



Partnerships that Strengthen Military Families

August 5, 2026

OneOp.org/learn/160145/





About OneOp

Supporting your work so you can better support military families.



Who We Are

A DOW & Cooperative Extension partnership supporting professionals who serve military families.

Our Mission

Strengthening military family service providers through accessible, research-informed learning.

What We Offer

Free, online professional development through webinars, podcasts, courses, and more.



The views expressed in this presentation do not necessarily reflect the official policy of the Department of War, U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Government or OneOp.

The mention of any entity or product is for informational purposes only.

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Building Strong Communities for Military Family Readiness

Throughout August 2026, OneOp hosts a 4-week professional development learning series designed to help service providers strengthen their capacity to support military families by enhancing community infrastructure and partnerships.





Webinar Essentials



Visit the event page to download a copy of the webinar slides and any additional resources.



Select ***'Everyone'*** from the drop-down menu when commenting in the chat pod.



This webinar has been approved to offer continuing education credit. Stay tuned for more information!



Email us if you need tech support or have questions.

Contact@OneOp.org

OneOp.org/learn/160145/



Today's Presenter

Dr. Catherine W. O'Neal

*Associate Professor,
Department of Human Development and
Family Science, University of Georgia*

About

Dr. O'Neal's research focuses on the intersection of risk and resilience, particularly for military families, with the goal of informing evidence-based outreach efforts.





Learning Objectives

Webinar Overview

This webinar introduces community capacity from theoretical and empirical perspectives, highlighting the importance of individuals' concern for one another and their behaviors that support community progress and improvement.

1

Describe collective competence and shared responsibility as critical components of community capacity for supporting military families.

2

Explain the interaction between community capacity and resources and individual and family capabilities.

3

Apply community capacity strategies as a core organizing component across support and service systems.

4

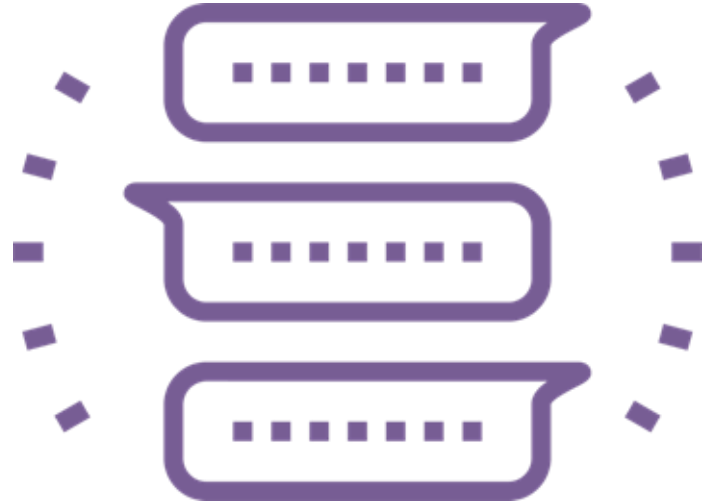
Recognize how community capacity approaches can be adapted to meet diverse needs across different contexts.



Some Questions to Get Us Started: Challenges...



What do you think are the most challenging aspects of military life?



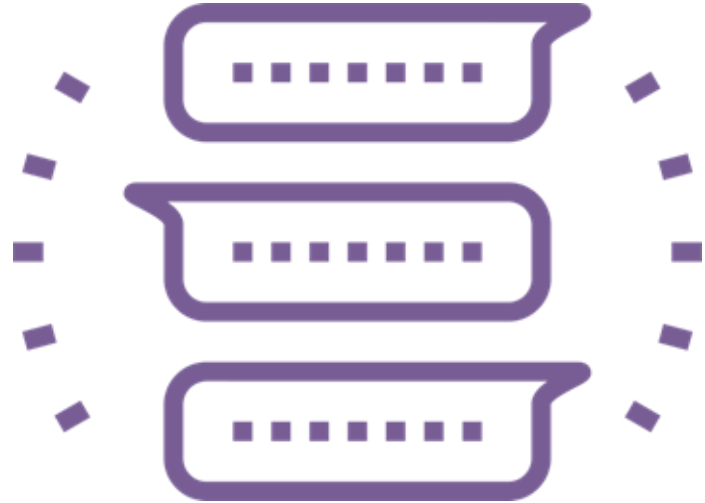
Share your thoughts with us in the chat pod.



