



Healthy Choices as Easy as 2-1-5

Students at Yokota West Elementary are learning how to improve their health and fitness through a program developed by a DoDEA school nurse, Lily Bagtas. Operation 2-1-5 is a two hour weekly club held after school. The program name emphasizes the key goals of Operation 2-1-5: reducing screen time (time spent in front of computer or television) to no more than two hours per day, encouraging at least one hour of physical activity each day, and aiming for five servings of fruits and vegetables per day.



The program lasts ten weeks and uses biometrics (pacer tests, upper body/abdominal strength, and flexibility testing) to measure its effectiveness. Ms. Bagtas sustains the energy of the program by enlisting a multi-disciplinary team of volunteers from throughout the community to work with the children. School psychologist, Carol Ryan, and counselor, Sebastian Laroche, teach decision-making and stress-reduction units. Senior Airman Treshawna Gwendo and Staff Sergeant (SSgt) Julien Martinez, diet therapists from Health & Wellness Center, along with Ronda Saenz, a dietitian from Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Overseas, offer segments about healthy food choices. SSgt Evelyn Jackson and SSgt Christina Tovar, fitness instructors from Yokota Air Base, get kids moving with Zumba dancing, kickboxing, mini circuit workshops, and a “boot camp.” Meanwhile, Air Force pediatrician, Dr. Tyson Brown provides clinical support to the staff and participants of Operation 2-1-5. “It’s definitely a team effort,” said Ms. Bagtas.

Ms. Bagtas encourages parents to attend the program. She says that since parents are the ones shopping and cooking for their children, having them participate in the program makes it more likely that the family will benefit. For example, one mom initially resisted the program for fear it would increase her commissary expenses. After taking part in a hands-on workshop devoted to making healthy snacks, the mom overhauled her shopping list.

The program is open to all students who want to enjoy a healthy lifestyle. Ms. Bagtas even offers a parallel program for teachers and staff eager to get healthy. Principal Lee Kirsch actively supports both programs. DoDEA administrators who would like to bring Operation 2-1-5 to their schools can contact safeschools@csc.com for a copy of Ms. Bagtas’ program materials. ■

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Deployment Stress Busters: Maintaining Emotional Wellness During the Deployment Journey

Part Two in this “Stress Busters” series discusses tips that administrators can share with families to help them manage the emotional stress of deployment. Imagine if other families who have endured repeated deployments could make a map of where the “emotional pot holes” are located to help others avoid them. They have! The tactics described below can help families discover how to convert the sacrifice of temporary deployments into life lessons that will strengthen their relationship and build resiliency to see them through other tough times in the years ahead.



Watch for pot holes. Recognize the predictable emotional traps that have caught others. For example, the Marine Corps warns couples to expect an argument in the weeks leading up to deployment, as the service member spends greater amounts of time with their unit preparing to deploy. Talking through the expected stress in advance, and recognizing that these incidents are normal, can help couples keep inevitable tensions in perspective. Myriad resources, including Army Family Programs, Fleet Support Center, and Families Overcoming Under Stress (FOCUS), offer workshops describing the types of emotional highs and lows associated with the deployment cycle.

Carpool. Remember that individuals experiencing the deployment cycle are not alone. Literally millions of other military dependents have conquered similar emotional challenges and emerged from the experience stronger and more adaptable to life’s adversity.

Ask Directions. With guidance on how to think positively about the experience, students can turn thoughts such as “Why did my mom have to go away?” into an action plan for using this opportunity to build resilience. Learning how life rewards those who think positively and exercise mental discipline will see students through tough times in their future relationships.

Use Technology Wisely. Just as people should not send text messages while driving, families who make careful use of technology avoid unnecessary “stress triggers.” Schedule calls, including video calls, at regular intervals that respect the competing demands on the family and ensure the soldier does not wait in line to phone home to an “empty computer.” Resist the urge to “vent” about the difficulties of deployment. While it is important to acknowledge each individual’s feelings, it is equally important to connect with loved ones in a way that is emotionally satisfying and offers opportunities for mutual comfort.

