



Supporting Military Parents in Pediatric Clinics: A 6-Step Field Guide to Meet the Mission

Alan R. Scheuermann, Ph.D.

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Presenter



Alan R. Scheuermann, Ph.D.

Child and Adolescent Psychologist

Educational and Developmental Intervention Services

United States Naval Medicine, Readiness, and Training Command

Naples, Italy



Alan R. Scheuermann, Ph.D.



- Licensed Clinical Child, Adolescent and Family Psychologist (OR, GA, and IN)
- 25+ Years experience w/ Military Families Agencies/Positions
 - U.S. Army MEDCOM (10 yrs)
 - U.S. Navy BUMED (6.5 yrs)
 - DoDEA (7 years)
 - ASACS (2 years)
- Programs
 - School-Based BH (Bavaria)
 - Child and Family BH Service (Bavaria)
 - Educational and Developmental Intervention Services (Naples and Bavaria)
 - Behavioral Health Department (Guam)
 - School Psychology (Heidelberg/Ft. Campbell)
 - mTBI Program (Bavaria)
 - Adolescent Substance Abuse Counseling (Heidelberg)



Disclosures



- Dr. Alan Scheuermann has no relevant financial or non-financial relationships to disclose relating to the content of this activity.
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Learning Objectives



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

1. Evaluate the unique challenges faced by military families with children who have special needs, particularly in the areas of relocation, deployment, and access to care.
2. Explain the barriers and facilitators to care for military and Veteran families, including systemic issues and stigma.
3. Explore innovative solutions and resources available to support military families with special needs children, such as telehealth, peer support programs, and the efforts of organizations like the Center for Deployment Psychology.



Military in Europe Context



USAREUR MISSION

U.S. Army Europe and Africa provides ready, combat-credible land forces to deter, and, if necessary, defeat aggression from any potential adversary in Europe and Africa. (<https://www.europeafrica.army.mil/Mission-History/>)





European Theater Context



NAVEUR MISSION

U.S. Navy Europe Conducts the full range of maritime operations and theater security cooperation in concert with coalition, joint, interagency and other partners in order to advance security and stability in Europe and Africa.

(<https://www.c6f.navy.mil/About-Us/Welcome-Aboard/>)





DHA Mission



DHA Mission

The Defense Health Agency supports our Nation by improving health and building readiness -- making extraordinary experiences ordinary and exceptional outcomes routine.

(<https://www.dha.mil/About-DHA>)



Parenting = Readiness



5 Pillars of Individual Military Readiness

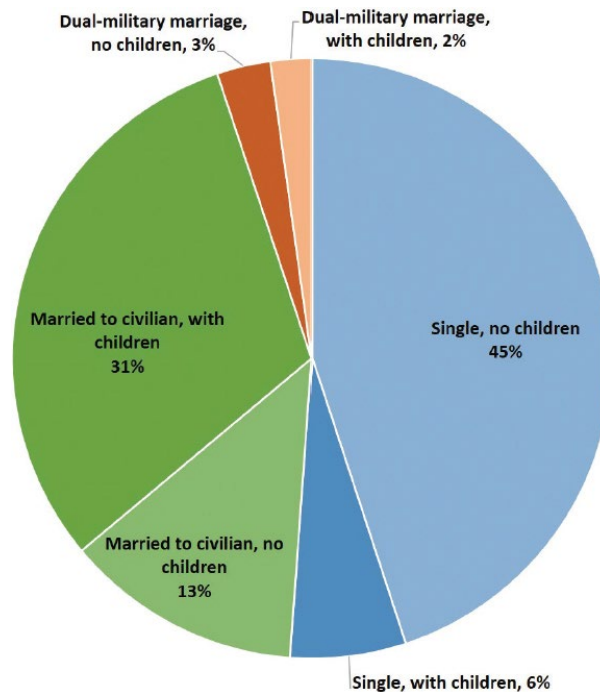




Military Parent Status



Military Parent Status





CFBH: DHA Approach



DHA-AI 6490.1

Behavioral Health System of Care

Published on 22FEB2023

“The DHA recognizes that the well-being of military ADSMs and family members (FM) is critical to force readiness and optimizing mission success.” (pg.14)



Parents as Mediators in the Pediatric Office

Parents play central role in Pediatric Medicine

“the pt is the parent”

- 50% to 65% of all pediatric outpt visits involve a behavioral health concern. (Trafails, et al, 2021; Lancaster, et al. 2019).
- Evidence suggests this is increasing (HHS, 2022).
 - Visits for Depression increased by 27%
 - Visits for Anxiety increased by 29%
- Growing need and evidence for inclusion of parenting interventions in primary care (Smith, et al, 2020; HHS, 2022).
 - Loss of Referrals from PCM to BH



What to do?



