



Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense  
**Military Community and Family Policy**

# Military OneSource: Sources of Support for Military Children and Youth During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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National Capital Region

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Quality of life policies and programs that help our service members, their families and survivors be well and mission ready.



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Ms. Kelly Smith serves as Associate Director for Military Community Support Programs and Military OneSource Program Manager within the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy. She leads the Outreach and Engagement team for three centrally funded Department of Defense multimillion dollar programs – Military OneSource, Military and Family Life Counseling, and the Spouse Education and Career Opportunities Program.



# Disclosures

- Ms. Kelly Smith has no relevant financial or non-financial relationships to disclose relating to the content of this activity.
- The views expressed in this presentation are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense, nor the U.S. Government.
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# Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this activity, participants will be able to:

1. Identify the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on the well-being of children and youth, as well as its impact on family dynamics.
2. Evaluate utilization and access to counseling support for children and youth during the COVID-19 pandemic.
3. Outline resources to support children and youth transitioning to school and parents returning to work.



# What We Know From Experience

In a large sample of **military families** ( $N = 2,762$ ), 65% of families reported child behavioral changes such as acting out and feeling sadder and more anxious than usual during the pandemic.



(militarytimes.com, 2021)

(Urbieta et al., 2021)



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# The Wellbeing of Children (ages 6-16)



(alamy.com, n.d.)

In a sample of 43 children (ages of 6 and 16), common negative effects from the COVID-19 pandemic reported by children included:

- Missing school and struggling with at-home education
- Poorer mental health
- Concerns about family members' health
- Missing older family members
- More tension in immediate family relationships due to constant contact

Younger children (6-9 years old) reported more negative thoughts and feelings about COVID-19 than older children (10-16 years old).

(Chu et al., 2021)



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# The Wellbeing of Youth (ages 11-18)

According to data from a sample of 88 youth between the ages of 11-18 who had experienced an early life adversity, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic (i.e., pandemic-related concern and events such as parental or personal job loss) was associated with more psychiatric symptoms (i.e., depression and anxiety symptoms, aggression, sleep quality)

- The association between the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and psychiatric symptoms was stronger among youth who scored low (compared to high or average) on self-enhancing humor (e.g., finding humor in everyday situations) or affiliative humor (e.g., using humor to bring people together; Kuhlman et al., 2021).
- The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on youth's psychiatric symptoms was stronger among youth with lower use of cognitive reappraisal (i.e., reframing a situation) than those who reported greater use of cognitive reappraisal (Kuhlman et al., 2021).
- In other words, past life experiences (e.g., early life adversity) and current coping mechanisms (e.g., ability to reframe the situation, finding humor) mattered for well-being.

(Kuhlman et al., 2021)



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# The Wellbeing of Youth (ages 11-18)

On average, 2,738 4<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> graders rated not seeing friends, missing events, and the thought of family and friends possibly getting sick as stressful aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

- High school students commonly rated falling behind on schoolwork and difficulty concentrating as stressful experiences during the initial school closure period.
- Regardless of grade level, female students averaged higher rates of COVID-19 stress (i.e., all COVID-19 stressors combined) compared to males during the first three months of the pandemic.



(alamy.com, n.d.)

(Styck et al., 2021)



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# Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Family Dynamic



(defense.gov, 2020)

In a sample of **4,112 military families**, 46% of families reported lost or reduced childcare access, 53% reported decreased personal income, 49% reported decreased family income, and 56% of military spouses reported job loss or reduced hours.

(National Military Family Association, 2021)



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# Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Family Dynamic

**2,762 Service members** reported on their families' experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- One in five families reported having transfers disrupted.
- Additionally, 9% of respondents noted that their Service Member was unable to return home from deployment
- 22% of military families reported needing to utilize money from their savings accounts due to the pandemic.
- 16% of military families reported a reduction in working hours to provide educational support or because they were unable to find childcare. However, 26% of active duty Service members reported increased working hours. Thus, there were increases in family- and work-related responsibilities.

