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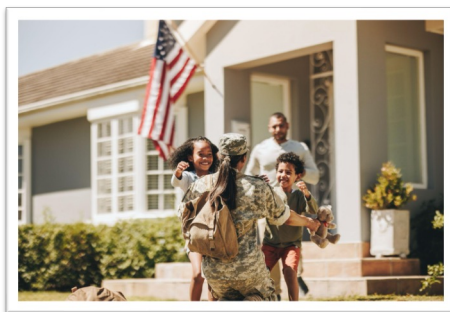
Enhancing Military Family Well-Being: Understanding and Nurturing Economic Security

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Enhancing Military Family Well-Being: Understanding and Nurturing Economic Security



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This material is based upon work supported by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the Office of Military Family Readiness Policy, U.S. Department of Defense under Award Number 2019-48770-30366 and 2023-48770-41333.

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Today's Presenters



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Dr. Chris Plein

Professor of Public Administration
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Learning Objectives

- Review the various factors, often called the “social drivers of health,” or SDOH, that influence health and well-being.
- Promote a mindset that empowers providers to focus on understanding the root causes of health and wellness challenges and to be change agents for positive outcomes.
- Examine how various organizations and institutions are fostering efforts to encourage awareness and action to address health disparities and to promote well-being – with a special focus on the U.S. military and the Cooperative Extension system.
- Identify various state and federal programs that can contribute to military family health and wellness, with a special focus on TRICARE, VA health benefits, Medicaid, and Medicare.
- Consider possible new programs and policy developments relevant to military family health and well-being.

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Setting the Context: Thoughts and Viewpoints



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What are some of the factors or circumstances that affect military family economic readiness and well-being?

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The Howards – Family Profile

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Joseph Howard

- Active-duty service member, Army
- 30 years old
- Father



Margaret Howard

- Military spouse, married to Joseph
- Civilian
- 29 years old
- Mother
- Teacher

Maya Lynn Howard

- Margaret and Joseph's child
- 2 years old
- Has developmental disabilities



Read the entire Howard Family Case Story:
oneop.org/2024-mfra-case-story

family icon by musmellow from Adobe Stock / alt.
description: vector of a family / Purchased June 18 2024



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 **Short Answer Response**

What economic factors may be impacting the Howard Family? How may they be impacting their daily lives?

Image by Drazen from Adobe Stock / AdobeStock_327793864. alt: description: young happy father having fun with his small daughter while carrying her on his shoulders at home.

 ECONOMIC READINESS MILITARY FAMILY WELL-BEING

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An Ecological Perspective

- A big question is whether this environment determines who we are or whether we can make use of features of the environment, and even change the environment, for our own purposes.
- This is not just a philosophical question. It is an essential practical question that relates to the development of programs, policies, and practices affecting the lives of individuals, families, and communities.
- By looking at things from an ecological context, we gain a better understanding of how conditions and situations can influence human behaviors and circumstances.

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Ecological Models in Use: Identification



CDC, 2024

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Ecological Models in Use: Response

An ecological perspective allows for organizations and institutions to develop more resilient and adaptive programs and systems to address individual, family, and community well-being.

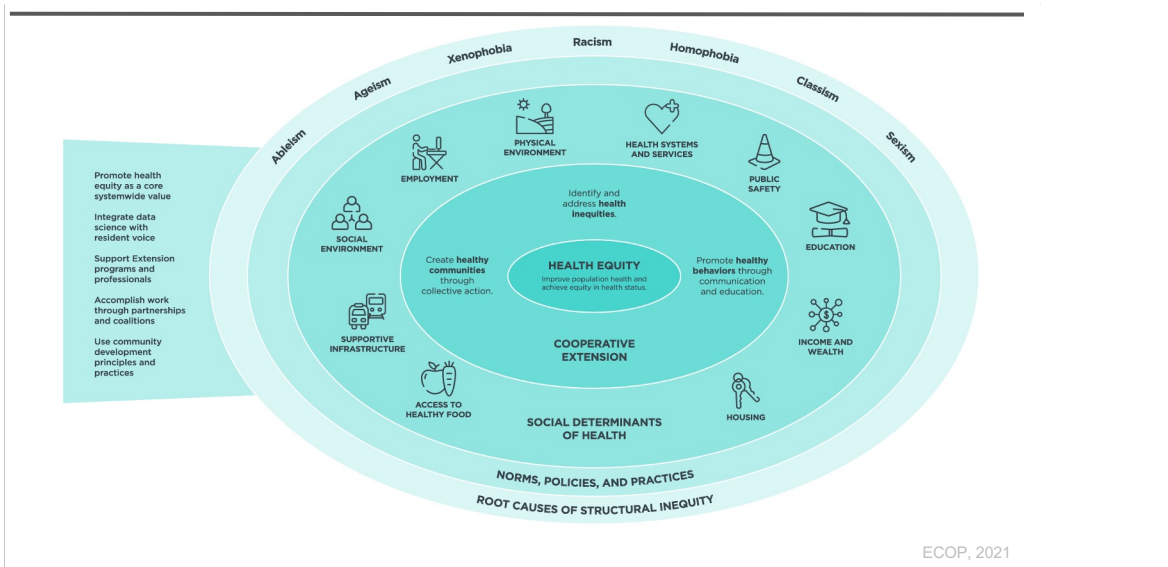
Two approaches of special interest are:

