MILITARY CONNECTED YOUTH & FAMILIES IN VERMONT
BRIAN STOUDNOUR
LEAD CHILD & YOUTH PROGRAM COORDINATOR (CONTRACTOR)

BRIANNA HALEY
VERMONT VETERANS OUTREACH SPECIALIST (CONTRACTOR)

KAMRYN HEIDTMANN
FAMILY ASSISTANCE SPECIALIST (CONTRACTOR)
Mission Statement
Family Assistance Centers (FAC) provide resource referral and support assistance to Service members and their families, of all military branches, throughout the cycle of deployment and levels of contingency mobilizations. FACs are a “Open Stop Shop” of Local, State, and Federal resources to provide outreach, coordination and support to all military families geographic to their area.

FACs offer 24/7, confidential services at no cost to the Service Member and their families.

Mission Statement
Conduct ongoing outreach to primarily all combat veterans and their families. Identify any potential needs, and facilitate the process to access all available services for the veteran. Partnered with the Family Assistance Centers, and other local, state, and federal agencies, ensuring the concerns of veterans and their families are responded to in a prompt and confidential manner.
Mission:
The mission of the Army National Guard Child & Youth Program is to positively impact Soldier and family readiness, resilience and retention by providing secure, timely, flexible and high-quality youth development opportunities and resources which promote the overall well-being of ARNG children and youth.

Goals:
Provide life-skills and peer-to-peer connections to increase overall Soldier and family readiness
Build community capacity by developing partnerships with education and community resources that support geographically dispersed military youth and families
Expand access to and awareness of Federal, State and community benefits that support military youth
Utilize leadership and service learning opportunities in ARNG children and youth
Utilize research based curriculum as a means of increasing the resilience skills in ARNG youth to promote soldier and family readiness and retention
WHO ARE YOU?

• Raise you hand if:
  • You are/were in the military?
  • You have/had a spouse in the military?
  • You have an immediate family member in the military?
  • You have an extended family member in the military?
  • You have experience working Service Members, or their families
TRAINING OBJECTIVES

• Introductions
• Overview
• Reserve Components and the National Guard
• Military Culture
• Military Families
• Military Youth/Young Adults
• Fostering Resiliency (if time permits)
RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

- Use facilities as needed
- Leave your politics in your car
- Participate FULLY
- Ask questions
  - I may not have the answer, but I will provide you with guidance that will lead to an answer
“COMMONALITIES”
LET’S GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER BETTER

• When I say “GO” your group has 5-7 minutes to brainstorm as many things that you all have in common as possible
  • Nothing obvious like we all have clothes on, shoes, in W. Leb, NH, at PD for the day, etc.
  • Things like we have all been to Europe, or better yet, we have all been to Frankfurt, Germany
  • Get as detailed as possible
• Also, identify one characteristic that is unique to you within your group. Be creative! Not, “I am the only male in my group,” but, “I won the state baton twirling championship
A NEW REALITY: IMPACT OF OVERSEAS CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS

• Has changed the face of military service for those in U.S. Reserve Components (National Guard and Reserve)

• Different needs than Active Component Military Families

• Primary occupation is not one of Service Member and Families don’t consider themselves “Military Families”

• Geographically dispersed from others in the same circumstances (not necessarily located near a military installation)
MILITARY COMPONENT STRUCTURE

Active Component*
- Regions
- Installations
- Geographically Dispersed**

Reserve Component
- National Guard
  - States
- Reserve
  - Regions

* Base Operations organization, not units
** Assigned away from military installations, e.g. Army Recruiters, ROTC Instructors
# National Guard

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Army National Guard</strong></th>
<th><strong>Air National Guard</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- 343,000 Soldiers</td>
<td>- 107,000 Airmen</td>
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<tr>
<td>- 33% of Army’s total strength</td>
<td>- 21.7% of Air Force’s total strength</td>
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<tr>
<td>- State and Federal mission</td>
<td>- State and Federal mission</td>
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<tr>
<td>- State command</td>
<td>- State command</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Primarily combat and combat service support units</td>
<td>- Primarily flying missions and expeditionary combat support</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ARMY RESERVE OVERVIEW

- 202,000 Soldiers
- 1,700 units throughout U.S. and territories
- Federal Mission
- Regional commands (13 and 1 ARCOM)
- Primarily combat support and combat service support units
GREEN MOUNTAIN BOYS

- VTARNG = 3,000
- VTANG = 1,000
- Total = 4,000 Service Members

STATE OF VERMONT US ARMY RESERVE

- 310 Soldiers
What is Culture?

