medical experts and support services at every stage, so families are not left to navigate these challenges alone.

## **Small steps, major payoffs.**

Immediate transformation is unrealistic. Research shows that consistent, incremental changes are most effective.

- ♥ Replace unhealthy snacks with fruit.
- ♥ Choose stairs over elevators.
- ♥ Encourage a colleague to join you for a walk.
- ♥ Practice brief relaxation techniques.

Every small improvement benefits heart health.

Individual choices influence others. When leaders and community members demonstrate healthy habits, they foster a culture of wellness. Heart health is a collective responsibility.

## **How to take action.**

- ♥ Schedule a check-up. Even if you feel fine, do not skip routine screenings. Knowing your blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar helps you take control.
- ♥ Check in with yourself. Are you constantly stressed? Is there someone (a friend, a coworker, your spouse or significant other) who can help shoulder the load?



[continued below]

♥ Use your resources. Military clinics, the EFMP and local agencies often host workshops, fitness classes, health screenings and informational events throughout the month.

♥ Reach out to others. You never know who is quietly struggling. A word of encouragement, an offer to walk together, or just checking in on a friend could be the nudge they need.

## **What really matters.**

American Heart Month demands a commitment to meaningful change. For those who serve, support or work alongside the military, heart health is a shared mission. Prioritizing personal health strengthens families, teams and the broader mission. If uncertainty or challenges arise, leverage programs like the EFMP for support. Seek information, build connections and use available resources. Your heart and those who depend on you deserve this commitment.

For more information on your installation's Exceptional Family Member Program, visit your local [Fleet and Family Support Center](#).

# FEBRUARY HOLIDAYS AND OBSERVANCES

- February 4 — USO Birthday
- February 14 — Valentine's Day
- February 16 — President's Day
- February 19 — Coast Guard Reserves Birthday
- Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month
- American Heart Month

American Heart  
Month





# Anchor Your Furniture to Prevent Tip-Overs

Navy Housing is partnering with [AnchorIt.gov](https://www.anchorit.gov) this month to raise awareness about the dangers of furniture tip-overs.

Unsecured furniture, especially tall or heavy items like bookshelves, dressers and stoves, can fall and cause serious injuries. To keep your home safe, anchor these items to the wall.

While anchoring devices are the most reliable way to prevent accidents, you can improve safety by placing heavier items on lower shelves, keeping floors clear of cords and supervising children around large furniture.

For more information on furniture safety, visit [AnchorIt.gov](https://www.anchorit.gov). To learn more about Navy Housing, contact a local [Navy Housing Service Center](#).



# Building Healthy Relationship Habits While Navigating Navy Life

February naturally brings attention to love and connection, making it a perfect time to highlight the habits that help relationships thrive, especially in the unique rhythm of Navy life. Whether couples are navigating deployment, reintegration or the everyday stressors of military service, small intentional actions can strengthen bonds and build resilience.

## Prioritize Meaningful Communication

Healthy communication is not about talking more. It is about talking with purpose. Setting aside even a few minutes each day to check in, share feelings or simply listen can help partners stay connected despite distance or busy schedules. When conversations get tough, focusing on understanding rather than winning helps keep the relationship grounded.

## Show Appreciation Regularly

Acts of appreciation go a long way, especially when time together is limited. A quick message, a handwritten note, or an acknowledgement of something your partner does well reinforces connection and reminds them that they are valued.

## Maintain Your Individual Well-being

Strong relationships are built by individuals who take care of themselves. Prioritizing sleep, stress management and personal goals supports emotional balance and helps partners show up as their best selves. Encouraging each other's growth strengthens the relationship as a whole.

## Create Rituals of Connection

Rituals do not have to be elaborate. Weekly video calls, shared playlists, reading the same book or celebrating small milestones can create a sense of togetherness even when miles apart. These routines help couples maintain closeness during deployments or busy periods.

## Seek Support When Needed

Reaching out for support is a sign of strength, not struggle. Nonmedical counseling can help couples navigate communication challenges, manage stress and build healthier patterns. Whether together or individually, talking with a counselor can provide tools that make relationships more resilient.

## Counseling Support Resources

For counseling support, visit your [nearest Fleet and Family Support Center](#) for assistance. For virtual clinical counseling, call 1-855-205-6749 to schedule an appointment.