- More is recommended, but how to proceed?
- Smith, et. al. (2020) reviewed Parenting interventions in Primary Care.
 - Many Evidenced Based parenting interventions are available
 - >30 reviewed for various age groups and symptom focus
- Problems – how to become an expert in which to choose
 - Availability overseas
 - Time available in the office is limited
 - How do you choose with so many
 - Practicality
 - Parenting classes poorly attended on base (ACS/FFSC)



Role of Pediatrician



- What can you do?
- Role of Pediatrician in Behavioral and Mental Health
 - American Academy of Pediatrics (2022)
 - Collaboration
 - Community Health Resource
 - Education and Consultation
 - Advocacy



Pediatrician as Trusted Source



COMMUNITY HEALTH RESOURCE AND EDUCATION

Smith, et. al. (2020) suggests that Pediatricians play a substantial role in setting the stage for successful parenting interventions.

- Evidence suggests that parents value parenting advice in the Primary Care setting – Riley, et.al. (2019) and Sholer, et. al. (2012)
- Evidence suggests that parent engagement is higher when offered in the primary care setting– Wood-Jaeger, et.al. (2020).
 - As compared to community or specialty clinics



Provider/Pt ALLIANCE



Provider Parent/pt relationship is critical

Your credibility 'sells' the parent on the intervention

- Parents are more satisfied with care when Provider/Pt relationship is rated as high. (Wissow, et. al. 2010)
- Pt's are more likely to follow recommendations when Provider/Pt relationship is rated as high (by the pt) (Martin, et.al.2005)
- 'Therapeutic Alliance' is a core aspect of 'patient centered care' and can facilitate better outcomes. (Boeckxstaens, et.al. 2020)
 - Using the Working Alliance Inventory for General Practitioners (WAI-GP)

How do you know when you have a good Provider/Pt Alliance?



Possible Parenting Interventions

Many Parenting Interventions to choose from

- Many popular approaches used in military communities
 - Magic 1-2-3
 - Love and Logic
 - Scream Free Parenting
- Many others are designated as Evidenced Based Parenting Interventions
 - 23 listed under United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2024).
 - Many additional ones are identified in the research (Smith, et.al. (2020).
 - ADAPT –solely focused on military parents Gewirtz, et.al. (2018).
 - Positive Parenting Program – Triple P (U. Of Queensland)
 - Modular CBT and Match-ADTC – (Delieden/Weisz/Cheron)



Common Themes

Combination of Behavioral Interventions, Social Emotional Support, Attachment, and Enrichment

- Behavioral Skills for parents – Specific Parent skills re: managing behaviors – (Match-ADTC, Triple P)
- Social Interaction Learning – (ADAPT, Triple P, PCIT)
- Creating Enriching environments for children (Triple-P, PCIT)
- Good, positive, warm relationships with your children (ADAPT, Triple-P, PCIT)
- All are similar with similar foundations and elements.
- Most involve 10+ Sessions.
- If you pick one to refer to – I'd recommend ADAPT (easily found online: <https://www.adaptparenting.org/>).



Common Elements of EBP Parenting Strategy

- Elements include –
 - Positive Framework to encourage positive behavior
 - Positive relationship with children
 - Enrichment of child's life and experiences
 - Discipline through logical consequences (with specific behavioral techniques as well)
 - Consistency of approach over time and among parents
 - Monitoring for consistency and progress over time
 - Flexible, problem-solving approach (authoritative rather than authoritarian)
 - Multiple 'micro-skills' to enhance effectiveness (ex. Targeted praise, planned ignoring of neg. beh, effective instruction; patterns of speech decreasing conflict/more collaborative or facilitative)



Barriers to Acceptance



How does that work for a Military Parent?

What are the barriers?



Barriers



- Mothers are more likely to seek help than Fathers (Sawrikar, et.al., 2024)
 - Impact - Imbalanced interventions
- Mental Health Stigma is still present within the military culture, although changing (Kaplan, 2019).
 - Impact – No intervention beyond the pediatric office
- Skepticism about effectiveness of treatment also impacts help-seeking (Bobwoodrufffoundation.org, 2023).
 - Impact - No intervention
- Others?



Good News

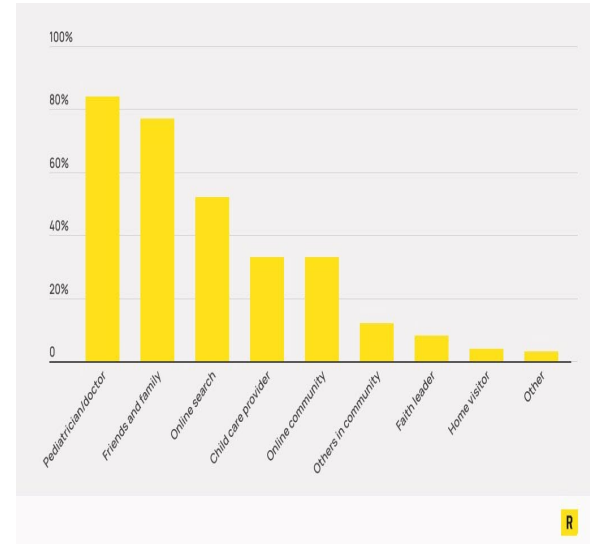


How you can increase Military Parent Engagement

Your credibility is significant - 88% of parents trust their child's pediatrician (rapidsurveyproject, 2023).