- Culture (definition): The knowledge, experience, values, ideas, attitudes, skills, tastes, and techniques that are passed on from more experienced members of a community to new members.
- Elements include: aesthetics, ceremony, ethics, health and medicine, myths, gender roles, gestures and kinetics, grooming and presence, ownership, recreation, relationships, rewards and privileges.
ELEMENTS OF MILITARY CULTURE

- Soldier’s, and Airman’s Creeds
- Chain of Command
- Expectations and Impact of the Mission on Family Life
- Military Acronyms and Terms
- Utilizing Protocol
- Military Customs and Courtesies
MILITARY VALUES

Army Values
- Loyalty
- Duty
- Respect
- Selfless Service
- Honor
- Integrity
- Personal
- Courage

Air Force
- Integrity First
- Service Before Self
- Excellence In All We Do

Navy & Marine Corps
- Honor
- Courage
- Commitment
MISSION OF THE MILITARY

• The mission of the DOD is to provide the military forces needed to deter war and to protect the security of our country.

• The Army’s mission is to fight and win our nation’s wars by providing prompt, sustained land dominance across the full range of military operations and spectrum of conflict in support of combatant commanders.

• The mission of U.S. Air Force is to fly, fight, and win in air, space and cyberspace. Our rich history and our vision guide our Airmen as we pursue our mission with excellence and integrity to become leaders, innovators and warriors.

• The mission of the Navy is to maintain, train, and equip combat-ready Naval forces capable of winning wars, deterring aggression, and maintaining freedom of the seas.

• Marines are trained, organized, and equipped for offensive amphibious employment and as a “force in readiness.”
I am an American Soldier
I am a warrior and a member of the team. I serve the people of the United States of America and live the Army Values
I WILL ALWAYS PLACE THE MISSION FIRST
I WILL NEVER ACCEPT DEFEAT
I WILL NEVER QUIT
I WILL NEVER LEAVE A FALLEN COMRADE
I am disciplined, physically and mentally tough, trained and proficient in my Warrior tasks and drills. I always maintain my arms, my equipment and myself
I am an expert and I am a professional
I stand ready to deploy, engage and destroy the enemies of the United States of America in close combat
I am a guardian of freedom and the American way of life
I am an American Soldier
I am an American Airman.
I am a warrior:
I have answered my nation’s call.

I am an American Airman.
My mission is to fly, fight, and win.
I am faithful to a proud heritage,
A tradition of honor,
And a legacy of valor.

I am an American Airman,
guardian of freedom and justice,
My nation’s sword and shield,
Its sentry and avenger.
I defend my country with my life.

I am an American Airman:
Wingman, leader, warrior.
I will never leave an Airman behind,
I will never falter
and I will not fail.
EXPECTATIONS & IMPACT OF THE MISSION ON FAMILY LIFE

- Expectations of the military lifestyle
- Mission of the VT National Guard
- VT National Guard values
- Coping with the impact of the mission on the family
VERMONT NATIONAL GUARD MISSION

The Vermont National Guard is the premier national guard organization; ready, reliable, and relevant. We are a diverse team proudly answering our Nation's call and providing value to our communities. We strive to be innovative in our approach across a broad spectrum of missions and committed to developing our people.
VERMONT NATIONAL GUARD VALUES

• **Integrity** - Do what’s right, legally and morally

• **Service** - Put the welfare of the nation, Army, state, and your subordinates before your own

• **Excellence** - To be outstanding
MILITARY ACRONYMS & TERMS

ARNG—Army National Guard
ANG—Air National Guard
PMOS—Primary Military Occupational Specialty
FRG—Family Readiness Group
RDC—Rear Detachment Commander
FAC—Family Assistance Center
TAG—The Adjutant General
JAG - Judge Advocate General
MOBEX—Mobilization Exercise
### MILITARY PHONETIC ALPHABET

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter</th>
<th>Phonetic Word</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Alpha</td>
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<td>Yankee</td>
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<td>Z</td>
<td>Zebra</td>
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CONVERTING BETWEEN MILITARY TIME
AND CIVILIAN TIME

Conventional to Military:

The first twelve hours of the day
• Always has four numbers
• Delete the colon
• Before 10:00 am, add a zero (7:00 am to 0700)
• 10:00 am to 12:00 pm is read without the colon (11:00 am to 1100)

The remaining twelve hours (between noon & midnight)
• Delete the colon
• Add twelve hours to the conventional time (11:00 pm to 2300)
THE CHAIN OF COMMAND

• Structure used by all branches of military for command & control
• Information disseminated from the lowest to the highest ranking member and back down
• Integrity of the chain of command is critical when working with the military
• Work at the highest level allowed within the chain of command
UTILIZING PROTOCOL