# Teen Dating Violence Awareness: What Adults Need to Know

February is Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month. A time to shine a light on an issue that often goes unnoticed but affects millions of young people each year. Teen dating violence is not limited to physical harm; it can include emotional manipulation, verbal abuse, digital harassment and controlling behaviors that can deeply impact a teen's well-being and future relationships.

## What is teen dating violence?

Teen dating violence occurs when one partner uses power or control over another in a dating relationship. This can look like:

- Constant texting or monitoring social media activity.
- Isolation from friends or family.
- Insults, humiliation or threats.
- Pressure related to sexual activity.
- Physical aggression.

These behaviors are often mistaken for normal relationship conflict or intense affection, making them harder to recognize.

## Warning signs to watch for.

Adults play a critical role in prevention and early intervention. Some common red flags include:

- Sudden changes in mood or behavior.
- Withdrawal from friends, activities or family.
- Unexplained injuries or frequent excuses for a partner's behavior.
- Anxiety around phones, messages or social media.
- Declining academic performance.

## Why awareness matters.

Teens are still learning what healthy relationships look like. Without guidance, unhealthy behaviors can become normalized and carry into adulthood. Awareness helps teens understand their boundaries, recognize unhealthy patterns and seek help when needed.

## How to support teens.

- Start the conversation early. Talk openly about respect, boundaries and consent.
- Model healthy relationships. Teens learn by observing adult behavior.
- Listen without judgment. Create a safe space for teens to share concerns.
- Know the resources. Share trusted hotlines and support services.

## Help is available.

If you or a teen you know needs help, confidential support is available:

[LovellsRespect.org](https://www.lovellsrespect.org/): 1-866-331-9474 or text LOVEIS to 22522

[National Domestic Violence Hotline](https://www.ndvh.org/): 1-800-799-SAFE (7233)

Or find a counselor on your installation through the [FFSC Directory](https://ffsc.org/).

By staying informed and engaged, we can help teens build healthy, respectful relationships and prevent dating violence before it starts.



# Get a Head Start on Tax Season: Organization Pays Off

Tax season can feel overwhelming, but getting organized early can make the process far less stressful. Gathering documents, understanding filing options and planning ahead not only saves time but can also help reduce errors and missed opportunities. Taking a proactive approach now can bring peace of mind and financial clarity later.

Staying organized is one of the most effective ways to simplify tax preparation. Keeping important documents, such as W-2s, 1099s, expense records, and receipts in one place helps streamline the process and prevents last-minute scrambling. Whether you use a folder, binder or digital system, having a consistent method makes filing quicker and more accurate.

For military members, veterans and their families, [Military OneSource offers MilTax](#), a valuable and trusted resource during tax season. Through Military OneSource, eligible individuals can access free tax preparation software and support designed to address the unique aspects of military life, including deployments, multiple states and special pay considerations. Using this service can help ensure returns are completed correctly while maximizing eligible credits and deductions.

Beyond filing taxes, staying organized financially supports overall wellness. Reducing financial stress allows more time and energy to focus on personal goals, family and well-being. Knowing your taxes are handled, and your records are in order, can provide a strong sense of control and confidence.

If you have not started yet, now is a great time to gather documents, create a checklist, and explore the tools available through [Military OneSource](#). A little preparation today can make tax season smoother, simpler and far less stressful tomorrow.





# Why Community Matters: The Power of Finding Your Third Place

In today's busy, always-connected world, many people spend most of their time moving between just two places: home and work or school. While both are essential, relying on only these spaces can leave us feeling isolated or disconnected. Wellness is more than physical health; it also depends on our sense of belonging and meaningful connections with others.

Community plays a vital role in overall well-being. Strong social connections are linked to lower stress, improved mental health and better physical health outcomes. Even small, consistent interactions, such as seeing familiar faces or being greeted by name, can help reduce loneliness and increase feelings of support and stability.

One way to strengthen community and connection is by finding a "third place." A third place is a regular space outside of home, work or school where people gather, relax and connect. It might be a coffee shop, library, gym, community center, park, faith-based group or volunteer organization. What matters most is that the space feels welcoming and allows for regular connection.

Having a third place offers an opportunity to step away from daily responsibilities and be present. It provides balance, encourages healthy routines and creates space for relationships to develop naturally. Over time, these environments can become anchors of support, comfort and belonging.

Finding a third place does not require a major commitment. Often, it begins by noticing spaces where you already feel comfortable and choosing to show up consistently. Openness to conversation and connection, no matter how small, can help transform an ordinary place into a meaningful part of your wellness routine.

