

PREVENTION IN ACTION

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS AND INTERACTIONS

BUILD HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS IN ALL ASPECTS OF YOUR LIFE

A relationship is a way two or more people are connected or the way they behave toward each other. You might have romantic, friend, professional, and family relationships.

Healthy relationships include boundaries, self-control, communication, and respect. In healthy relationships, people feel supported, connected, and independent.

Think of a [healthy relationship](#) you have, or have had in

the past, regardless of the type of relationship, or maybe people who have a healthy relationship that you admire.

What made you think of that relationship? What do you think makes it healthy?

COMMUNICATION IN RELATIONSHIPS

- Treat each other with respect.
- Share in decision-making.
- Speak openly about thoughts and feelings.
- Listen to each other; feel heard and supported.
- Celebrate each other's successes.

RELATIONSHIP BOUNDARIES

- Trust each other.
- Spend time with family.
- Spend time with friends and apart from your partner.
- Don't pressure each other to do things.

Contact [Marine Corps Family Team Building](#) to sign up for a *Real Relationships* course.



CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Conflict is a normal part of all relationships, and everyone reacts differently to conflict. Negotiating is one of the best ways to resolve conflicts and problems. Negotiating includes the following:

- Focus on the idea, not the person.
- Allow others to finish statements and thoughts.
- Emphasize shared values, viewpoints, and attitudes.
- Show interest in others' viewpoints.
- Don't let emotions run the discussion.

Showing **kindness, understanding, and respect** enables individuals to create and sustain healthy relationships.

EXPRESS YOUR NEEDS IN A RELATIONSHIP IN A POSITIVE WAY

If someone isn't meeting your needs, it is important to discuss it with the other individual. If the other person is unaware that the behavior is negatively impacting you, there is little chance the behavior will stop. If you can't positively communicate those expectations, you could drastically limit your relationship.

There's an effective way to do that without sounding critical, and it's called an I statement. These statements may sound odd at first, but they make logical sense.

Using I statements allows you to pose your expectation, point,

"I feel _____ when _____ because I _____."

FEELING BEHAVIOR EFFECT

frustration, or idea without making it about the other person.

Instead of "You never clean up after yourself," try "I **feel** frustrated **when** the house is a wreck **because** I am too tired to clean up after work." Instead of "You never have time for me," try "I **feel** lonely **when** we don't have a date night once a week **because** I value spending time with you even with our busy schedules."

PRACTICE SELF-CARE

The Practice Self-care feature focuses on self-care techniques that Service members, civilians, veterans, and Families find helpful. Stress is a regular part of everyday life, and all of us can benefit from learning techniques to manage it and including time in our schedules for self-care.

**Capt Ryan Stahley, Operations Officer
Behavioral Programs Branch,
Headquarters Marine Corps (HQMC)**

What: Staying fit, listening to music, and going to the shooting range

How It Helps: Rowing, lifting, practicing yoga and different fighting styles, and rock climbing allow me to clear my mind and focus on my physical health.

Listening to music and researching musicians helps me relax and learn. Putting rounds down range focuses all of my energy and melts any stress away.

**Anne Hickey, Embedded Preventive
Behavioral Health Capability Coordinator,
Behavioral Programs Branch, HQMC**

What: Spinning, Nerf gun fights, and dance parties

How It Helps: Work/life balance in the current environment is challenging at best and our kids feel it, too! I keep my spin bike in front of my desk at home as a constant reminder to find time to prioritize my physical health in the midst of all of the craziness.

And when life catches up to us and things get too serious, we like to blow off steam with an impromptu (read: surprise attack) Nerf gun fight or a dance party. It's hard to be sad or mad when you are laughing or dancing. Everyone, adults and kids alike, needs to make more time for fun, especially now!

ABOUT THE NEWSLETTER

The United States Marine Corps' Marine & Family Programs Division publishes Prevention in Action.

The contents are for informational purposes only and not intended to be a substitute for professional financial advice, medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment.

Email hqmcprevention@usmc.mil to suggest topics or ask questions. May's topic will be change.

To access hot links in newsletter: right click on link, copy link location, and paste link into a new browser window.

SET HEALTHY BOUNDARIES IN RELATIONSHIPS

When was the last time you set a boundary with people in your life? Whether it's with your friends, your family, your coworkers, your romantic partner, or with some of your own behaviors — it is

important to understand and communicate your needs.

Keeping your boundaries solid takes **time and effort**. Being honest with yourself and recognizing when a boundary you've set isn't being respected might feel tricky, but it's important to advocate for yourself.

Start setting more healthy boundaries across your social spheres with these ideas:

Boundaries with Friends

If you feel like your friends are always asking you for advice, congrats! You're probably a **great listener**. If you feel drained emotionally or need more time to yourself to help recharge, it might be helpful to set a couple of boundaries.