• Learn chain of command for connecting with the Branches of Service and other organizations with which you work, including VTNG Family Programs-Child & Youth Program, Veterans Outreach, Family Assistance Centers, and Family Readiness Groups (FRG)

• Develop relationships with appropriate points of contact in the respective chains of command
  – Name
  – Title
  – Preferred methods of being contacted

• Follow agreed upon protocols

• Be professional
INTRODUCTION TO MILITARY CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

- **Reveille and Retreat**
  - Bugle call played in the morning and end of duty day
- **Flag Etiquette**
  - Flag is flown every day or for specific holidays and significant events
- **Parades**
  - Conducted for change of command, retirement, graduation ceremonies, to honor visiting dignitaries, and other special occasions
- **Change of Command Ceremony**
  - Official passing of colors and responsibilities of command of a unit from one officer to another
- **Receiving Lines**
  - Purpose is for a guest to greet and be welcomed by host for an event
- **Invitations**
  - Generally sent to attend social and official functions
- **Thank-You Notes**
  - Should be promptly sent after you attend a social function
“WALK THIS WAY”
MILITARY CHILDREN AND YOUTH ARE VULNERABLE DURING MAJOR LIFE CHANGES, SUCH AS:

• Moving due to permanent change of station
• Parent absence due to long-term temporary duty
• Mobilization and deployment
• Changes in family demographics
• Graduating to junior/high school/post-secondary education

• Individual responses vary based on age, maturity, gender, personality, relationships, and coping skills
SOCIAL ISSUES/NEEDS

• Adjusting to new or temporary family configuration

• Managing new situations, especially being “suddenly military”

• Accommodating physical changes

• Making new contacts

• Acclimating to new places

• Coping with changing schools, leagues, activities
EMOTIONAL ISSUES/NEEDS

• Need to know they are loved and cared for, regardless of their age

• Emotional issues include:
  — Sadness
  — Anger
  — Vulnerability
  — Loneliness
  — Lack of sense of belonging
  — Excitement
  — Anticipation
  — Confidence
  — New challenges
EDUCATIONAL ISSUES/NEEDS

Reorienting to new classmates, teachers, schedules, and inconsistencies in school requirements and offerings, e.g.,
• Immunization requirements
• School calendars/scheduling
• Entrance and exit testing
• Course content and sequencing
• Discipline
• Graduation requirements
• Special Education qualification and services
• Records/credit transfers
• Informing teachers, counselors, and administrators about deployment and its impact on youth
BENEFITS OF TRANSITION

- Make friends with other National Guard and Army Reserve Youth
- Make friends from other parts of the country
- Become more responsible
- Adapt more easily to change and become more flexible
- Experience firsthand what is read/taught in social studies
- Depend on family for safety, security, and companionship
THE CYCLE OF DEPLOYMENT

- Each stage characterized by specific emotional challenges
- Failure to negotiate can lead to significant strife
- Promoting understanding of deployment helps avert crisis and need for intervention/mental health counseling
- Five distinct stages—
  - Stage One: Pre-deployment
  - Stage Two: Deployment
  - Stage Three: Sustainment
  - Stage Four: Re-deployment
  - Stage Five: Post-deployment
STAGE ONE: PRE-DEPLOYMENT

• Shock/surprise for National Guard and U.S. Army Reserve Soldiers, family members
• Denial & anticipation of loss
• Train up/long hours away
• Getting affairs in order
• Mental/physical distance
• Stress/arguments
• Timeframe: Variable
STAGE TWO: DEPLOYMENT

• Mixed emotions—grief and loss combined with relief
• Disoriented/overwhelmed
• Numb, sad, alone/lonely, feelings of abandonment
• Sleep difficulties
• Security issues
• Frequent communication helps all cope
• Timeframe: Approximately first month, potentially more
STAGE THREE: SUSTAINMENT

• Separation anxiety
• New routines established
• New sources of support
• Feel more in control—Able to cope
• Independence
• Confidence—”I can do this”
• Phone contact unidirectional—initiated by spouse; may lead to feeling trapped as may miss call
• Timeframe: Approximately months 2 through 18
UNDERSTANDING SEPARATION ANXIETY

Preschool or Kindergarten children

— Clinging
— Unexplained tears, crying
— Change in relationships with same-age friends
— Preference in spending time with adults
— Increased acts of violence toward people, pets, things
— Isolation
— Sleep & eating difficulties
— Fear of new people and/or situations
UNDERSTANDING SEPARATION ANXIETY

