Family Communication for Returning Veterans

United States veterans and their families sacrifice immensely for our country. Veterans protect our lives and freedoms. When there is a call to action, military service members are on the front lines providing protection, medical care, food, and other aid to families and communities in need.

Montana has one of the highest per capita veteran populations in the country with nearly 9% of Montanans having served in the military (2017). With so many Montanans serving in the military, it’s critical that supports are in place to ensure that coming home is a smooth process.

Transitioning to civilian life is no small feat for veterans when returning to work, re-engaging in social activities, or adjusting to a physical or mental injury incurred during deployment. Spouses, and other family members also experience significant adjustments and disruptions in their relationships when service members return home and re-enter their previous lives. Expectations are often unreasonable, left unspoken, and can result in feelings of anger and resentment. Previously held roles as a husband or wife, or as a father or mother often change and are difficult to immediately resume. These changes can complicate re-entry, place additional stress on family relationships, and result in a wide range of negative emotions.

This month's Montana Minute highlights the struggles frequently encountered by Montana’s military families. We’ve included an in-depth interview with a couple who has successfully navigated the challenges that often accompany military life, marriage, and raising children. We’ve also included a list of resources and recommendations from a seasoned therapist who specializes in working with veterans and couples.
The University of Montana’s Center for Children, Families, and Workforce Development was established in 2015 to partner with the child protection, health, educational, and judicial systems to develop and deliver educational and training resources to professionals and caregivers statewide. The Center also conducts research that focuses on solving problems that impact children and families. The Center receives support from the University of Montana, College of Health Professions and Biomedical Sciences, and School of Social Work.

Did you Know?

**Featured Podcast: Family Communication for Returning Veterans**

In this episode, you will hear from Terry and Delaine who are both veterans and have over 20 years of combined service and a handful of deployments. They describe how they have managed family disruptions when being deployed and when returning home. Meaghan Lee-Moriarity, a therapist at Missoula’s Vet Center also provides advice for veteran families on transitioning back home and for those impacted by trauma.

Listen Here

Resources
How to Help:

**After Deployment: Adaptive Parenting Tools: Infant to teenager toolkits for parents**

**Veterans Families United:** Helpful tips for families in a crisis

**Help for Family and Friends:** National Center for PTSD

**Helping Someone with PTSD:** HelpGuide.org list tips and do's and don'ts

Other Resources:

**Family and Relationships:** treatment options, self-help tools, and resources to help overcome family and relationship issues

**Healthy Family Functioning:** 10 things you should know

**Sesame Street for Military Families**

**Why is Dad so Mad?** For children in military families whose father battles with combat related PTSD.

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Upcoming Events:

**What You Need to Know about Substance Abuse Disorders**

There is no escaping substance abuse and addictions in today's world. We are all affected by the current and emerging drug trends. Our state, like many others, finds itself in a crisis with an insufficient number of trained addiction professionals. This course is for those in aligned fields who want to increase awareness, knowledge, and literacy in the area of substance use disorders (SUDs). It is intended to increase competencies when working alongside addiction professionals and interdisciplinary teams that encounter clients with SUDs.

**Miles City, August 7, 2018**

**Fairmont, August 9, 2018**
Child and Family Services ECHO

Billings Clinic and UM's Center for Children, Families and Workforce Development are partnering to bring Child and Family Services Division a unique opportunity to obtain expert knowledge, feedback and peer support in a six-month pilot of trauma-informed learning and case consultations via Project ECHO. Project ECHO, a video-based tele-mentoring platform, is utilized by Billings Clinic to reach clinicians across Montana on a variety of topics including pediatric and adult mental health, opioid use disorders, and adverse childhood experiences. Child and Family Services ECHO will focus on supporting child welfare professionals working with children who have been exposed to complex childhood trauma, including abuse and neglect. Child and Family Services ECHO will connect Montana's child welfare professionals with regional and national experts for peer support, service knowledge enhancement, case discussions and treatment planning.

Child and Family Services ECHO next session is on July 26, 2018 from 11:30 - 1 at CFSD offices.