Some Questions to Get Us Started: Resilience...



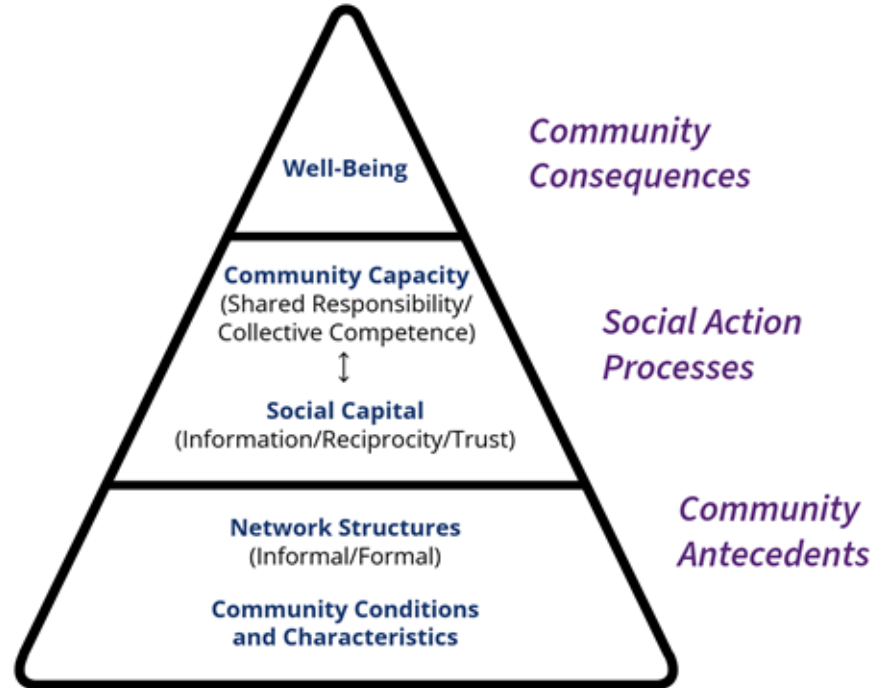
Why do you think some families are resilient to challenges and others are not?



Share your thoughts with us in the chat pod.

Social Organizational Theory of Action & Change

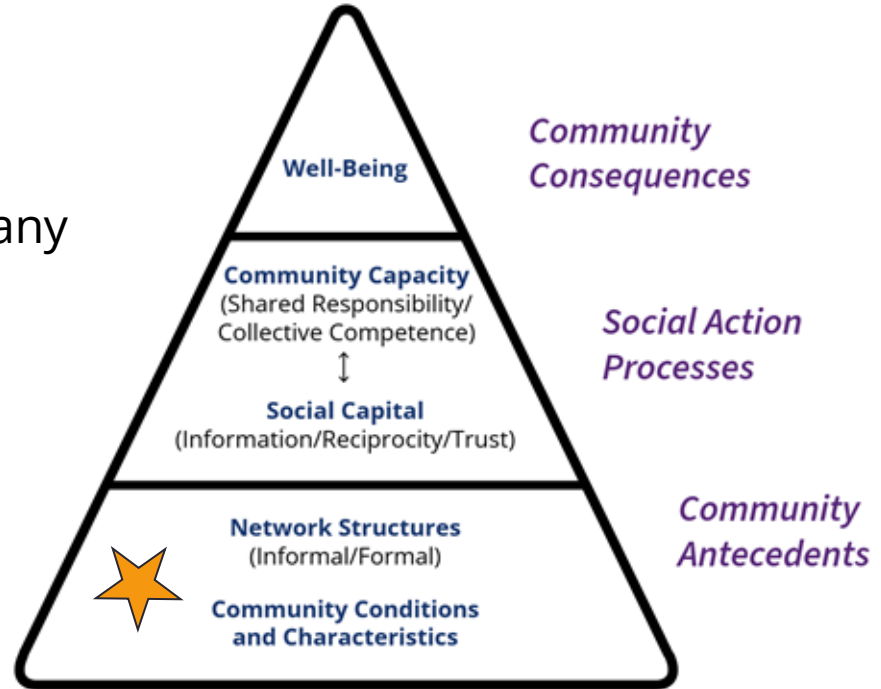
Framework for **understanding how change occurs through communities** (Mancini & Bowen, 2009).