(Urbieta et al., 2021)



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# Discipline During the COVID-19 Pandemic

During the COVID-19 pandemic, a sample of 2,068 parents reported:

- Engaging in positive discipline (e.g., using time out) 67.1%
- Reported harsh discipline (e.g., cursing at child, spanking) 59.0%
- Reported neglectful parenting (e.g., failing to prevent harm to child) 55.6%



(US Army, 2013)

Parents were more likely to engage in both positive and harsh disciplinary practices when their children were between 5-9 years old, and least likely to engage in these practices when their children were 16 years old or older.

(Connell & Strambler, 2021)



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# It's Not All Bad...

During the pandemic, 11% of military families reported that they received tangible support (e.g., running errands), and 22% received emotional support (e.g., someone available to discuss concerns).



(alamy.com, n.d.)

(Urbietta et al., 2021)



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# Families Feeling Supported

In a sample of 183 parents with children under 18, more pandemic-related stressors (e.g., parent's relationship/interactions with partner, children's physical health), anxiety symptoms, and depressive symptoms were related to greater parental stress.



(defense.gov, 2021)

- Some parents reported positive outcomes related to the stay-at-home orders, such that it allowed them to spend more time with their children
- More parental support and perceived control over the COVID-19 pandemic were associated with less parental stress and less potential for child abuse

(Brown et al., 2020)



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# Utilization of Counseling Support

Drawing from a U.S. nationally representative sample of parents ( $N = 2,019$ ), about one quarter of parents (23.4%;  $n = 514$ ) utilized some type of treatment during the pandemic with online apps and courses being the most utilized.



(Getty Image, n.d.)

(Wamser-Nanney et al., 2021)



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# New Parent Support Program



(alamy.com, n.d.)

Focus groups from 30 home visitor family service providers with the Army New Parent Support Program identified the challenges and benefits of working with **military families** during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Although remote work limited access to families (e.g., some families refused virtual services), communication with families was maintained through a variety of methods (e.g., texting, phone calls).
- Boundaries with families were blurred (e.g., communicating outside of work hours) and family needs (e.g., managing childcare) often took priority over program participation.

(Ferrara et al., 2021)



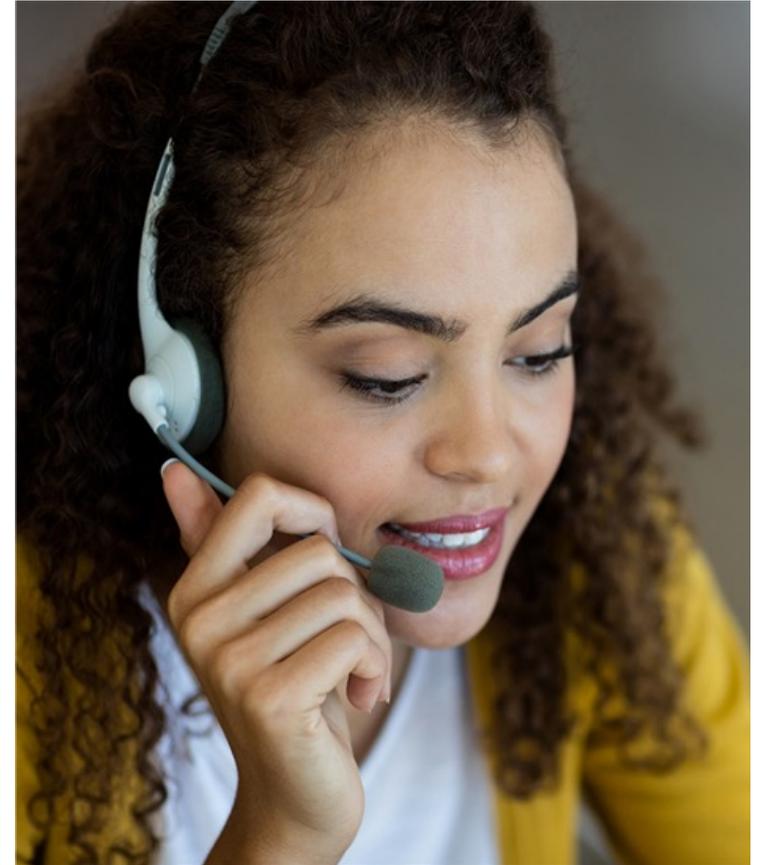
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# Transitioning to Telehealth

Compared to pre-pandemic recollections, most telepsychology use during the pandemic occurred among psychologists in:

- Group practice (83.0%)
- Academic medical centers (82.1%)
- Hospital/medical practice (73.6%)

Compared to pre-pandemic levels, telepsychology use increased the most during the pandemic for presenting problems of anxiety, relationship difficulties, sleep/insomnia, and women's issues.