• Primary School children
  — Same as previous slide, plus…
  — Rise in physical complaints (stomachaches, headaches) when nothing seems wrong
  — More irritable or cranky
  — Increase in problems at school
  — Drop in grades
  — Unwillingness to go to school
  — Odd complaints about school or teachers
UNDERSTANDING SEPARATION ANXIETY

• Adolescents & Young Adults
  — Same as previous slide, plus…
  — Acting out behaviors (trouble in school, at home, or with the law)
  — Low self-esteem
  — Self-criticism—blaming themselves for situation
  — Misdirected anger (i.e., excess anger over small events)
  — Sudden or unusual school problems
  — Loss of interest in usual activities/hobbies
STAGE FOUR: RE-DEPLOYMENT

- Anticipation of homecoming
- Excitement
- Apprehension—“Will I have to give up my independence”?
- Burst of energy; “nesting”
- Difficulty making decisions
- Time frame: Months 17–18
STAGE FIVE: POST-DEPLOYMENT

- Honeymoon period
- Loss of independence
- Need for “own” space
- Renegotiating routines
- Reintegrating into family
- Most important stage to get to know one another again—patient communication, going slow, and lower expectation are key
- Timeframe: 3–6 months or more after deployment
STRENGTHS FOR YOUTH RESULTING FROM DEPLOYMENT

- Fosters maturity
- Growth inducing
- Encourages independence
- Encourages flexibility, adaptability
- Builds skills for adjusting to separation and losses faced later in life
- Strengthens family bonds
- Civics—relationship with community
- What other strengths may result from deployment?
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GENERAL PATTERNS OF COPING FOR CHILDREN/YOUTH/YOUNG ADULTS

- Denial
- Regression
- Withdrawal
- Altruism
- Impulsive acting out

- Humor
- Suppression
- Anticipation/hyper vigilance
- Sublimation
- Other examples?
OTHER DEPLOYMENT STRESS-RELATED ISSUES

• **Combat Stress**—Natural result of heavy mental and emotional work when facing danger in tough conditions; physical symptoms (i.e. headaches, racing heart fatigue, anger) generally get better with rest and replenishment.

• **Post Traumatic Stress Disorder**—Possible response when deployment has occurred to war zone, natural disaster site or urban riot location: physical, mental, and emotional symptoms that require professional assistance.

• **Secondary Traumatic Stress**—Possibly experienced by family members upon return of Soldier; stress resulting from helping or wanting to help a suffering or traumatized person (Figley, 1993).
IMPACT OF STRESS AND CHANGE ON RESERVE COMPONENT FAMILIES

• Civilian lifestyle for the most part until separation/deployment
• Change can impact the entire Family physically, emotionally, mentally, socially, financially and spiritually
• Fear of harm to separated/deployed Family member in training, war or natural disasters
• Constant media coverage of dangerous events
• Extended separation from loved one
• Reintegration
• Transition and relocation
SPECIFIC STRESSORS IMPACTING MILITARY FAMILIES

- Threats and acts of terrorism
- Natural disasters
- War
- Extended separation
- Constant media coverage
- Reintegration
- Transition and relocation
- Other examples?
GENERAL PATTERNS OF COPING FOR CHILDREN/YOUTH/YOUNG ADULTS

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- Humor
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- Other examples?
BEFORE ADULTS CAN HELP

Effective helpers need a combination of

— **Knowledge** about the constellation of stressors and coping strategies of the child/youth

— **Appreciation** of the child/youth’s point of view and their reasons for unconscious choices of coping modes

— **Skills** in working effectively with children and youth; communicating easily and warmly, gaining trust, and helping them talk openly and completely

— **Self-Awareness** of own biases and belief systems in regard to each kind of stressor and coping strategies
BEFORE ADULTS CAN HELP

- Educate self on the impact of deployment on children/youth and families
- Reflect what you see and hear in terms of their behavior to help them with understanding
- Be patient, understanding, caring, and firm with consequences for misbehavior
- Help children/youth identify, accept, and express what they are feeling
- Model constructive ways of dealing with strong or challenging emotions such as anger, grief, loss, sadness
UNIVERSAL PREVENTION STRATEGIES

• Focus on youth and maintaining a supportive learning environment
• Reinforce safety and security
• Provide healthy and clear expectations, boundaries and consequences
• Listen, acknowledge, validate and provide opportunities for healthy expression of feelings
• Maintain objectivity
• Be sensitive to language and cultural needs
• Be patient and, if possible, temporarily reduce student workload
• Reinforce healthy anger management and grief/loss responses
• Encourage volunteerism
PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