Social Organizational Theory of Action & Change

Social and Physical Infrastructure

Social and physical infrastructure includes the many resources, like programming, supports, or facilities, professionals offer.



Resources

Resource Type	Examples
Economic	Income, housing, financial security
Social	Family cohesion, support networks
Psychological	Self-efficacy, optimism
Human	Education, health, parenting skills
Institutional	Healthcare, schools, family services

An interesting aspect about resources...they are largely rooted in **communities**.

Example Military-Community Resources by Type

Resource Type	Examples
Economic	• Personal Financial Readiness (PFR) counseling and education • Military housing and housing assistance (BAH, privatized housing offices) • Emergency financial assistance • Employment and career assistance for spouses • Transition assistance
Social	• Key Support Liaison/Key Spouse Program • Installation community activities • Outdoor Recreation and family recreation programs (MWR) • Couple relationship education (ELEVATE or PREP)
Psychological	• Military Family Life Counselors (MFLCs) • Resilience training • Stress management and wellness workshops • Individual coaching or goal-setting programs
Human	• New Parent Support Program (NPSP) • Parenting education classes • Nutrition and fitness education programs (Health Promotion) • Family advocacy prevention education
Institutional	• TRICARE • Child Development Centers (CDCs) • School Liaison Program • Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP)



Resource Inventory Template

Designed to help **identify and organize community-based resources** for military families.



Capture helpful organizations, websites, or services in **one place**.

Build a **centralized, up-to-date resource list**—making it easier to connect families with needed support.



Download at:
OneOp.org/learn/160145/

Social Organizational Theory of Action & Change

Community Capacity Building

So, social and physical infrastructure have implications for well-being, but **what does well-being even mean?**





What is Well-Being?

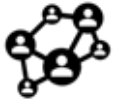
A holistic approach considers:



Physical health E.g., cardiometabolic disease markers like cortisol or health behaviors (such as tobacco use)



Psychological health E.g., depressive symptoms like feeling sad or anxiety symptoms (such as feeling on edge)



Relational health E.g., interactions like warmth and/or hostility, as well as levels of closeness and satisfaction in romantic relationships, friendships, or parent-child relationships





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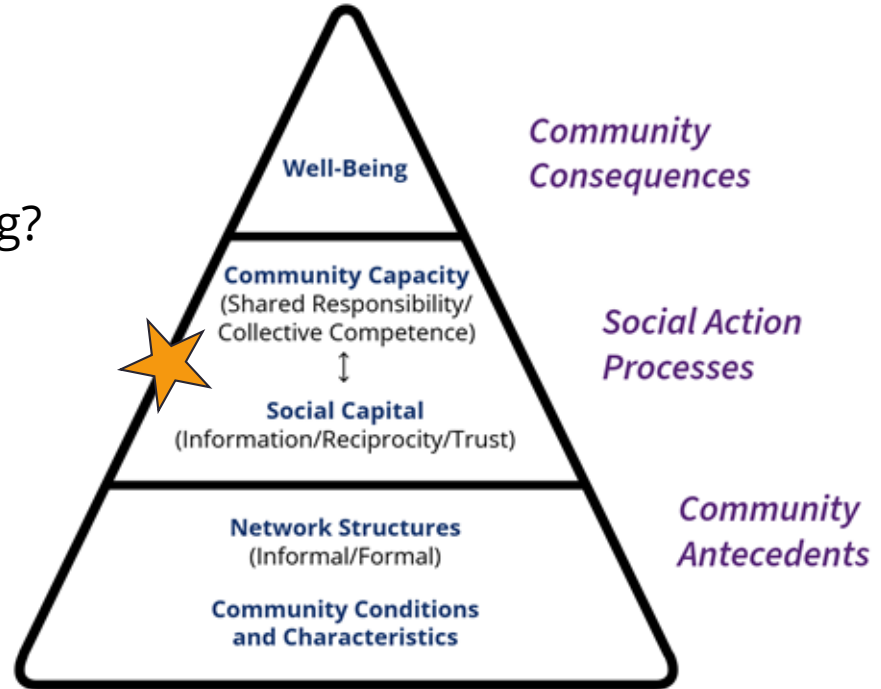
Community Capacity

Social Organizational Theory of Action & Change

Community Capacity

How does social and physical infrastructure impact well-being?

