



# U.S. AIR FORCE RESERVE Psychological Health Advocacy Program

"THE CONNECTOR"  
PHAP Quarterly Newsletter

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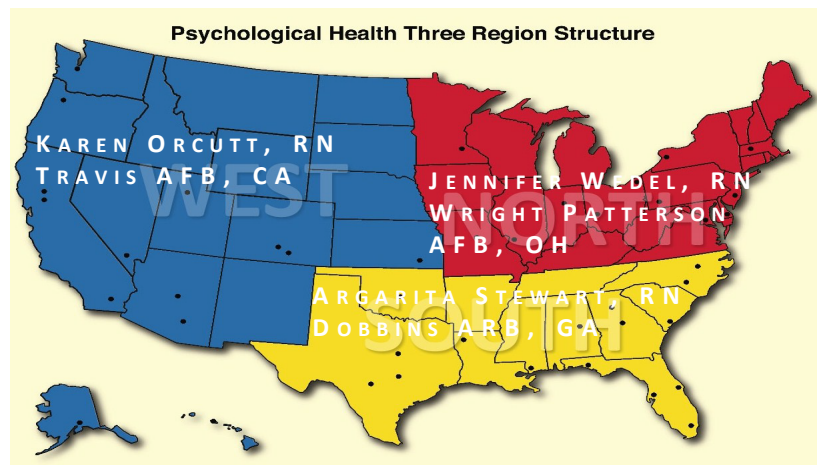
Quarterly Newsletter of The Psychological Health Advocacy Program

You and your family are not alone.

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Contact Us: [AFRC.PHAP@us.af.mil](mailto:AFRC.PHAP@us.af.mil) | PHAP 24/7 Call Center: 1-888-810-2400

The PHAP consists of three regional offices located at Dobbins ARB, GA, Travis AFB, CA, and Wright Patterson AFB, OH. They provide services throughout the United States, including Hawaii, Alaska and Guam. Each office consists of a case facilitator, two outreach specialists and an administrative specialist who locate resources to assist reservists and their family members with a variety of life stressors.



## Help is Here...

Mental health plays an essential role in shaping one's life. A person free of excessive anxiety, stress and worry is more capable to live life at its fullest. A mentally fit person maintains a positive self-image and interacts well with co-workers, family and friends. With this in mind, the Air Force Reserve Command created the Psychological Health Advocacy Program (PHAP) to assist reservists and their families obtain the support they need to maintain their emotional well-being. Additionally, PHAP personnel can assist commanders and reserve medical unit personnel when members need mental health services. The PHAP seeks to create a culture of support for psychological health in which prevention and resiliency are part of normal life.



From LEFT-to-RIGHT: Ernest Farmer-Outreach Specialist, Argarita Stewart-Case Facilitator, Kara Valentine-Admin Specialist, Rolando Edwards-Outreach Specialist

## SOUTH Region

Dobbins ARB, GA  
678-655-4358





Many thanks to Seymour Johnson AFB for inviting us to participate in the Family Day event on 27-October-12.

# Psychological Health Advocacy Program 94th Airlift Wing at Dobbins ARB, GA

# Family Day at Seymour Johnson AFB, NC



## Family Day - Seymour Johnson



*The conditions of hurricane 'Sandy' held off long enough to allow for family members, children, and the reservists to have a good time.*

*"Click here" to notify us of any upcoming events where we can share information about our services which are available to all AFRC service members and their family members at no charge; or you can reach us 24 hours/day at 1-888-810-2400.*

## Eating to Manage Your Holiday Stress?

During the holiday season it can be difficult to keep to a healthy diet, even for those most dedicated to healthy foods and activity. In addition to the ongoing temptation of cookies and candies, many Americans experience heightened stress during the holidays, which can result in unhealthy management strategies, such as overeating.

The American Psychological Association's 2010 Stress in America survey found that 40 percent of adults surveyed reported overeating or eating unhealthy foods because of stress in the past month. The survey also showed that Americans appear to be caught in a vicious cycle where they don't think they have the time or willpower to make the lifestyle or behavior changes necessary to manage their stress in healthier ways. Unhealthy eating is one reaction to stress that can affect both parents and children. According to the survey:

- Twenty-seven percent of overweight children reported eating to make themselves feel better when they are stressed.
- Children also reported awareness of their parents' stress.
- Ninety-one percent of children reported that they know their parent is stressed, however 69 percent of parents report that they think their stress has a slight impact or no impact on their children.
- Children who said their parents are always stressed were more likely to report having a great deal of stress themselves than those who said their parents were never stressed (17 percent vs. two percent).

Children model their parents' behaviors, including those related to managing stress. Parents who deal with holiday stress in unhealthy ways by overeating or drinking to excess, risk passing those behaviors on to their children. Alternatively, parents who cope with stress in healthy ways can not only promote better adjustment and well-being for themselves, but also promote the formation of critically important habits and skills in children. By taking small, manageable steps to a healthier lifestyle, families can establish and work toward goals to be psychologically and physically fit this holiday season and throughout the year.

