Promoting Relationship Health and Family Wellness

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month

Learning to navigate challenges and communicate effectively is not easy and often takes practice and patience. The Family Advocacy Program is available for support during every stage of your relationship.

Strong families are an essential part of military life. Usual stressors found in any relationship can also be found in the relationships between intimate partners and spouses or parents and children in military families. Additional stressors, like frequent relocation, deployment and intermittent single parenting may contribute to even more tension in the home. The Family Advocacy Program (FAP) exists to help individuals and families adapt to common relationship issues, as well as military-related stressors, to prevent episodes of domestic abuse or child abuse from happening and to offer safety and support to victims when abuse has occurred.

Prevention

In any relationship, it's normal to get angry or frustrated. It's typical to disagree, argue and occasionally hurt each other's feelings. But if at any time you feel like an argument could escalate into abuse or you're fearful of a partner or a family member, you may want to contact FAP to take advantage of their preventative programs and services in order to avoid abuse in your home.

FAP's primary mode of abuse and neglect prevention is through education and awareness. Programs vary by installation, but usually include leadership education programs, unit trainings, public awareness campaigns and classes and workshops. Classes and one-on-one counseling and support are available to help individuals develop the following skills:

- effective communication
- positive parenting techniques
- positive ways to cope with anger and stress

FAP is your family's healthy relationship ally. Let FAP staff help you and your family manage tense situations before they escalate and become hurtful. Don't feel ashamed or afraid if you and/or your family are in need of help. Early intervention is the best way to protect your family from potential violence. If you or someone you know are in need of FAP's services, contact your installation's FAP office.

Communication skills

Strong communication skills within the family can reduce misunderstandings, help resolve problems and prevent destructive anger. Communication is especially important as you transition to new phases of your life, like getting married, moving in together or becoming a parent. Effective communication skills are important at all stages in your life. These skills can help you learn to listen and understand the concerns of your family members as well as calmly and clearly communicate your feelings without resorting to abuse.
Positive parenting techniques

Parenting is one of the most important and most stressful jobs you'll ever have. On a daily basis your child may test your patience and your parenting skills. Of course, you'll get frustrated from time to time, but understanding positive parenting techniques can help you learn to deal with these normal parenting frustrations calmly and safely. Recognizing the mental, physical and emotional developmental stages of your growing child can give you a better understanding of why he or she acts a certain way. Developing parental resilience can help you learn to let minor frustrations roll off of your back and help you bounce back more quickly. Parenting education and support are available through FAP parenting classes and in-home support is offered through the New Parent Support Program.

Positive anger coping mechanisms

Learning how to deal with your anger won't erase it. You won't necessarily walk around smiling and happy 24 hours a day. Intense conflicts can occur anywhere and are not limited to the home. Practicing anger management techniques can help you deal with your anger in a safe and healthy way by allowing you to manage your feelings rather than allowing your anger to manage you. Effective coping techniques can protect you as well as those you love the most. The FAP staff can help you learn the best ways to handle your anger and support you in your efforts to protect your relationships.

Each relationship and family is unique and comes with its fair share of ups and downs. You may be facing recurring conflicts and misunderstanding or you may be vulnerable to new issues as you move from one phase of your life to another. Whatever your situation, FAP is here to help. Stop by your installation FAP office to discover all of the programs and services, available to you.

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