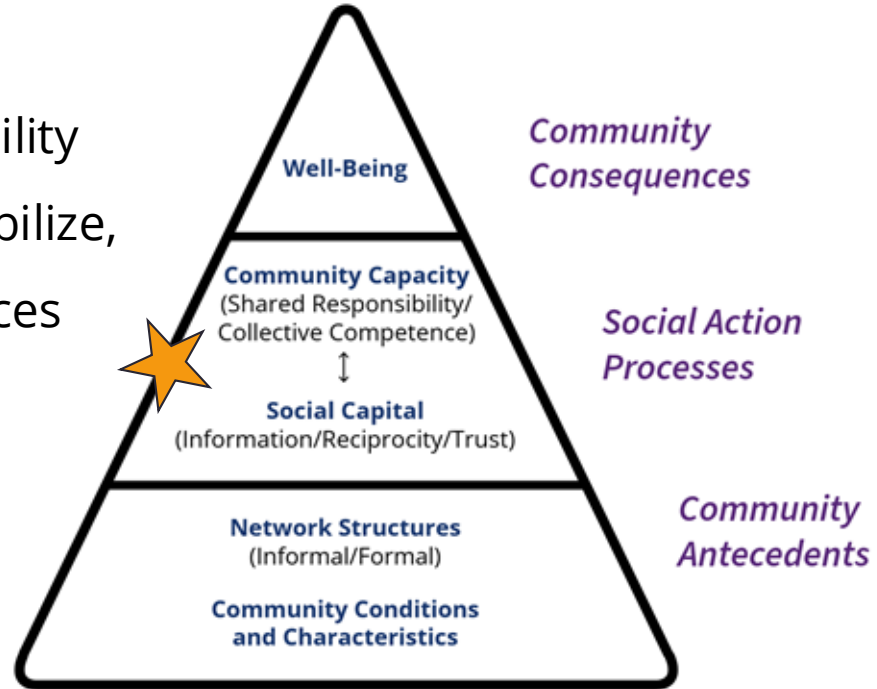
Community Capacity!!



Social Organizational Theory of Action & Change

Community Capacity Defined

Community capacity is the ability of a community to identify, mobilize, coordinate, and sustain resources that promote the well-being of individuals and families.



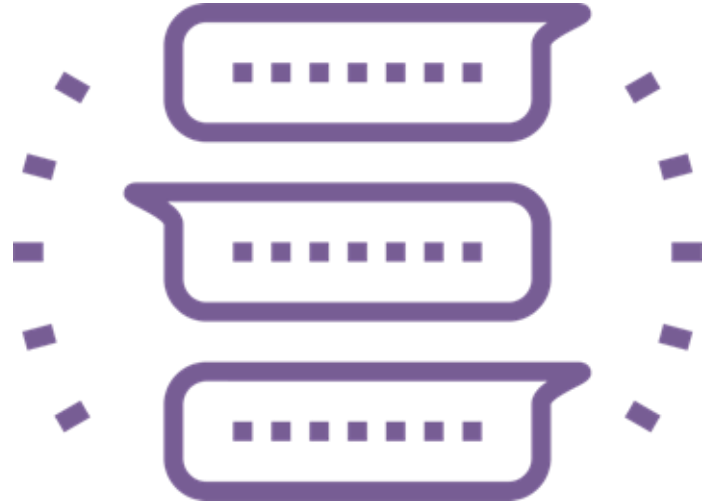


What is Community Capacity? Reflection

The ability of a community to identify, mobilize, coordinate, and sustain resources that promote the well-being of individuals and families.



***What does that
mean to YOU?***



Share your thoughts with
us in the chat pod.

Community Capacity 101

Two elements –

- **Do they feel that community members...**
 - **Care** for one another? (*shared responsibility*)
 - **Take action** for the best interest of the community? (*collective competence*)
- **It's a *perception* held by the individual.**
 - It may or may not align with objective indicators.
 - When people treat a situation as real, it has real effects.