Source: American Psychological Association, [www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2010/12/eating-stress.aspx](http://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2010/12/eating-stress.aspx)

## CMSgt Kloepfel, 349th Medical Superintendent, Travis AFB, shares insight on Resiliency

Resilience is a foundation to a service members' overall health condition. Being resilient doesn't mean going through life without experiencing difficulty and distress. Spouses, family members and loved ones may experience unique challenges especially in the midst of deployment period. Some of these challenges are complex and even the most resilient person can deal with.

When reservists and family members find themselves in this situation, free help is just a phone call away with Psychological Health Advocacy Program.

"Having social support and seeking help when you need it, as well as talking about situation with loved ones and staying connected with friends helps build resiliency," said Chief Master Sgt. Mark Kloepfel, 349th Air Mobility Wing medical superintendent, Travis, AFB. "I think the Air Force does a great job of communicating where to get help if needed. The Air Force Four Pillars of wellness: Spiritual, Emotional, Physical and Social are all tied in with Mental Health. If you pay attention and feed these areas of your life you will be healthy."

The Air Force Reserve Command has put together a program to support service members and their families by using creative initiatives to effectively address the need of the reserve members and help build resilience in them. The AFRC Psychological Health Advocacy Program's mission is to build a culture of support for psychological health where prevention and resiliency are part of military life.

"As a case facilitator it is our duty to contact members at their request, to follow up on issues and monitor their cases until they request closure. We don't leave members hanging out there without follow up. This gives them the feeling that someone out there is looking out for their best interests," said Karen Orcutt RN, West Region Case Facilitator. The Best way to let people know that seeking help is not a sign of weakness is when you can talk one-on-one with someone and give them examples of people that they would consider strong that have sought out help and after receiving it have become stronger and more resilient," said CMSgt. Kloepfel.





Psychological Health Advocacy Program  
445th Airlift Wing at Wright Patterson AFB, OH

**NORTH** Wright-Patterson, AFB, OH  
**Region** 937-257-2396



## The Reality of Depression: A Perspective from the PHAP, North Region

Posted by Dr. James Bender, DCoE clinical psychologist on October 25, 2012

Dr. James Bender is a former Army psychologist who deployed to Iraq as the brigade psychologist for the 1st Cavalry Division 4th Brigade Combat Team out of Fort Hood, Texas. During his deployment, he traveled through Southern Iraq, from Basra to Baghdad. He writes a monthly post for the DCoE Blog on psychological health concerns related to deployment and being in the military.

Depression has been referred to as "both the common cold and cancer of health care." It's like the common cold in that it can affect anyone at any time (depression affects approximately 17 million American adults annually). It's like cancer because it can be deadly. Take, for example, someone who is clinically depressed and commits suicide. Depression also increases the chances of someone experiencing a heart attack.

A lot has been written on the subject of depression and its treatments. What's not often written about is the fact that depression, whether it's mild or severe, inhibits both physical and mental performance (yet, service members and veterans are too often reluctant to seek help). If you want to avoid or minimize the negative impacts of depression on your performance, seek effective treatment and adopt healthy habits.

For more information, [visit Frontline Psych with DOC BENDER: The Reality of Depression](#)  
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### **Holiday drinking: Keep it safe!**

- Resist the pressure to drink or serve alcohol at every social event.
- Decide that drinking and driving is not an option. As you might suspect, the period between Thanksgiving and New Year's Eve is reported to be the most dangerous season due to alcohol related injuries and fatalities. Mothers Against Drunk Driving estimates that more than 1,000 people die in drunk driving accidents during this time span each year in the United States.

### **Why are the holidays more dangerous than other times of the year?**

- More people drink during the holidays due to numerous parties and other festivities.
- Many Americans don't drink except around the holidays and therefore have a lower tolerance for alcohol. As a result, these people often underestimate their level of impairment and sometimes even drive when they shouldn't. When arrested for drunk driving, these people often show a relatively low blood alcohol content yet they are very intoxicated.
- Because there are more parties and socially acceptable occasions to drink during the holidays, many problem drinkers and people with alcoholism report that they feel more "normal," and therefore drink more often. Because they have a high tolerance for alcohol they consume large amounts before showing the effects, yet they are, in fact, too impaired to drive.
- The holidays are busy and stressful. People are hurrying more than normal and winter road conditions in many areas of the country make driving more dangerous. Add alcohol to this scenario and you have a recipe for disaster.

### **Avoiding an alcohol-related disaster: follow these tips for a safe holiday season:**

- Resist the pressure to drink or serve alcohol at every social event. Just because it's there does not require that you drink it. There is no law stating that alcohol is a necessary ingredient for holiday cheer!
- If you want to serve alcohol to your guests, offer nonalcoholic beverages as well. Make your guests feel as comfortable choosing a nonalcoholic beverage as they would choosing alcohol. You can do this by putting nonalcoholic drinks in a prominent, easily accessible place and by asking guests what they would like to drink, instead of pointing them to the bar or handing them an alcoholic drink when they arrive.
- If you or your friends are going to a party and plan to use alcohol, decide in advance who will be the designated driver. Decide that drinking and driving is not an option.

By Drew Edwards, EdD, MS  
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