(alamy.com, n.d.)



(Pierce et al., 2021)

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# Clinicians Serving Military Families via Telehealth

Drawing from data within their treatment network, the Cohen Veterans Network reported that **military families** and clinicians that served military families were reluctant to use telehealth services.

- Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the primary reason for reluctance was not feeling compelled to learn how to use and become proficient in telehealth programs, because the delivery of services in-person was working for both clients and clinicians.
- At the start of the pandemic, barriers to telehealth services included lack of technology at individual clinics (e.g., few laptops, some connectivity issues) and client reluctance to receive telehealth services (e.g., waiting indefinitely for services to return to normal).
- Access to a robust telehealth platform (e.g., a central office managing licenses and secure document sharing platforms, training protocols in place for clinicians), facilitated telehealth capabilities.

(Shelton et al., 2020)



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# Benefits of Telehealth During the COVID-19 Pandemic



(Adobe Stock, n.d.)

- Telehealth sessions allowed healthcare providers to explicitly “see” how families were functioning within their home, a potential benefit of telehealth and leverage point for interventions.
- Also allowed service providers to target specific learning tools available in each family’s home (e.g., toys, learning materials), and these tools could be used once the session ended (i.e., not training with materials only available within the providers office).

(Jeffrey et al., 2020)



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# 24/7 Virtual Connection to Resources & Support

- A single source of virtual support, information and resources for service members and military families
- Continually updated and supported by agile content development processes
- Allowing focused efforts such as addressing the impact of coronavirus on military life
- Private, discreet, individualized support
- Free, tailored, confidential
- Trustworthy information and resources — from the Department of Defense

**MILITARY**  
**ONESOURCE**



(alamy.com, n.d.)



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# 24/7 Virtual Connection to Resources & Support

Military OneSource is the Department's 24/7 connection to comprehensive information, answers, and support to help service members and families reach their goals, overcome challenges, and thrive. The program aims to normalize help-seeking with proven results to enhance Total Force readiness and resilience.



Data shown is  
FY21 versus  
FY20

**1,244,833**

Call Center  
Contacts

**178,445**

Non-medical  
Counseling  
Sessions

**271,549**

Tax Returns  
Filed

**1,415,417**

Products  
Distributed

Military OneSource overall call center utilization up 2.2% over FY 2020

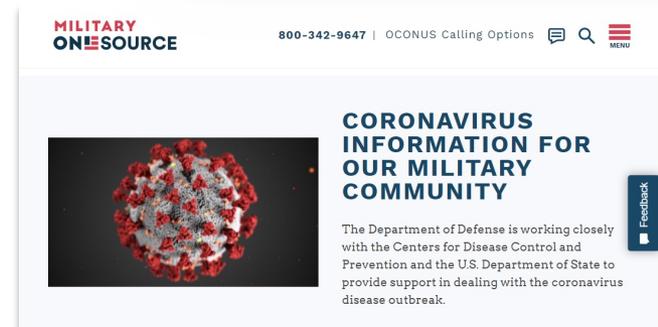
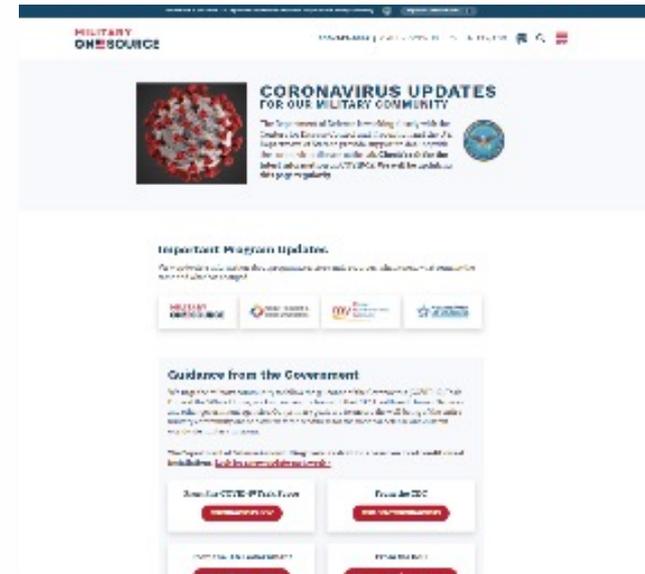