Community Capacity Typology

These two elements exist in combination and create four possibilities:

1. Synergetic
2. Able
3. Relational
4. Disengaged

		Shared Responsibility	
		High	Low
Collective Competence	High	<i>Synergetic Community:</i> High in both shared responsibility and collective competence	<i>Able Community:</i> Low in shared responsibility, high in collective competence
	Low	<i>Relational Community:</i> High in shared responsibility, low in collective competence	<i>Disengaged Community:</i> Low in shared responsibility and collective competence

Community capacity typology. Reprinted from Pathways of Human Development: Explorations of Change (2009). Mancini and Roberto (Eds.), Lexington Books, All rights reserved.

Applying the Community Capacity Typology

Think of a military family you interacted with recently...



- ***How do you think they would classify their community on shared responsibility sentiments and collective competence through action taken and why?***

		Shared Responsibility	
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Collective Competence	High	<i>Synergetic Community:</i> High in both shared responsibility and collective competence	<i>Able Community:</i> Low in shared responsibility, high in collective competence
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(Mancini and Roberto, 2009)

Empirical Research Findings



O'Neal, Mancini, & Bowen, 2020 in the *Journal of Community Psychology*.



Data from 266 active-duty service members (SMs) and their civilian partners.



Examined:

1. Both partners' community capacity perceptions
2. Variations by contexts and experiences
3. Association with well-being indicators (particularly mental health)

What Do We Know About Types of Community Capacity?

Prevalence

Synergetic

- 64% of SMs
- 61% of partners

Disengaged

- 25% of SMs
- 19% of partners

Relational

- 4% of SMs
- 11% of partners

Able

- 6% of SMs
- 6% of partners

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(Mancini and Roberto, 2009)

What Do We Know About Types of Community Capacity?

Takeaway

Synergetic

- 64% of SMs
- 61% of partners

Disengaged

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Relational

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Takeaway: Perceptions of sentiments and behavior are often, but not always, similar.

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(Mancini and Roberto, 2009)

What Do We Know About Types of Community Capacity?

Context and Experiences

Context and experiences can shape perceptions of community capacity.



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(Mancini and Roberto, 2009)



We found perceptions of community capacity to vary by individuals:



Role

Service members averaged more capacity than partners.

Rank

Higher ranking service members averaged more capacity.

Transition Experience

Those with more transitions reported more collective competency.

What Do We Know About Types of Community Capacity?

Connections to Well-Being

Community capacity has
implications for well-being.

PDF Resource: [*Community capacity building: Supporting military service members and families – A resource manual for military and family program professionals*](#)



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(Mancini and Roberto, 2009)



Connections to Well-Being

Those perceiving their military community as **synergetic**, typically experienced:

- Fewer depressive symptoms
- Less anxiety
- More self-efficacy (belief in their ability to succeed)
- Greater life satisfaction



What Do We Know About Types of Community Capacity?

- Implications for well-being were **stronger for service members** than partners.
 - Consequences for lethality and warfighter readiness.
- **Shared responsibility** “mattered more” than collective competence for partners’ well-being.

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(Mancini and Roberto, 2009)

Why Does This Matter (For Us)?

- A lens to think about how military families ***experience*** community.
- Can frame an understanding of community ***resource utilization***.
- Integrating community capacity building in service efforts can enhance services offered and outcomes generated.

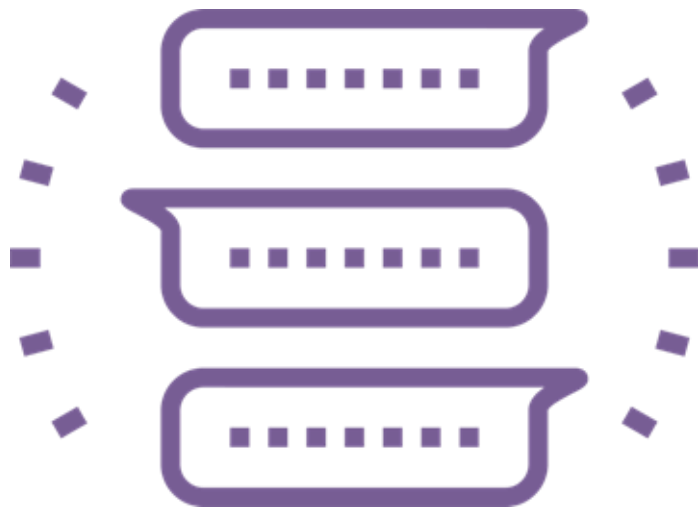


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Creating “Chances” for Community Capacity Building

When working with military families, how can we create chances for people in the community to show care and support for one another through their words and actions?