• For younger children:
  — Understand that young children are limited by their developmental capacities
  — Organize activities & events that are age-appropriate
  — Encourage active involvement rather than competition
  — Build upon children’s physical, social, emotional, and cognitive skills
  — Be generous with praise
  — Encourage exploration
  — Provide clear rules, boundaries, & structure
PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

• For adolescents/teens:
  — Encourage emerging independence, but maintain structure, boundaries, rules
  — Be sensitive to self-image issues
  — Be open to discussing/handling sensitive issues
  — Foster positive peer interaction
  — Be a positive role model
  — Provide constructive criticism along with positive feedback
  — Promote hands-on activities & experiential learning opportunities
A BLANKET COMMUNITY
WHAT IS RESILIENCE

- Resilience is the ability to **grow** and **thrive** in the face of challenges and **bounce back** from adversity.
- Resilient people bounce, not break.

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## Essential Elements of Youth Development

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Belonging</th>
<th>Independence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Positive relationships with a caring adult</td>
<td>• Opportunity to see oneself as an active participant in the future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• An inclusive environment</td>
<td>• Opportunity for self-determination</td>
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<tr>
<td>• A safe environment</td>
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<tr>
<th>Mastery</th>
<th>Generosity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Engagement in Learning</td>
<td>• Opportunity to value and practice service for others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Opportunity for Mastery.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: National 4-H - Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture*
STEP ONE IN FOSTERING RESILIENCE: ALWAYS COMMUNICATE THE “RESILIENCY ATTITUDE”

- Expressed verbally and nonverbally

- “I see what is right with you no matter what has happened in the past, no matter what challenges/problems you face right now”
STEP TWO IN FOSTERING RESILIENCE: FOCUS ON STRENGTHS WITH SAME OR EVEN GREATER METICULOUSNESS THAN USED IN CHARACTERIZING WEAKNESSES

• Honestly acknowledge problems/challenges

• And…focus more prominently on individual strengths and positive supports! (Reframing)
STEP THREE IN FOSTERING RESILIENCE: 
THE RESILIENCY WHEEL

Step Three in Fostering Resilience:
The Resiliency Wheel

- Provide opportunities for meaningful participation.
- Increase prosocial bonding.
- Set clear, consistent boundaries.
- Teach “life-skills.”
- Provide caring and support.
- Set and communicate high expectations.

Wheel adapted from the Resiliency Training Program (c) 1977 Nan Henderson and Associates
STEP FOUR IN FOSTERING RESILIENCE: “NEVER GIVE UP!” ATTITUDE

- Resiliency is a lifespan process that ebbs and flows
- Resiliency doesn’t happen by putting a kid through a program
- Connection(s) with caring adults with high expectations and who offer opportunities for involvement create resilient children
HUNT THE GOOD STUFF

Counter the negativity bias, create positive emotion, and notice and analyze what is good.

The “Negativity bias” is a basic survival instinct from the beginning of time.

Science informs us that people who are Optimistic are also:

- Happier
- Healthier
- Have stronger relationships
- Perform better
- Are more successful

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HUNT THE GOOD STUFF

HOW

- Record three good things several times a week
- Write a reflection:
  - Why did this good thing happen?
  - What does this good thing mean to you?
  - How does this good thing make you feel?
LOCAL & STATEWIDE RESOURCES

  VTNG-Child & Youth Program/Family Assistance Centers/Veterans Outreach/Family Readiness Support/Military Family Life Counselor (MFLC)/Personal Financial Counselor (PFC)
  - VTNG Child & Youth Program (Facebook): [https://www.facebook.com/VTNGCYP/](https://www.facebook.com/VTNGCYP/)
- Local National Guard Facility/Armory
- VTNG Hotline (24/7 confidential call center) – (888)-603-8773
- Military Kids Vermont: [https://www.uvm.edu/extension/youth/mkvt/](https://www.uvm.edu/extension/youth/mkvt/)
  - Facebook: [https://www.facebook.com/MKVermont/](https://www.facebook.com/MKVermont/)
- VT Agency of Education
- Veterans Affairs
NATIONAL RESOURCES

- National Guard Child & Youth Services-Mobile App (Android & IOS): Download the “ARNG CYSS” Mobile App for Apple & Android
- Military OneSource: [https://www.militaryonesource.mil/](https://www.militaryonesource.mil/)
- Our Military Kids: [www.ourmilitarykids.org](http://www.ourmilitarykids.org)
- MCEC (Military Child Education Coalition): [www.militarychild.org](http://www.militarychild.org)
- Dept. of Defense Family Resources
- Dept. of Defense Military Student Resources
- National Guard Family Programs
- Veterans Affairs
QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, & CONCERNS
PLEASE COMPLETE THE EVALUATION
THANK YOU!