Celebrate Success. Recognize the heroism and value of sacrifice of both the deployed military personnel and the family. As LTC Larry Ingraham from the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research observed in his Open Letter to Commanders, “The real reason families are important, however, is that healthy families keep soldiers alive on the battlefield” (Army Leaders’ Desk Reference, www.carlisle.army.mil/usawc/dclm/family/Leaders_Reference.pdf). LTC Ingraham observed that soldiers who go into battle free of distractions regarding personal or family matters have better chances of demonstrating commitment and expert judgment in combat. They also have greater odds of recovery if they encounter psychological wounds in battle. ■

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Simplifying Shelter-in-Place Table Top Exercises

Often schools do not have an opportunity to practice shelter-in-place procedures as often as they rehearse for lockdown or evacuation. If it is difficult to find time to involve the entire school in a shelter-in-place drill, consider conducting a table top exercise to ensure the Crisis Management Team is ready and able to execute the required actions. The following sequence of actions can simplify planning.

- 1) **Ask for Help.** Several resources are available within DoDEA including the security professionals at the district or area office (i.e., the Area/District Safety and Security Officer).
- 2) **Designate a Planning Team.** One or two members of the Crisis Management Team can save time for others by preparing the materials and facilitating the exercise.
- 3) **Clarify Objectives.** Clearly articulate the objectives of the exercise. This helps participants understand what they need to achieve and how the team will benefit. An example could state: “This table top will present a scenario requiring a protective action to test our awareness of when shelter-in-place is required and how well the crisis management team can coordinate and adapt our response as conditions change.”
- 4) **Designate Observers.** Decide in advance who will take notes and provide feedback to the group at the conclusion of the exercise. That person should be free to observe rather than participate actively in the scenario. An easy way to accomplish this is to pretend that the person who planned the exercise was absent from school that day and other team members had to cover his or her duties.
- 5) **Conduct the Exercise.** With proper planning, conducting the actual exercise need not usurp much of the team members’ time. The key actions to observe include:
 - a. Was the announcement communicated effectively to all members of the school community? (For example, did the principal state that she would make an announcement on the PA system and notify the superintendent and emergency responders?)
 - b. Students and staff moved inside the school and closed all exterior windows and doors.
 - c. The designated individual (or substitute) turned off the Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) system. For an exercise insert, consider pretending that the lead custodian is sick and someone in the school who is “cross-trained” on his duties needs to turn off the switch.
 - d. Classes moved to the designated shelter-in-place location or sheltered in their classrooms as appropriate.
 - e. Classroom teachers reported attendance to the principal/designee so the school can account for all personnel.
- 6) **Review Results.** Ask designated observers to provide verbal comments and write up the results so that the Crisis Management Team can harvest the lessons and incorporate improvements into the crisis management plan for continuous improvement.



Some crisis management team members could take a “field trip to the utility room” so the custodian can demonstrate how to turn off the HVAC system. Consider marking the critical switches with colorful stickers so they are easy to find.

A table top exercise can enhance coordination and awareness among key members of the school staff so that they know what actions need to be accomplished and feel confident they can implement those actions. For a shelter-in-place scenario that can be tailored to a specific school, contact safeschools@csc.com. ■

Deployment Support Services Now Only a Click Away

Numerous resources, both governmental and civilian, exist to support the needs of families of deployed soldiers. Finding programs that fit the requirements of a particular situation, however, can be time-consuming. Often when an individual needs support, or when emotions are running high, he or she is not able to sift through the vast number of programs available.

Until recently there has not been a simple way of comparing all of the DoD support programs side by side. Fortunately, the Deployment Health Clinic Center now offers an online gateway, including active links, to the entire spectrum of family support programs offered by DoD. The following is a partial list of the types of programs currently available and their relative departmental or branch affiliations within the DoD.

