

## The Sands Gazette

Issue # 61

December 2012



### Happy Holidays



#### Inside this issue:

<a href="#">Deployment Resources</a>	P.1
<a href="#">New Programs Aim to better help Military Personnel transition to Civilian life</a>	P.2
<a href="#">Beating The Holiday Blues While Apart</a>	P.3
<a href="#">Power of Attorney</a>	P.3
<a href="#">Bahrain's National Day (Al Eid Al Watani)</a>	P.4

**FFSC Director**  
Carolyn L. McCorvey, LCSW

**Counseling & Advocacy Supervisor / Family Advocacy Representative**  
Sharmane Delgado, MSW, LISW-S

**Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC)**  
Ann C. Wilson, LCSW

**Clinical Social Worker**  
Nancy Busch, LCSW, CTS

**Clinical Social Worker**  
Susan Cartwright, LCSW, DCSW

**Work and Family Life Program Manager**  
Terri Johnson-Salter

**Family Life Specialist**  
Jonathan Ridgel

**Family Life Specialist**  
April Brown-Kimbrell

**Family Life Specialist**  
James Rayburn

**Intercultural Relations Specialist**  
Alaa Afifi

**Intercultural Relations Specialist**  
Sara Albob

**Management & Program Assistant**  
Bitto Palamattath

## Deployment Resources - by Military Families Near and Far

### Pre-Deployments

Advance planning and open communication, along with a big dose of reassurance, can help everyone get through the difficult time leading up to a service member's departure. Here are some ideas to get you started:

#### Prepare and plan together

- Let the important people in your life, especially those involved in your child's care, know that a parent will be leaving. Establish a support network you can count on for help when you need it. (It's okay to seek counseling if you feel overwhelmed-you can even do so anonymously if you prefer.)
- Help older children build their own extended support systems, which might include school counselors, teacher, and trusted peers.
- Talk to your child(ren) about the upcoming deployment and encourage them to ask questions. Without discussions, a child may imagine the worst. A young child may even fret about his parent's basic needs being met. To the fullest extent possible, describe what the deployed mom or dad's everyday life will be like-what she'll eat, where she'll sleep, etc. No matter what your child's age, remind him that his parent is highly trained. Tell him: "Your mom knows how to do her job well, and she's not alone. She's working with others who also do their jobs well."

#### Be aware of different reactions from your children

- If you have more than one child, don't be surprised if each reacts differently to the upcoming deployment. Remind older children that they should share their worries and concerns with you too.

#### Keep family connections Strong

- Assure your child that regular family activities, such as bedtime stories, game nights, or family dinners, will continue.
- Create a "thinking of you" item like a "hug-me" pillow. Stuff one of the deployed parent's T-shirts and sew it closed. When your child feels the need, he can wrap himself in a hug!

#### During Deployments

Many things will change once a parent has been deployed. You'll find yourself creating new routines and adjusting old ones to fit new circumstances. But in time-and with patience-your family will adjust, and take pride in doing so.

Continued... See Page 2

### Stick to routines

Routines will help your child feel secure.

As time goes on and your child begins to feel more comfortable, ask her to help establish new family routines. For instance, make Thursdays "Breakfast for Dinner" days, spend every Saturday afternoon at the park together, or set aside Sunday night for writing letters to loved ones far away.

When a parent is deployed, older children can give younger ones comfort and be terrific role models. Let your older children know that they're an important part of the team, and encourage them to help out. But make sure to let them be kids, too!

Take care of yourself by including physical activity in your routines: a family walk, a game of tag, or dancing to your favorite tunes. Also, be sure to prepare healthy meals and get plenty of sleep. By keeping yourself physically fit, you'll keep yourself emotionally fit as well.

### Keep connected to the deployed parent

Reassure your child by keeping connected to the deployed parent with e-mails and phone calls. The military families website offers many ways to help your family stay connected as well. Share messages, letters, artwork, photos, and videos with loved ones in your family network.

Create a special ritual that the family and deployed parent can both share while away from each other. For instance, your little one and her deployed mom or dad can look up at the sky each night as a reminder that they are underneath the same moon and stars. An older child and his parent might choose a word or phrase that will be their secret message-when they hear or say it, they'll think of each other.