(Military OneSource, 2021)

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# Response to COVID-19

- Launched MilitaryOneSource.mil/coronavirus
- Streamed daily Facebook Live COVID-19 updates
- Expanded Military OneSource video non-medical counseling to youth
- Adapted the Military and Family Life Counseling program to phase in telehealth services
- Featured Military Spouse Employment Partnership employers with immediate hiring opportunities
- Developed Military OneSource webinars focused on supporting service members and families during COVID-19



(Military OneSource, 2021)

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# Here's Who Eligible for Military OneSource

- All active duty, National Guard and Reserve Component service members, regardless of activation status
- Immediate family members
- Coast Guard, when activated with the Navy
- Expeditionary civilians, 90 days pre- until 180 days post-deployment
- Retired or discharged, honorably or a general discharge, including Coast Guard veterans, and their immediate family up to 365 days post separation or retirement
- Survivors: non-remarried spouses and children

(Military OneSource)



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**MILITARY ONE SOURCE**

**Retiring or Separating from the Military?**

**Go to [MilitaryOneSource.mil](https://www.militaryonesource.mil) or call 800-342-9647 for a full year of access to free transition resources.**

Master your transition to civilian life. Take advantage of Military OneSource services 24/7 for up to one year after separation or retirement. Services after 365 days may be provided through the Department of Veterans Affairs or other community resources. With Military OneSource, you get:

<p><b>Personal Support</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Non-medical counseling to ease the emotional stress associated with transitions</li><li>• Spouse relocation and transition help to sort through renting vs. buying, choosing your next location, switching schools and other questions</li><li>• Connections to transition assistance programs that help you through this milestone</li><li>• Pre-separation counseling to identify transition needs and a personal plan</li></ul>	<p><b>Career Resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Expert consultations on identifying career goals</li><li>• Help with mapping your military experience to civilian jobs via the Career Transitions database</li><li>• Spouse Education and Career Opportunities, or SECO, offering support for career exploration, education, training and licensing and more</li></ul>
<p><b>Education Assistance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sessions with an education consultant to identify benefits such as Post-9/11 GI Bill, federal grants and tax deductions to take you to the next level</li><li>• Information on colleges and online resources, such as College Navigator and TA DECIDE</li></ul>	<p><b>Financial and Tax Help</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Financial planning with an accredited financial counselor, including strategies on saving for transition and building emergency funds</li><li>• Guidance on military benefits, such as converting your Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance plan to Veterans Group Life Insurance and transferring your GI Bill to your children and spouse</li><li>• Help identifying military tax deductions and allowances, such as combat pay exclusion and moving expenses</li><li>• Secure, easy-to-use tax filing software with 100 percent guarantee for accuracy by the software provider</li></ul>

When you're mastering your transition, we're on standby to help. Call 800-342-9647 or visit [MilitaryOneSource.mil](https://www.militaryonesource.mil).

# Military OneSource: Non-medical Counseling

- Face-to-face, online, by phone and video sessions
- Short-term, up to 12 sessions, per issue
- NEW: Video sessions for children and youth
- Helps with issues such as:
  - Improving relationships at home
  - Stress management
  - Marital and communication issues
  - Adjusting to life at home
  - Parenting skills
  - Isolation
  - Grief and loss



(Getty Image, n.d.)



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# Military and Family Life Counseling

- Free non-medical counseling by licensed master's or doctorate-level counselors. Sessions are confidential.
- Counselors who specialize in child and youth behavioral issues are available to support children and teens with non-medical counseling.
- In March 27, 2020 the program phased in telephonic and video non-medical counseling; available in areas where face-to-face support is restricted due to COVID-19.