1. The Cooperative Extension Service Health Equity and Wellness Framework ([ECOP, 2021](#))
2. The DoD's Total Force Fitness Framework ([DoD Military Health, 2024](#))

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Cooperative Extension System

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Cooperative Extension System

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The CES recognizes its role as a change agent and catalyst in addressing health and well-being disparities and in promoting equity through education, programming, and engagement.

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Military Total Force Fitness

DoD recognizes domain interrelationships and that all must be considered in promoting total force fitness.



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Health and Economic Readiness: A Closer Look



*How do issues relating
to health and wellness relate to
financial readiness and well-being?*

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The Importance of Healthcare Coverage and Benefits to Financial Readiness

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- Financial readiness is akin to maintaining a diversified portfolio of resources and assets – health coverage and benefits are part of the benefit.
- Major healthcare assets include: TRICARE, ECHO, VA, Medicare, Medicaid
- Health coverage and benefits become crucial in major life transitions and touchpoints discussed in the MFRA.



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Recognizing the Link Between Policies, Programs and SDOH

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The utility of ecological frameworks, like the SDOH, is illustrated by evaluation and actions that have been taken to make policies and programs more responsive. For example:

- Medicaid has increased focused on nutrition and housing supports.
- VA healthcare system is prioritizing overall life conditions of beneficiaries.
- TRICARE and DHS have sought to reduce barriers to access
- VA and DoD exploring Outdoor Rx – actually prescribing time outdoors for its health-giving benefits

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What's with the "Rx"?

Rx: A medical prescription. The symbol "Rx" is usually said to stand for the Latin word "recipe" meaning "to take." It is customarily part of the superscription (heading) of a prescription.

NAME Military Families
 DATE Today

R

Go outside!

REFILL 0 1 2 3 NR PRN
 SIGNATURE _____

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OutdoorRx

Veteran and servicemember-centric. Started in NY Legislature and currently spreading. Features both back-country and front-country outdoor-based therapeutic approaches.

NatureRx

Student-focused with an emphasis on natural setting and time spent within them as "good for your overall health and well-being."
<https://health.cornell.edu/resources/health-topics/nature-rx>

Types of Rx

ParksRx

Formal park designation-centric, with heavy emphasis on the spectrum of attributes of "Nature" as therapeutic. Not only as recreation, but as setting as well.
<https://www.parkrx.org/>

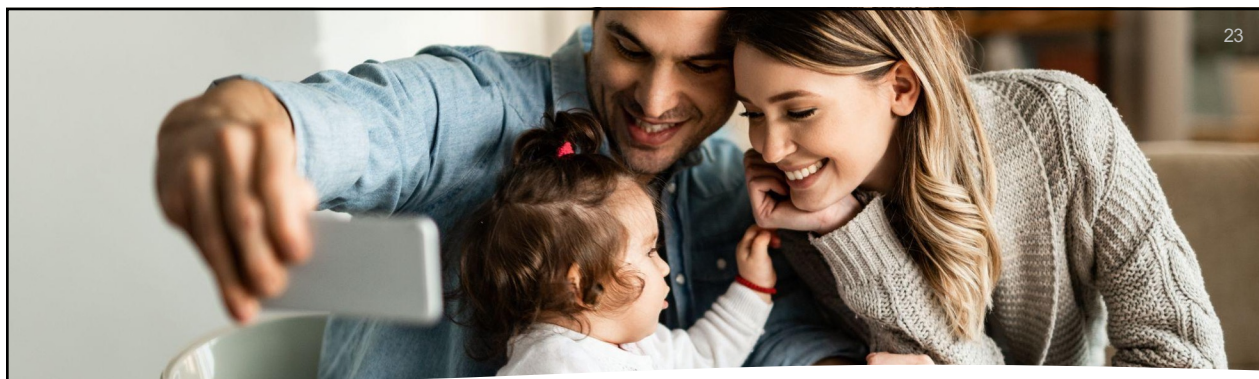
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Responding to Urgent Biophilia - the “Rx”

- Therapeutic recreation (TR) practitioners have used nature-based interventions and activities to address functional outcomes and provide recreation opportunities for military and veteran populations with Post-Traumatic Stress (PTS) (Hawkins, et al, 2016; Craig et al., 2020).
- Multiple types of nature-based recreation approaches utilize the natural environment for specific therapeutic outcomes (Poulsen et al., 2015).
- Evidence suggests that nature-based recreation approaches merit continued investigation to evaluate efficacy and implementation (Townsend et al., 2018).
- There are efforts to move the clinical community to consider prescribing time spent outdoors to address health and well-being concerns beyond PTS.