### Leave the homecoming date open-ended

Your child might ask, "When is Dad coming home?" or "Why can't he come home now?" When answering these questions, leave the homecoming date as open-ended as possible while giving your child something hopeful to hang on to: "Dad will be home as soon as his job is finished. He loves us all very much and can't wait to be with us again."

Help your child keep track of the days Dad is away. For example, start a paper chain and add a colorful link each day, to be presented to him or used as decoration at homecomings. Put some change in a jar for each day apart. When Dad returns, your child can use the money to buy something special for him or the family to enjoy together.

## New Program Aims to Better Help Military Personnel Transition to Civilian Life

*(Excerpts taken from Defense.gov)*

As announced by President Barack Obama July 23, the Navy, in conjunction with the departments of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Labor (DOL), is launching a redesigned Transition Assistance Program (TAP) to better prepare Sailors for the transition to civilian life.

Transition (Goals, Plans, Success) known simply as Transition GPS, replaces the 20 year old TAP as part of the Veterans Opportunity to Work (VOW) Act passed in 2011 and is a crucial element of the president's plan to reduce veteran unemployment levels, and aims to bolster and standardize the transition support that Sailors receive in order to make them as employment ready as possible. The Act mandates that all service members, with limited exceptions; participate in the TAP program help them prepare for civilian employment.

The Transition Assistance Program has been redesigned into a comprehensive, mandatory 5 day program that includes pre-separation counseling, a military to civilian skills review, a VA benefits briefing and application sign-up, financial planning support, job search skills building, and individual transition plan preparation. Essentially, the Transition GPS standardizes the curriculum across DOD, brings expanded and improved Department of Labor employment workshops and VA briefings.

In the course of the 5 days, students will develop an individual transition plan that will allow them to follow the first 12 months after transitionally from the military. It also covers how to write a resume and how to interview for a job, along with exploring how military skills can be carried over into the civilian work force. Optional two-day tracks will be included to help those who want to pursue a college degree or technical training.

CNIC has directed that Navy FFSC's begin implementing the new Transition GPS curriculum the week of 19 November 2012. NSA Bahrain's FFSC will officially begin teaching the new curriculum in December due to the Thanksgiving Holiday. It should be clarified, however, that the only portion of the new curriculum under the Navy's control will be implemented. All other new Transition GPS curriculum is still under development by DOL and VA.

**Please contact your Command Career Counselor or FFSC at 318-439-4046 for more information.**

## Beating the Holiday Blues While Apart

**Susan Cartwright – LCSW**

Holidays can be a time of excitement and joy- and loneliness, if you are separated from loved ones during the holidays. Here are some "survival" tips that can help you manage your holiday if you are deployed and separated from loved ones;

**Identify and monitor your expectations-** be kind to yourself, create time for yourself, have a plan for how you will spend your time. Use "Skype" or "Face time" to connect with friends and family.

**Create a tradition of your own-** and incorporate these into existing traditions. Consider hosting your own "get together".

**Do something that might be helpful to someone else-** consider volunteering on base, or invite others who are alone to join you to share a meal, or just some time enjoying one another's company.

**Seek a "sacred space"-** seeking out a sacred space such as a church, mosque, synagogue, or temple can remind you of the true meaning of the holidays.

**Being kind to yourself may include-** eating well, getting a realistic mix of rest and activity, and reducing the amount of junk food, sugar and alcohol you consume.

**Be careful about "over spending"-** many of us compensate for our emotions through "retail therapy" but overspending has long term consequences which can ultimately diminish the "fun" as you later get hit with bills you may end up struggling to pay. Buck the tradition of excessive gift giving and practice simplicity, creativity, and basic human kindness. Research some low cost, fun things do to in the area.

**Don't forget to breathe-** when we are stressed our breathing becomes shallow and ineffective- leaving us more stressed. Take a few deep breathes throughout your day. A well known technique is to breathe through the nose using for the count of 6. The "hold" your breathe for the count of 4. At this time, you can say an affirmation to yourself such as, "I am blessed", or "I can do this". Then exhale through the mouth for the count of 6. Try this 3 or 4 times and your will likely feel more relaxed. Repeat as needed!