Wellness does not always come from doing more or pushing harder. Sometimes, it grows from connection, familiarity and community. Finding a third place may be a simple but powerful step toward a healthier, more balanced life.



# GOOD NEWS!



## Holiday Cocoa Stroll' Brings Joy to Exceptional Families at Kings Bay

The Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay, Georgia's Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) and Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) hosted the "Holiday Cocoa Stroll" on Friday, Dec. 12, 2025.

The event, held at the Community Recreation Activity Building on base, was planned for military families with special needs.

It offered a low-stress and sensory-friendly photo opportunity with Santa, with reduced noise and smaller crowds.

Activities included a walk through a holiday tree display, live jazz music, an outdoor snowfall experience and complimentary hot cocoa with cookies.

The event was designed to build family resilience and reduce holiday-related stress. It highlighted the continued partnership between the EFMP and MWR and their commitment to serving the long-term needs of military families with disabilities.

For more information on the EFMP and other events throughout the year, visit your installation's [Fleet and Family Support Center \(FFSC\)](#) or your MWR.



[continued below]



## Naval Base San Diego's Busy Supporting Sailors and Families

### Counselors Deployed to Support Sailors



The Fleet and Family Support Center at Naval Base San Diego, California, sent counselors to sea on USS Higbee (DDG 123) and USS Gridley (DDG 101). Following combat operations, they provided support to more than 600 Sailors through clinical counseling, stress-resilience training and reintegration workshops.

### Holiday Initiative Boosts Morale

The Holiday Cheer for Transient Sailors initiative provided free holiday artwork and care packages to unaccompanied Sailors at the Transient Personnel Unit in partnership with the Child Development Center and San Diego Military Outreach Ministry.

### Food Distributed During Shutdown



During a government shutdown, the FFSC at Naval Base San Diego partnered with Naval Medical Center San Diego and Feeding San Diego to organize a food and resource expo. The event provided food and resources to more than 500 active-duty members and federal employees, eventually distributing nearly 19,000 pounds of food over four events.



### Lemoore Outreach Connects Sailors to Resources

At Naval Air Station Lemoore, California, the Fleet and Family Support Center team set up outreach tables to provide Sailors with information on healthy relationships, stress management and sexual assault prevention. The team reached more than 150 people.



# Special Thanks to this Month's Contributors:

- Anali Aguilar, NSB Kings Bay Fleet and Family Support Center
- Cora Estrella, CNRSE Fleet and Family Support Program
- Dr. Sonia C. Blyther, NDW Fleet and Family Support Program
- Antonella DeLuca, CNIC Housing Division
- Dr. Cornealius Stamps, CNIC Fleet and Family Support Program
- Tim McGough, CNIC Fleet and Family Support Program



# YOUR *Virtual* FFSC WEBINAR SCHEDULE

We have webinars scheduled to suit time zones around the world!

Visit [MyNavyFamily.com](https://MyNavyFamily.com), select a topic, and view available sessions with times automatically converted to your local time.

## EMPLOYMENT

AI Resume Building - A Paradigm Shift	<b>2/4/26</b>	9:00 AM EST	6:00 AM PST
Leveraging AI For Your 2025 Job Search	<b>2/6/26</b>	10:00 AM EST	7:00 AM PST
How to Design a Powerhouse Mock Interview - Help Your Client with the Interview	<b>2/10/26</b>	1:00 PM EST	10:00 AM PST
AI Prompt Engineering: From Idea to Output	<b>2/11/26</b>	9:00 AM EST	6:00 AM PST
Power Up Your Resume for Remote Jobs	<b>2/11/26</b>	1:00 PM EST	10:00 AM PST
USAJOBS 2026	<b>2/13/26</b>	1:00 PM EST	10:00 AM PST
The ART of the Interview	<b>2/18/26</b>	11:00 AM EST	8:00 AM PST
Pain Free Resume Writing	<b>2/25/26</b>	11:00 AM EST	8:00 AM PST

Want more? Click on Employment for dates and times for:

- Becoming Federal Resume Savvy
- Job Search Hacks
- Mastering the Modern Resume
- Mastering Virtual Interviews
- Remote Ready: A Spouse's Roadmap to a Virtual Career!