**MILITARY & FAMILY  
LIFE COUNSELING**



(alamy.com, n.d.)



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# Comprehensive Range of Support



(Military OneSource)



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# Coping: How's It Going? video



(Military OneSource)



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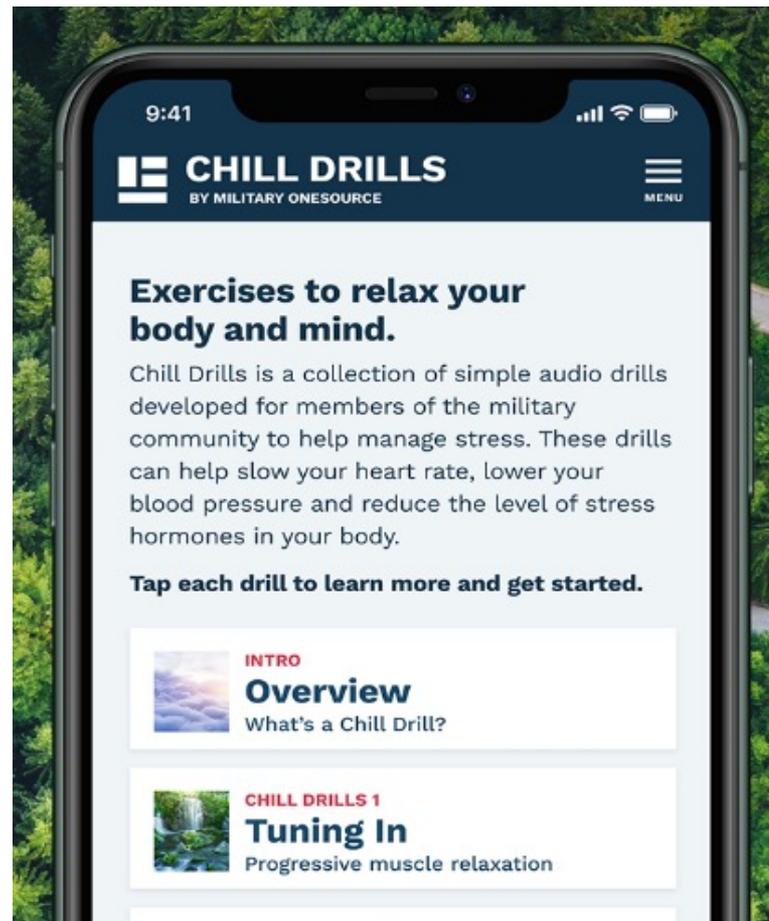
# Virtual Resources for Military Families

The [My Military OneSource App](#) includes personalized help, resources and expert support with in-depth benefits, tools and relevant articles, MilLife Guides and more. Get connected to live support from the Military OneSource call center with one tap.

[Expanded child care options](#) offer free access to a national database of more than a million caregivers to find hourly, flexible, and on-demand child care.

[Chill Drills](#) allow you to practice mindfulness and relieve stress with a collection of simple audio recordings available 24/7.

[Love Every Day](#) is a free digital resilience tool that encourages couples to connect in a fun and meaningful way for a few minutes a day for 21 days.



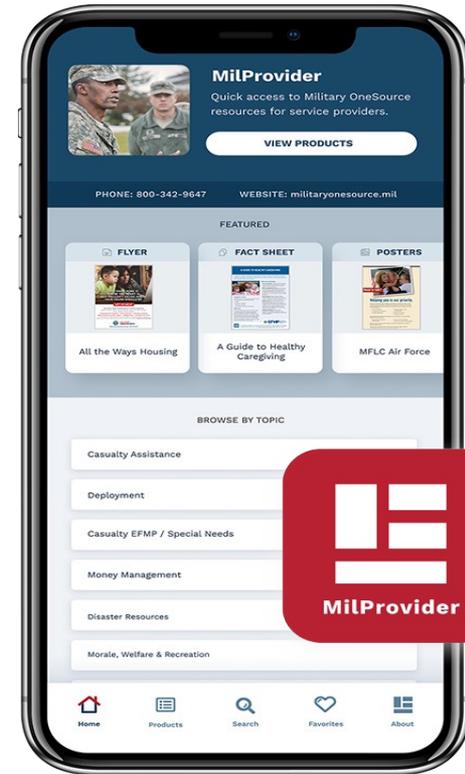
(Military OneSource)