**Forgive-** use this holiday time to make a list of those from your past, your office, your family, (don't forget to include yourself!) who you have been holding a grudge against. Be careful about resentments related to holidays past. The holidays are a great time to consider forgiveness. Keep in mind those who have practiced forgiveness such as Nelson Mandela Mother Theresa, and Martin Luther King, Jr. who have used forgiveness to "move mountains". If they can do this, perhaps so can we. Consider thanking those who have been helpful to you throughout the year, or during your life.

**Acknowledge your feelings-** whatever they are. Avoid using alcohol or other substances to deal with your feelings- in the long run, that does not help and may create even greater problems.

If you feel you could benefit by some additional support during the holidays or at any other time, the FFSC Counseling team is here to assist. To schedule an appointment, call 439-4046 or from off base 1785-4046 or by just stopping by our office in bldg 267. Happy holidays!

## Power of Attorney

**James Rayburn – Family Life Specialist**

A Power of Attorney gives someone else the authority to act on your behalf for the entire period of time indicated, but usually it is recommended that you make the period for the length of the deployment, or no longer than one year. Make absolutely sure that you trust the person to whom you give any power of attorney. Many Sailors have had their financial lives destroyed by people who abused the power of attorney privilege. A general POA gives complete control in your personal decisions so be careful about trusting someone who does not have deep ties to you. There are two kinds of powers of attorney - General Power of Attorney, and a Specific or Special Power of Attorney.

**General Power of Attorney -** Since the appointed person has the power to do anything on behalf of the person giving the power, it is very easy to take advantage of these documents. Many businesses do not accept this type of POA and the Navy Legal Services Offices advises against them.

**Specific Power of Attorney -**This gives someone else the authority to act in your behalf in one specific area – i.e., selling or buying a car, selling or buying a home, signing tax returns, etc. It is limited to the specific act noted on the document. Businesses prefer this type of POA since it is less likely to be used abusively or fraudulently.

For single parents it may be wise to give a Medical Power of Attorney to your childcare provider to handle any medical emergencies that may arise while you are deployed. You may also need a special power of attorney for your child's caretaker to enroll your child in school or sign permission slips.

**For more information contact your legal services office or the FFSC at 439-4046 or Comm: 17785-4046**

# Sexual Assault Prevention Begins with Sexual Assault.... Not at NSA Bahrain!



**Respect Yourself and Others.... Use the Buddy System Wisely....  
Drink Alcohol Responsibly.... Look Out for Each Other.... Don't Be An Offender!**

For 24/7/365 Assistance, Contact the Duty Victim Advocate at 3940-3906 or the SARC at 3940-9854

## *Cultural Focus: Bahrain's National Day (Al Eid Al Watani)* **Intercultural Relations Specialists**



To mark the nationhood of a country, a particular day is earmarked. This day is celebrated throughout the country as the '**National Day**'. National day is usually a holiday in the respective nation. The national day of a state or territory is often the commemoration of achieving independence. National Day in Bahrain is celebrated on the 16th of December. For a long time the country was under British imperialism. Bahrain got its independence on the 16th of December, 1971.

This happy event is one of the most widely celebrated events every year as the National Day in Bahrain. Initially the National Day was celebrated on the 16th of December alone, but now it is being celebrated on two consecutive days. People will celebrate across the country, on the 16th and also the 17th of December, which is celebrated as the Accession Day. National Day has been extended to a two day holiday since 1999, courtesy of his Majesty King Hamad.



National Day in December is the time when the citizens of Bahrain forget all differences of cast, religion and social hierarchy and celebrate with fireworks, opera and day long festivities. The buildings are beautifully decorated, illuminated, and pictures of the royal family are posted on billboards around the capital. For this most colorful festival in Bahrain, preparations begin two weeks before hand. Government, Ministries and clubs put up stalls at an exhibition at the Bahrain National Stadium because the festival will take place there. Also, flags and streamers are lined up in the street. It is a very cheerful day which no Bahraini person could miss!



# Happy Holidays