Ignoring a friend might lead to unintended consequences (like hurt feelings or **more stress**), but it's important to state how and when you can help them. When a friend leans on you for support, make sure you're still making time to take care of yourself.

Boundaries with Family

Family can help build us up, but family members also seem to have a greater ability to



STOP OVER-COMMITTING

TAKE A BREATH

SET BOUNDARIES



push our buttons. Think about routines or traditions you can establish to **build togetherness** and dedicated "family" **time**. Try including your family in **activities** or hobbies you already enjoy, like hiking, tennis, or fishing.

Boundaries with Coworkers

Not sure how to tell the difference between work time and downtime? If you feel you're inching toward burnout, these **resources** can help. Talk to your manager and set priorities. Set up team meetings to discuss ways to work together and share tasks.

During your shift, consider taking a quick mental **microbreak** by doing a deep breathing exercise or thinking about things you're looking forward to doing when you have more time. When you are not working, enjoy your time off and practice **self-care** rather than hitting refresh on your work email to wait for the next tasks.

Boundaries with Romantic Partners

Intimate relationships should have some basic rules or **values in place** that you share with your partner. We're not talking about a formal

contract, but some upfront work should be done to help both parties feel at ease. Ask each other: What makes you **feel safe**? What can I do to support you? How can I best let you know when I need a little space? How often should we communicate? Recognize the signs of **stalking** and other **unhealthy relationship behaviors** early on to prevent violence or unsafe situations.

Boundaries with Yourself

Not to get all meta on you, but setting boundaries with yourself is just another way to look inward and identify experiences that **help you** versus the ones that don't. Think of it as a form of self-care — did you really want to spend money on something you don't need or get takeout five nights in a row? Making small changes can improve your well-being.

In any healthy relationship, saying "no" is always **an option**. Respect when someone else says it, too.

—Excerpt from Navy's *Real Good Day* post on [medium.com](https://www.foxnews.com/health/real-good-day). Follow the campaign on Twitter and Instagram @RGDCampaign.

2021 Virtual Military Spouse Symposium Offers Three Days of Online Sessions

Register now for the 2021 Virtual Military Spouse Symposium, which will be held April 27-29.

Build knowledge on self-care, entrepreneurship, and federal job searching while networking with other military spouses.

Participate in breakout sessions for Army, Marine

Corps, Navy, and Air Force spouses.

On Day Two at 1400 EST, hear Marine Corps Prevention Manager Christine Heit talk about spouse self-care. On Day Three, take part in a Relationship Summit and learn more about relationship skill-building with tips from experts.

HEALTHY PARENT–CHILD RELATIONSHIPS INCLUDE CONSISTENT DISCIPLINE

There is a universal truth with all parents regardless of where they may call home.

Parents want what is best for their children. They want them to grow up to be good human beings who make a contribution to society in some way.

Many parents know discipline is necessary to end unwanted behavior but are unsure of how to discipline beyond their own childhood experiences.

Parents have the challenge of being responsible for molding their child’s behavior. Our children need to know if they should continue what they are doing or not. Trial and error is one of the ways they learn.

Unfortunately, sometimes parents don’t really know the best way to address the challenge and the learning opportunity is lost.

Discipline is necessary. It is one of the ways we teach and guide our children. How we discipline is key.

Research has shown us that a more positive democratic approach to discipline provides the optimum outcome of a well-adjusted adult. Here are 10 tips and tactics to help you achieve your parenting goals:

- Show respect and focus on the behavior, NOT the child. Be consistent with showing you value your child, just not the current behavior.
- Be firm, fair and consistent

with each and every child. Discipline with love. No means no, now, next week and next month.

- Do not use physical punishment. Doing so only teaches children that violence and aggression is OK.
- Fit the consequence to the behavior. For example, if the child writes on the wall, then the punishment is to clean it off (if age appropriate).
- Act as soon as possible so your child associates misbehaviors with their consequences.
- If you are too upset, cool down before you discipline. Be thoughtful, not emotional.
- Keep in mind no one is perfect, and that we all make mistakes.
- Decide which behaviors you must take a stand on and with which ones you can be more flexible. It is important to remain consistent.
- Catch your child “being good.” Give praise often for your child’s positive actions and qualities. This encourages your child to continue the behavior you want.
- Take some time for yourself. Recharging is an important part of being able to provide positive discipline!