- Make it easier for an informal group to meet (e.g., offer childcare or your space)
- Build in time for casual connection
- Encourage the exchange contact information
- Connect individuals with similar interests or situations
- Organize platforms where families pitch in for one another



Share your answers with us in the chat pod & remember to select "everyone!"

How Can YOU Apply This? Reflection

When working with military families, how can you create chances for people in the community to show care and support for one another through their words and actions?

Using These Ideas to Meet Needs Across Diverse Contexts

- What might building community capacity look like in specific military-connected contexts, such as when serving:
 - Guard/Reserve families and/or those in rural areas?
 - First-term, Junior Enlisted families?
 - Those experiencing frequent deployments (SOF)?
- What other contexts might require specific approaches for capacity building?

References

- Mancini, J. A., & Bowen, G. L. (2009). Community resilience: A social organization theory of action and change. In J. A. Mancini & K. A. Roberto (Eds.), *Pathways of human development: Explorations of change*, 245-266. Lexington Books.
- Mancini, J. A., & Bowen, G. L. (2014). Community capacity building: Supporting military service members and families: A resource manual for military and family program professionals. Department of Human Development and Family Science, University of Georgia.
- O'Neal, C. W., Mancini, J. A., & Bowen, G. L. (2020). Connecting experiences of community shared responsibility and collective competence to the well-being of adults in military families. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 48(5), 1637-1650.

Questions?



Evaluation

Go to the event page and click the link to take our evaluation and post test!



Your feedback helps shape a stronger, more effective Academy.

OneOp.org/learn/160145/



Continuing Education

This webinar offers **1.5 CE credits** from the:

- American Association for Family and Consumer Sciences (AAFCS)
- Patient Advocate Certification Board (BCPA)
- Commission for Case Manager Certification (CCMC)
- Commission on Dietetic Registration for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (CDR)
- National Council on Family Relations (NCFR)
- National Commission for Health Education Credentialing (NCHEC)
- Michigan Education Association's Center for Leadership and Learning
- Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)
- University of Texas at Austin School of Social Work (UTSW)
- Certificate of Attendance



Academy Schedule



8/05

Podcast
8/06



8/12

Podcast
8/13



8/19

Podcast
8/20



8/26

Partnerships that
Strengthen
Military Families

Network for
Military Nutrition
Readiness

Child Care Access
& Military Spouse
Employment

Building Strong
Communities: A
Panel Discussion

OneOp.org/building-strong-communities-for-military-family-readiness/





August 12, 2026 at 11:00 AM Eastern

Register: [**OneOp.org/learn/160146/**](https://OneOp.org/learn/160146/)

Register for the Next Academy Webinar

Creating a Network for Military Nutrition Readiness

Strengthening nutrition readiness is essential to supporting the overall well-being and resilience of military families. Building on this understanding, attendees will gain an overview of federal nutrition assistance programs and Cooperative Extension education programs that support both nutrition and financial readiness. Further, attendees will hear from an installation community partnership addressing nutrition readiness.

Build Your Local Resource Inventory

Connect military families to the support they need through your network.



Our Template

Download a copy from
Event Materials to
organize resources in
your community

How to Use It

Add organizations,
services, and websites
as you learn about
them to support your
service navigation.

Best Practices

Start with a clear
purpose, focus on
relevant and
accessible resources,
and update regularly.

Discover the OneOp Podcast

*Episodes this month are focused on
community building, belonging, and
fostering collective competence.*



New Episode: Thursday, August 6

This episode features Dr. Julika von Stackelberg as she explores the power of community building, belonging, and resilience. Join us for an insightful conversation on creating strong connections that support individuals, families, and communities in times of challenge and change.