## PARENTING

Parenting to Prevent PSB: Preteens (SHAPE Module 4)	<b>2/3/26</b>	12:00 PM EST	9:00 AM PST
Parenting to Prevent PSB: Teens (SHAPE Module 5)	<b>2/11/26</b>	12:00 PM EST	9:00 AM PST
Positive Parenting	<b>2/11/26</b>	12:00 PM EST	9:00 AM PST
What About the Kids	<b>2/19/26</b>	1:00 PM EST	10:00 AM PST

Join us for these webinars offered several times throughout the month:

- Helping Kids Thrive Through Change
- Spotting the Signs of Youth Suicide
- Nine Steps to Positive Parenting

## MENTAL WELL-BEING

Understanding Anger	<b>2/10/26</b>	10:00 AM EST	7:00 AM PST
Couples Communication - Conflict Resolution	<b>2/11/26</b>	2:00 PM EST	11:00 AM PST
Stress Management	<b>2/24/26</b>	10:00 AM EST	7:00 AM PST



## NAVY LIFE

Mission Start: Military Spouse Orientation 101	<b>2/3/26</b>	12:00 PM EST	9:00 AM PST
Stronger Together During Deployment	<b>2/4/26</b>	12:00 PM EST	9:00 AM PST

Click Navy Life for webinars like:

- Navy Family Connection
- Family Operations Security made Easy and more

## PERSONAL GROWTH

Healthy Relationships	<b>2/10/26</b>	10:00 AM EST	7:00 AM PST
Personal Communication	<b>2/26/26</b>	10:00 AM EST	7:00 AM PST



Click the Personal Growth category for Finding the Good in Conflict offered several times throughout the month.



- 1 Go to [MyNavyFamily.com](https://MyNavyFamily.com) to log in or create a free account.
- 2 Select the category on the home page, then select your webinar.
- 3 Confirm the start time and click "Enroll Me."

The FFSC LMS also has comprehensive resources like New Spouse Orientation, the Navy Family eHandbook, and the Navy Spouse library.

## PERSONAL FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Quarterly Command Financial Specialist Forum	<b>2/11/26</b>	10:00 AM EST	7:00 AM PST
Million Dollar Service Member Day 1	<b>2/17/26</b>	11:00 AM EST	8:00 AM PST
Why Insurance Matters and More: Do You Have the Right Coverage?	<b>2/17/26</b>	2:00 PM EST	11:00 AM PST
Million Dollar Service Member Day 2	<b>2/18/26</b>	11:00 AM EST	8:00 AM PST
Navy Retirement..Is it Enough?	<b>2/19/26</b>	1:00 PM EST	10:00 AM PST
Baby Breaks the Bank	<b>2/20/26</b>	3:00 PM EST	12:00 PM PST
Money Munchkins: Raising Money-Savvy Kids	<b>2/25/26</b>	1:00 PM EST	10:00 AM PST

Click Personal Financial Management for webinars on:

- Booties & Budgets: Welcoming Your First Child and Baby-Proofing Your Finances
- Command Your Credit
- Emergency Financial Preparedness
- Financial Readiness Before Deployment: Securing Your Future
- Making the Most of your Overseas Pay
- Making your Money work for you
- Military Retirement Planning
- PCS and your Pocketbook
- Planning your Financial Future
- Servicemembers Civil Relief Act Q&A
- Stretching Budgets and Maximizing Nutrition and more!



## RELOCATION

Click the Relocation category for Calming Cultural Shock, Planning the Perfect PCS, Stepping up Support: Sponsorship Training, and The PCS Process — all offered several times throughout January for your convenience!

Out with the Old, In with the New Continent: Moving Overseas	<b>2/12/26</b>	11:00 AM EST	8:00 AM PST
Smooth Move - Overseas	<b>2/17/26</b>	1:00 PM EST	10:00 AM PST

## EFMP - EXCEPTIONAL FAMILY MEMBER PROGRAM

Getting a Jumpstart into Early Learning	<b>2/19/26</b>	1:00 PM EST	10:00 AM PST
Navigating Employment: A Resource Guide for Exceptional Family Members	<b>2/20/26</b>	12:00 PM EST	9:00 AM PST



## RESILIENCE

Stoicism Principles and Stress Management	<b>2/20/26</b>	9:00 AM EST	6:00 AM PST
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Click Resilience for webinars on:

- Bounce Back Better
- Run Resilience
- Mission Ready, Mentally Strong