Your status as military member also can assist in convincing parents to seek assistance (>Father involvement)
SO....How do you sell it?

Use the common military language to show how interventions 'fit' for them.





Military Cultural Competence Framework for Parenting



USE YOUR MILITARY CULTURE TO EMPHASIZE
THEIR 'MISSION' AS PARENTS

How might these terms relate to the 'mission' of parenting?

Organizational Values = Family Values (Foundational Values)

Mission = Overall Purpose as Parents (Outcome as Parents)

Strategic Goals = Specific Goal (Qualities/skills to Develop in Children) Strategy = Approach to Teach/Influence Children

Rules of Engagement = Guidelines or Standards of Behavior (for all in family)

Tactics = Specific Parenting Actions/Intervention

Leads to -

Mission Accomplishment = Ongoing Sustained Review (outcomes)



Field Guide To Military Parenting



SIX STEPS TO MILITARY PARENTING

1. Establish your Organizational Values
2. Clarify your Parenting “mission” (Strategic Goals)
3. Establish Parental Rules of Engagement
4. Develop Tactical Goals
5. Outline Tactical Approach within Organization Doctrine
6. Implement with Ongoing Review



Step 1: Organizational Values



Values

What are your branch's organizational values?

Step one: clarify parents' family values to ensure that they can focus clearly on what is important to them. Identify their overall set of values and settle on a basic set.

Challenges?

Parents assume they 'share' the same values. There are implicit differences in all dyads.



Step 2: Parenting Mission

Step Two: Parents outline the 'specific qualities' they wish to develop in their child by age 18.

- Strategic Goal is based on a clear outline of an outcome.
- Outcome should be achievable (not unrealistic).
- Research suggests outcomes should focus on 'patterns of behavior', not specific identities or activities.
 - Gardener Parenting NOT Carpenter Parenting



Step 3: Standards of Behavior



Step 3: Establish clear Rules of Engagement

- Positively stated
- Relate directly to values (and mission)
- Guide behavior for ALL in the family (adults and kids)
- Allows for reminders and self-monitoring
- Helps guide parental decision-making to be consistent with overall values and outlined ROE's



Step 4: Develop Individual Tactical Goals

Step 4: Identify individual tactical goals with each child

- Focused on the overall mission, values, standards of behavior
- Clarify this as a 'skill' to be 'coached' rather than 'disciplined'
- Ensure goals are developmentally appropriate



Step 5: Tactical Doctrine



Step 5: Establish Tactical Doctrine

- The 'tactics' of parenting
- Need to be effective (Evidenced based – mission/outcome-oriented/ micro-skills in Parenting programs, behavioral intervention techniques, etc)
- Need to align with Values and Organizational Standards/Rules of Engagement (risk of hypocrisy/undermining parental authority).
- Must respect the individual, no matter what the age



Step 6: Implement with Monitoring

Step 6: Implement the Overall Plan with Regular Checks

- Maintain overall focus on Values/Standards of Behavior
- Review as a family the progress and status (hot wash/AAR)
- Allow for leadership meetings to address conflicts (Value vs. Mission vs. tactical conflict)
- Make changes as necessary to tactics or strategy over time.



Then what?



Pediatrician Role

Collaboration – Collaborate with parents regarding

1. Need for change with children
2. Their power as parents
3. Their ability to be effective in their mission.
4. The importance of Military Strategic Approach/Field Manual to their mission
 - different than applying Military Tactics to parenting (Ex. PT as consequence)

Community Health Resource – Refer parents to

1. Local BH Services in MTF (School Based BH/CAFBHS/FFSC, etc).
2. ADAPT – online parenting program (the one focused on Military Parenting)
3. Military Onesource

You have set them up for success with aligning their efforts with a Mission.



Key Takeaways



- Pediatricians are the front line of behavioral and mental health concerns for parents
- Pediatrician play a critical role in getting parents to adopt positive parenting approaches
- Evidenced based parenting practices have direct impact on improved child and family functioning
- Emphasizing the provider-pt relationship is a key factor in recommendation adoption
- Using Military Cultural framework can enhance a pediatrician's effectiveness in encouraging parents to adopt positive parenting approaches



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Questions and Discussion



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2. On the main event page, select the “Get Started” tab (located in the menu below the event title on desktop and at the bottom of the page on mobile devices). Note: This tab will not appear unless you are registered and logged in to your account.
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