

## Opportunities on the Horizon

All webinars in the series  
begin at 11:00 am ET

**FEB  
1** Millennium Cohort  
Family Study: The  
Impact of Military Life

**APR  
12** Military Children's  
Family Relationships

**MAY  
12** The Relationship  
Changes of Military  
Couples During  
Reintegration



This webinar series shares research on the impact of military life on families, as well as tools and resources for service professionals to assist military couples and families in strengthening relationships.

Recordings are available for the first two webinars in the series.

## Staying Focused on Pandemic Support and Recovery for Military Families

by Karen Shirer, Ph.D.



Although the holiday season is behind us, I want to share with you an email from a sewing blog that I received in mid-December. The sender shared how many fellow sewers were too stressed to sew gifts for their friends and families due to the on-going pandemic. Her intent was to give fellow sewers permission to NOT sew gifts as a way to be kind to themselves. I'm certain the message was a gift to many readers.

This story highlights one of the difficulties of weathering another holiday season with COVID-19 for individuals and families. The season came with a new variant, Omicron, and increasing case rates, hospitalizations, and deaths due to the Delta variant. Hope is on the horizon as more people including children are [getting vaccinated and receiving boosters](#).

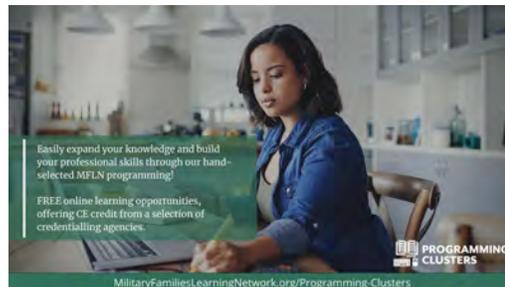
But COVID-19 remains a serious [slow-burn disaster](#), impacting all aspects of our lives, especially mental and physical health. [Experts](#) continue to believe that we will not be free of the pandemic's impacts for some time to come. Many of us had hoped to be past it all by now and may feel [pandemic fatigue](#). Yet, we need to continue focusing on both responding to and planning for recovery from COVID-19 in order to ensure [military family readiness](#).

Most military families will be resilient and recover quickly from the pandemic's impacts but some will need extra support. Military Family Service Providers (MFSPs) can play both an active role in helping families manage the ongoing pandemic, and in supporting recovery and preparing for the next pandemic.

This blog post's aim is to highlight MFLN webinars and other resources from 2021 that can assist you with responding to and planning for recovery from COVID-19.

[Follow the story...](#)

## Military Families Learning Network's Programming Clusters!



We are very excited to announce the launch of the [Military Families Learning Network's Programming Clusters](#)! Five curated programming clusters are available around topics of interest for professionals working with military families. Easily expand your knowledge and build your professional skills!



# Sign up for the MFLN Family Transitions Newsletter!

## Building Healthy Relationships in Military Families

by Jennifer Rea, Ph.D.



When asked, "How are you?"; how often have you responded, "I'm good, but I've just been so busy"?

It's easy to get caught up in the busyness of life.

As a helping professional, you are tasked with several work duties each day alongside managing all the things in your personal and family life as well. It is exhausting, but it is important to remember that you are not alone in feeling this way.

The military families you serve also face similar challenges. In addition to managing the demands of everyday life (e.g., juggling household items, taking care of children's needs), military families encounter additional hurdles that coincide with military life (e.g., frequent moves, unpredictable deployments).

In all facets (e.g., personal, professional, and familial relationships) of a military family's life, healthy relationships lay a foundation for overcoming and dealing with all the busyness that life brings.

When military families have stable and resilient relationships they can better cope with stress and challenges that may arise, whether military- (e.g., unexpected permanent change of duty [PCS]) or other (e.g., financial hardship).

In an effort to better support you in your work with military families, we're sharing two research-based tips for building healthy relationships while navigating life and its busyness. [Follow the story...](#)

### Featured Webinars

[The Relationship Checkup: Support for Military Couples](#)

[Destigmatizing Help-Seeking for Military Couples](#)

### Featured Podcasts

[A Closer Look at the Focus Forward Fellowship: Meeting Women Student Service Members and Veterans Where They Are \(Part 1\)](#)

### Featured Blog Posts

[Up Your Virtual FEE \(Family Engagement and Education\) with Military Families](#)

[Work-Family Conflict and the Military Family](#)

[Building Healthy Relationships in Military Families](#)

[Supporting Military Couple Relationships](#)

[Military Families & Domestic Violence: What We Know & How We Can Help](#)

### Meet our MFLN Partner - DoD Program Analyst, Kelly Smith



Kelly Smith is a clinical social worker who serves as a program analyst for the Department of Defense, Military Community and Family Policy (MC&FP). In her role on the Outreach and Engagement team for the Military OneSource, the Military and Family

Life Counseling (MFLC) program, and the Spouse Education and Career Opportunities (SECO) program, where she is responsible for program communications, outreach activities, and the non-medical counseling relationship campaign.

Before joining MC&FP, Kelly served as the Family Advocacy Program (FAP) Manager with the Department of Army where she was responsible for Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall's domestic violence and child abuse prevention program. She also worked as a FAP clinician for the U.S. Marine Corps. Kelly continues to have a passion for reducing barriers to help-seeking and the study of organizational psychology.

Kelly is a wife, mother of two small children, and proud daughter of a retired Airman and sister of a Marine.

Kelly presented the [Destigmatizing Help-Seeking For Military Couples](#) webinar on November 10, 2021, and co-presented [The Relationship Checkup Support for Military Couples](#) webinar on December 8, 2021.

### Meet Our Team



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