S-FERST FAMILY FLASH

COVID-19 RESOURCES

May Issue Highlights:

Cover: Employment Resources & Chaplain Infos
2. FAC Corner & Child and Youth
3. & 4. Army Substance Abuse Program (ASAP)
5. & 6. Master Fitness Trainer

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S-FERST Family Newsletter
MAY 2020

Employment Resources:

COVID-19 RESOURCES FOR SERVICE MEMBERS AND EMPLOYERS

Service members and employers have rights and responsibilities during all phases of the Opening of America. Service members may be adversely impacted returning to civilian employment following active duty service, military related training, or State Active Duty. COVID-19 has created some unique circumstances for Service members and their civilian employers and ESGR is here to answer questions and mitigate issues. Call the office and leave a message; an Ombudsman will return your call. 307.772.5376

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www.facebook.com/WYFamilyAssistance/

Spouse Resilience Website:
http://spousert.wpengine.com/introduction/

For Resources contact the Child and Youth Program:
Danae Petersen or Cindy Vroman-Pugh
Child and Youth Program Coordinators
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Dreamy Kids by Taylan Wenzel: Includes meditation and guided visualisations that can be combined with relaxing background ambient sounds. The free app includes a very limited number of resources, further programs addressing a range of common childhood issues such as xx are available as individually priced in-app purchases. Ages 5+.

Wellbeyond Meditation for Kids: This app includes 5 short (3-10 minutes) meditations themed to focus on focus (focusing mentally on what is right in front of you), feelings, kindness, entering and sleep. Free.

Stop, Breathe & Think Kids: This app includes a series of short, video meditation “missions” within seven categories – quiet, focus, caring and connecting, energizing, meltdown, open mind, and sleep. For kids 5+. Free.

Super Stretch Yoga: This one is popular with Aj at 6 years of age as it includes a more physical element than the other apps featured here. Integrating visual images of children doing a series of 12 simple yoga poses, it helps younger children to stretch their bodies, rest their minds and focus in their breathing. For ages 4+. Free.

Sleep Meditation for Kids by Christiane Kerr: While this app only includes one free 13 minute guided meditation, it is of a very high quality and my girls really like it. Parents can purchase further meditations by the same author within the app. These are mostly longer meditations, and include themes suitable for younger children and teens. For ages 4+. Free with further in app purchases.

Three Good Things – A Happiness Journal: Increase happiness and positivity by spending a little time each day to record three good things that happened in the day. Great for tweens and teens. Free.

Calming Bottle: A swirling bottle of virtual glitter to watch as you breathe. Users can change to colour and the time it takes for the glitter to settle. For ages 4+. Free.

Meditations for Kids by Highly Meditated: Meditations for Kids includes 10 short themed meditations (plus an introduction to parents) as well as six relaxing environmental sounds/music pieces. The meditations use guided imagery to help children learn to manage worry and anxiety, everyday stress, fidgeting, calmness and fear of the dark. Most suitable for children aged 6+ years. Currently $1.49AU.
A Message from the Army Substance Abuse & Suicide Prevention Program

In this time of uncertainly and change – take some time today to practice mindfulness – according to dictionary.com mindfulness is defined as “a mental state achieved by focusing one’s awareness on the present moment, while calmly acknowledging and accepting one’s feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations”. Looking inwardly can help us acknowledge our feelings and understand what we need to sustain or improve mental health and create a plan to get the support we need.

Take some time to reflect on decision making – What activities help you to be resilient? What skills or hobbies are you learning or actively improving? Are you choosing to abuse alcohol or other substances to get through these challenging times? If so, why? What other things could benefit from your time, effort, and money?

As an additional resource, consider these tips for staying resilient during physical distancing to help keep you mentally strong and healthy:

**Eat healthfully** to keep your body in top working order.

**Exercise** reduces symptoms of depression and anxiety, whether we’re working out at home or taking a solo jog around the neighborhood.

**Practice relaxation therapy.** Focusing on tensing and relaxing muscle groups can help you relax voluntarily when feeling overwhelmed, stressed or anxious.

**Let light in.** For some people, increased exposure to light can improve symptoms of depression. If you can, open the shades and let more sunlight in.

**Be kind to yourself!** Treat yourself with the same compassion you would a friend.

**Stay connected.** Even if you can’t get together face-to-face, you can stay connected to friends, family and neighbors with phone calls, text messages, video chats and social media. If you’re feeling lonely, sad or anxious, reach out to your social support networks. Share what you are feeling and offer to listen to friends or family members about their feelings. We are all experiencing this scary and uncertain time together.

**Monitor media consumption.** While you might want to stay up-to the minute with COVID-19 news, too much exposure can be overwhelming. Balance media consumption with other activities you enjoy, such as reading, cooking, or listening to music.

A Message from the Army Substance Abuse & Suicide Prevention Program Cont.

If you find that you need some extra help, please consider utilizing one of the following highlighted links for support – remember, you are not alone, and we need you!

**Talkspace:** Talkspace matches you to a licensed therapist who is available 24/7 via text, video, and audio messaging.

**Betterhelp:** Betterhelp offers professional counseling services via text, video, and phone. Individual, couple, and teen counseling services are available.