# Military OneSource MilProvider App

The app for military service providers:

- On-the-go access to Military OneSource information and resources
- Quickly find and share flyers, factsheets, brochures and other products through email or text
- Save favorites for easy reference later
- Easily connect the military community and family members to beneficial tools and resources



(Military OneSource)

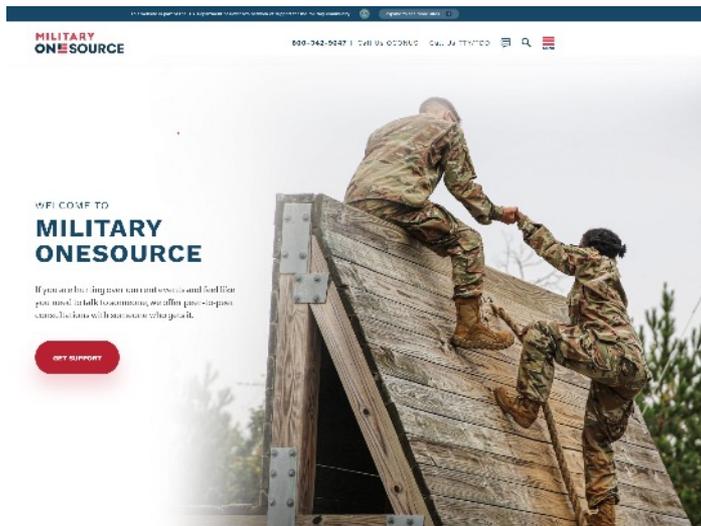


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# Connecting Military Families to Resources

Your 24/7 connection to information, answers and support.  
Your one source for your best MilLife.

Call 800-342-9647 or visit [Military OneSource](https://www.militaryonesource.mil/)  
<https://www.militaryonesource.mil/> or download the My  
Military OneSource app



(Military OneSource)



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# Key Takeaways

- Researchers identified numerous negative outcomes tied to the pandemic, however protective factors were also identified that may buffer children and youth from the negative consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Telehealth services increased overall, however some providers and patients were resistant to switching to telehealth services. The type of services offered influenced whether there was an increase in telehealth.
- The pandemic-related stressors experienced by parents appeared to negatively impact family dynamics and youth mental health. Although families reported a variety of negative experiences that occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic, positive experiences such as spending more time together and acknowledging their ability to cope during the pandemic were also reported.
- Military OneSource is a Department of Defense-funded program that is both a 24/7 call center (800-342-9647) and a website (MilitaryOneSource.mil). Comprehensive information, resources, and assistance on every aspect of military life are provided to service members and their families at no cost.



Thank You

Thank you for everything you do to support military children!



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# Questions?



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# How to Obtain CE/CME Credits

To receive CE/CME credit, you must register by 0800 on 29 APR 2022 to qualify for the receipt of CE/CME credit or a certificate of attendance. You must complete the program posttest and evaluation before collecting your certificate. The posttest and evaluation will be available through 12 MAY 2022 at 2359 ET. Please complete the following steps to obtain CE/CME credit:

1. Go to URL : <https://www.dhaj7-cepo.com/content/apr-2022-ccss-military-children-and-youth>
2. Search for your course using the **Catalog**, **Calendar**, or **Find a course search tool**.
3. Click on the **REGISTER/TAKE COURSE** tab.
  - a. If you have previously used the CEPO CMS, click login.
  - b. If you have not previously used the CEPO CMS click register to create a new account.
4. Follow the onscreen prompts to complete the post-activity assessments:
  - a. Read the Accreditation Statement
  - b. Complete the Evaluation
  - c. Take the Posttest
5. After completing the posttest at 80% or above, your certificate will be available for print or download.
6. You can return to the site at any time in the future to print your certificate and transcripts at <https://www.dhaj7-cepo.com/>
7. If you require further support, please contact us at [dha.ncr.j7.mbx.cepo-cms-support@mail.mil](mailto:dha.ncr.j7.mbx.cepo-cms-support@mail.mil)