The Role of Military Family Support Professionals

- Guides: helping service members and families understand the landscape, providing advice to help build skills, placing things in perspective, encouraging future-oriented thinking
- Trusted Sources: through study of interpretive frameworks (like the ecological models), policy and program developments, review of best practices.
- Connectors: Understanding the landscape helps us identify and use installation and community resources effectively.



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**Short Answer
Response**

What success have you had with programs supporting military families?

Image by Drazen from Adobe Stock / AdobeStock_327794530 / alt: description: young family smiling while taking selfie at home.



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**Short Answer
Response**

Are there specific recommendations you would make to Joseph and/or Margaret?

Image by Drazen from Adobe Stock / AdobeStock_325769360 / alt: description: displeased couple communicating at dining table



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Connecting to Capacity: The Role of Capitals



**Short Answer
Response**

What examples can you share of successful programs and initiatives within the U.S. military and Cooperative Extension system?

Image by Drazen from Adobe Stock / AdobeStock_325768360 / alt: description: happy couple looking at each other smiling



Effectively Supporting Today's Military Families

- Promote a mindset that empowers providers to focus on understanding root causes of health and wellness challenges and to be change agents for positive outcomes.
- Recognize that such a mindset requires a holistic or ecological approach to understanding how underlying contextual factors, individual circumstances, institutions, and programs interact with each other.

References/Resources

Braun, Bonnie, et al. 2014. Cooperative Extension's National Framework for Health and Wellness (Washington, D.C. NIFA).

ECOP Health Innovation Task Force. 2021. Cooperative Extension's National Framework for Health Equity and Well-being. [Extension's National Framework for Health Equity and Well-Being – Extension Foundation](#)

Emery, Mary, et al. 2006. "Using Community Capitals to Develop Assets for Positive Community Change." *CDC Practice* (Community Development Society). Issue 13.

Flora, Cornelia, et al. 2004. *Rural Communities: Legacy and Change* (Boulder, CO: Westview)

U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. 2022. *State Health Officer Letter: Opportunities in Medicaid and CHIP to Address Social Determinants of Health* (SDOH). SHO# 21-001.

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2024. Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) at the CDC. [Social Determinants of Health \(SDOH\) at CDC](#) | [About CDC](#) | [CDC](#)

U.S. Department of Defense, Military Health System. Total Force Fitness webpage. [Total Force Fitness | Health.mil](#)

U.S. Department of Defense, DoD Instruction. 2021. 1342.22 Military Family Readiness. [DoDI 1342.22, Military Family Readiness, August 5, 2021 \(whs.mil\)](#)

U.S. Senate Committee on Armed Forces. 2024. Summary of the Fiscal Year 2024 National Defense Authorization Act. [FY24 NDAA Agreement Executive Summary \(senate.gov\)](#)



Find a list of additional resources
on the webinar learn page!

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Recommended OneOp Resources

- PowerUp Article – “Maximizing Financial Wellness: Cooperative Extension's PowerPay for Military Service Providers”
- Practicing Connections Podcast Episode – "An Ecosystem of Military Family Support with Nicola Winkel" <https://oneop.org/learn/learning-from-each-other-s-5-ep-5/>
- Course – “The Cooperative Extension System: A Force Multiplier for Military Family Readiness” <https://oneop.org/learn/the-cooperative-extension-system-a-force-multiplier-for-military-readiness/>



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- American Association for Family and Consumer Sciences (AAFCS)
- Association for Financial Counseling and Planning Education (AFCPE)
- Center for Financial Certifications (FinCert)
- Commission for Case Manager Certification (CCMC)
- Commission for Dietetic Registration (CDR)
- National Council on Family Relations (NCFR)
- Patient Advocate Certification Board (BCPA)
- University of Texas at Austin, Steve Hicks School of Social Work (Social Work, LPC, LMFT)
- Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)
- OneOp **certificate of attendance** available.

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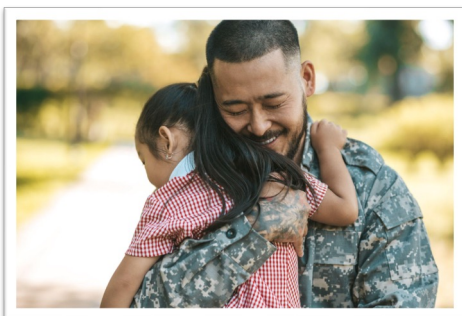
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Upcoming Event



Flexible Spending Accounts: A Tax-Advantaged Way to Pay for Expenses
Wednesday, September 25, 2024
11:00am – 12:30pm EDT

This webinar delves into how Flexible Spending Accounts (FSAs) can support service members and their families in paying for dependent care expenses. The webinar provides an overview of how to enroll and manage FSAs. The session also covers military family service providers tips on how to tailor FSAs to service member-specific circumstances such as Permanent Change of Station moves.

EVENT PAGE:

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