—*Debora Burns, Clinical Supervisor, Prevention and Education, Camp Lejeune–New River*

50 WAYS TO PRAISE YOUR CHILD

- Great job!
- You did it!
- Way to go!
- Awesome!
- Super!
- I knew you could do it!
- I am so proud of you!
- Fantastic!
- That’s great!
- You rock!
- You’re so smart!
- Keep up the good work!
- Magnificent!
- Wonderful!
- Go, you!
- Excellent!
- You’re great at that!
- I’m impressed!
- You worked so hard!
- You made me smile!
- I love being your mom/dad! I appreciate your help! Thank you!
- It looks beautiful!
- You’re so clever!
- Marvelous!
- Keep going!
- You can do it!
- Don’t give up!
- I believe in you!
- I know you can do it!
- How did you get so smart? I’m amazed!
- I love that!
- Whatever you set your mind to you can achieve! You have a heart of gold!
- You make me proud! That took courage!
- You were brave!
- You studied hard!
- You gave it your all!
- That’s a great idea!
- Super-doooper!
- Perfect!
- Amazing!
- You’re one of a kind!
- That was wonderful!
- Don’t stop now!
- You’re on a roll!
- I love you!

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU’RE LOSING YOUR COOL

1. Call a Time Out:

Like in a ball game, sometimes we just need to regroup. Putting distance between you and your child benefits both. Give yourself at least 20 minutes to cool down before re-engaging.

2. Relaxation/Meditation:

Taking deep breaths and focusing on the here and now encourages your body to relax by increasing oxygen to the brain. Take a deep breath to the count of 4, then exhale to the count of 4. Allow yourself to release tension with every exhale.

3. Talk to Someone:

Call a trusted friend or family member to talk the situation through. Talking about a problem often gives you the opportunity to view the situation rationally.

4. Exercise:

Going for a brisk walk or jog around the neighborhood can cause a release of feel-good hormones, known as endorphins, which reduce the amount of stress hormones associated with frustration and irritability.

5. Ice Water:

Drinking or dunking yourself in freezing cold ice water can shock your system. It provides an opportunity to stop angry outbursts before you do or say something you may later regret.



Prevention & Education
Building Resilience through
Healthy Relationships
mccslejeune-newriver.com/fap

MCCS Camp Lejeune-New River will distribute the two-sided bookmark above at schools and day care centers as part of National Child Abuse Prevention Month in April.

RELATIONSHIP RESOURCES

[Family Team Building](#) (courses on relationships)

[Community Counseling Program](#) (individual, couples, and family counseling)

[Military and Family Life Counselors](#)
[New Parent Support Program](#) (courses and services for parents)

[Family Advocacy Program](#) (courses)

[Military OneSource](#) (Building Healthy Relationships consultation)

[Chaplain Religious Enrichment Development Operation](#) or CREDO (marriage and family enrichment retreats)

STAYING FIT TOGETHER CAN STRENGTHEN RELATIONSHIPS

Being active with your family not only supports overall physical fitness, but it can also be a great way to have fun and bond with family.

The benefits of exercise extend beyond physical health to include improved mental well-being, and decreased stress and anxiety.

The benefits of physical activity apply to family members of all ages. Children and adolescents who participate in regular physical activity have increased muscle and bone strength, less risk for chronic disease, and improved cognitive function.

Taking advantage of opportunities for family-based activities is essential for military families. Deployments, training commitments, and long working hours mean family time is precious. Making time to be active as a family is a great way to reap some of the physical and mental benefits while strengthening the family unit and maximizing time together.

Semper Fit has the resources and programs for you and your family to get fit, to be healthy, and to stay mission-ready. Head to your local [fitness center](#) to catch a workout or a group exercise class with your spouse.



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You can also take advantage of Semper Fit’s outdoor recreation activities, from parks and trails to playgrounds and green spaces. You can also find your local [Outdoor Recreation](#)

[Equipment Checkout Center](#) to equip your family for a fun local adventure. Offerings vary, so be sure to check with your installation’s Semper Fit program.

BUILD HEALTHY ATTACHMENTS IN PARENT–CHILD RELATIONSHIPS

Building and maintaining healthy parent-child relationships can pose unique challenges in military families.

Service member absences, life transitions, blended family dynamics, the addition of new siblings or other household members, and dealing with separation or divorce can all affect bonding and attachment, especially with younger children.

There are strategies that parents can use to promote healthy attachment.

Build nurturing routines into a child’s day. This may include playtime or storytime, having meals together, or establishing nurturing bedtime routines.

During periods of absence, find ways to still be present in your child’s life. Record storytime with an absent parent’s voice, make video calls, and share family pictures to help a parent and child stay connected.

Remember, young children may not have



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the words to express their feelings, so they express them through their behavior. Try to anticipate your child’s needs, and respond appropriately. When a child is scared, worried, or lonely, find ways to offer reassurance and support. This may include extra cuddle time or one-on-one time.

For families parenting multiple children, when possible, create opportunities to bond

with children individually. One child may enjoy helping a parent prepare dinner, while another child loves arts and crafts.

Find time to do something fun with your child. Even if you have just a few minutes, make those minutes count.

For additional support with parenting young children, please contact your installation [New Parent Support Program](#).