**Online-Therapy:** Online-Therapy offers virtual support via live chats and messaging from consultant therapists, cognitive behavioral therapists, and practitioners.

**Crisis Text Line:** Crisis Text Line counselors are available 24/7 to offer support via text message.

**Teen Counseling:** Teen Counseling will match you and your teen with a licensed therapist who can provide support via text, phone, and video messaging.

**Self-care strategies** can also help you manage symptoms of anxiety or depression. Simple things like healthy eating and staying connected to loved ones can make a big difference in your overall mood and well-being.

**Give an Hour** – This organization's mission is to develop national networks of volunteers capable of responding to both acute and chronic conditions that arise within our society. They provide volunteer services and, in most cases, you can get an hour with a mental health professional without cost.

It can be hard to ask for help, but resources are available and can make a huge difference when you need it most. It is okay to not be okay and to reach out for help and information to take care of yourself and your loved ones. Take some time to develop a plan for you and your family in the event of a mental health crisis – you might be okay, but tomorrow might be a different story – a lot of mental health facilities have reduced services, and often, emergency rooms are overwhelmed combating the current pandemic. If you need assistance in developing a mental health first aid plan, please don’t hesitate to reach out to your prevention team – or, for that matter, any member of the S-FERST team – they will do their best to get you the assistance you need.

If you or someone you care about feels overwhelmed with emotions like sadness, depression or anxiety – reach out for help by contacting the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s (SAMHSA) Disaster Distress Helpline at 800-985-5990, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800-273-8255 or text MHFA to 741741 to talk to a Crisis Text Line counselor.

As always, the Wyoming Army National Guard Substance Abuse and Suicide Prevention team is here to help. Please reach out if you are struggling or need help with resources that can help with substance abuse or mental health – no stigma, no judgement.

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A message from the Master Fitness Trainer

I hope everyone is staying healthy at home! I know that this is trying time mentally and physically. Gyms are closed, kids are home, everyone is cooped up inside. My best health advice to you and your families is to eat a balanced diet, exercise and get good sleep.

Nutrition
Try to have a plan of attack before you hit the grocery store. Going to the store unprepared and hungry will result in panic-buying! I have listed below free resources for healthy meal plans. Try to start by planning a week ahead, make a list and do your shopping. This is a great time to teach your children how to do the same. Let me them choose a meal, make a list and help you cook it! Stress eating is a common reaction. The hormone cortisol is increased with stress which can increase your appetite. Stress is hard enough on the body and when we choose an unhealthy outlet, we have just doubled the negative health effect. So, when you feel the urge to snack, have healthy ones easily accessible. Fruits and veggies or healthy nuts are a great way to curb this.

Fitness
While we cannot go to the gym, we can walk or run outside. The weather is getting nicer! GET OUTSIDE and enjoy the fresh air and soak up some Vitamin D. We still need to be getting at least 30 minutes of exercise daily. Once again, take the opportunity to include your entire family and teach them the importance of fitness. There are many gyms and fitness instructors, besides me, offering free virtual classes. I have listed them all below.

Stress and Sleep
Getting at least 7-9 hours of sleep is crucial for every aspect of your health. In order to get our desired sleep, we need to effectively manage our stress and anxiety. Yoga and mediation are great tools. You can also turn to apps like Headspace and Talkspace for virtual mindfulness training and therapy, respectively.

As always, reach out if you need more help in dealing with your stress and anxiety. Just remember you're not in this alone, many are experiencing this along with you. Make time daily to check in with yourself on how your dealing with your mental health.
A message from the Master Fitness Trainer cont.

Many fitness centers are now offering free memberships, classes, and other resources to help you #GetActiveStayHealthy at home during this national quarantine. Take advantage and use this time to build healthy habits that will last.

24 Hour Fitness: Free workout classes on YouTube and the app
305 Fitness: Free cardio dance workouts
CorePower Yoga: Free videos and live workouts on YouTube and On Demand
Daily Burn: Free YouTube workouts
Gold's Gym: free AMP app membership until the end of May with promo code FIT60
LifeTime Fitness: free classes on YouTube and On Demand
MyFitnessPal: track your eating and exercise on this popular free app
Nike Training Club: free On Demand classes with the app
Peloton: free 90-day membership to the entire On Demand library of workouts
Planet Fitness: free videos and live stream on Facebook
SELF: free workout videos on YouTube
SoulCycle: free workouts on Instagram
The Body Coach TV: free workouts on YouTube, including HIIT and PE classes for kids
YMCA: free On Demand workouts
Yogajoy: free YouTube workouts for all ages
Yoga with Adriene: free YouTube workouts that emphasize mindfulness

Healthy Recipes
USDA: https://www.nutrition.gov/topics/shopping-cooking-and-food-safety/recipes
Food Network: https://www.foodnetwork.com/healthy/packages/healthy-every-week/healthy-mains/foodnetwork-most-saved-healthy-recipes
Allrecipes: https://www.allrecipes.com/recipes/84/healthy-recipes/
Eating Well: http://www.eatingwell.com/recipes/