The Office of Military Community and Family Policy supports community quality of life programs worldwide. Programs include:

- ◆ Military Family Research Institute
- ◆ Military HOMEFRONT
- ◆ MilitaryOneSource
- ◆ Military Teens on the Move

The Fleet and Family Support Center, which is part of Navy Installations Command, provides programs and services to support Navy readiness. In addition to a newsletter, podcast, and free 24/7 global hotline (800-342-9647), deployment related programs administered under the Fleet and Family Support Center include:

- ◆ Individual Augmentees (IA)
- ◆ Just for Teens
- ◆ Just for Navy Kids!
- ◆ Lifelines Services Network
- ◆ National Military Family Association
- ◆ Online Spouse and Support Groups

Army Family Programs, also known as Army Well-Being, focus on meeting the needs of Soldiers, Department of the Army civilians, veterans, retirees, and families. A sample of these programs includes:

- ◆ Army Community Service
- ◆ Army Emergency Relief
- ◆ Army Family Liaison Office
- ◆ Army One Source
- ◆ DOD DeploymentLINK
- ◆ National Guard and Reserve Family Readiness Programs
- ◆ Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors

Air Force Crossroads is a comprehensive program dedicated to the needs of Air Force families separated by deployment, remote assignment, or TDY. Videos, telephone, online support, educational materials, and training seminars are available to ensure Air Force families receive the support they need at all phases of the deployment cycle.

Focus Project (Families OverComing Under Stress) is a resiliency-training program for military families, regardless of branch, to help them meet the challenges of combat operational stress during wartime. FOCUS staff assists families in understanding how combat operational stress affects them and the service family member, how to manage stress, and how to strengthen their family. FOCUS currently serves military families at nine sites around the world.

It may be helpful for family members to familiarize themselves with the wealth of available resources before a need arises. In so doing, when challenges related to deployment do occur, the family member is better equipped to seek the appropriate types of support. Each of the above programs can be accessed via the DoD Deployment Health Clinic Center Web site at www.pdhealth.mil/smfss_fam.asp#FP. ■

Practicing OPSEC Online

In a recent memorandum, DoDEA Director Shirley Miles addressed how Operational Security (OPSEC) relates to the mission of DoDEA. Dr. Miles described how DoDEA is affected by the recent evolution of DoD policy on the use of internet-based communication technologies, such as social networking services. The memorandum, dated March 2, 2010, concluded with a challenge from Dr. Miles to DoDEA personnel to recommit to protecting critical information. “It is appropriate to remember that everyone has a responsibility to protect themselves online,” wrote Dr. Miles. “DoD personnel and their families should take steps that ensure operational security and safeguard personally identifiable information at home and work.”

As technology becomes more pervasive in our lives, exercising personal judgment before pressing “send” becomes more important. As hard as it might be to believe, sometimes there are bad guys (and bad gals) who are surfing the Internet for clues they can use to hurt U.S. personnel.

Fortunately, the OPSEC process mentioned by Dr. Miles protects critical information that is not classified and may not seem sensitive, yet could be useful to an adversary. According to the Interagency OPSEC Support Staff (IOSS), OPSEC protects information that can be obtained from simple observation of routine patterns of behavior. So, if the adversary is looking for news about military personnel deploying or coming home, refraining from sharing personal or critical information can save the lives of soldiers, sailors, marines, and airmen overseas.

This does not mean that educators and military families need to become experts in security. OPSEC and personally identifiable information (PII) are not complex military-related terms. In fact, by adopting a few key best practices, anyone can participate in keeping information secure. Although social networking tools encourage the sharing of information, not every detail needs to be posted online. As IOSS notes on their “OPSEC and Social Networking Sites” checklist, “While social networking services can be useful and fun, they can provide adversaries, such as terrorists, spies, and criminals, with critical information needed to harm you or disrupt your mission.”

In March 2010, for example, the Israeli military called off a planned raid to nab terrorists near Ramallah in the West Bank because a soldier posted critical information about the operation online. According to multiple news reports, the soldier left a status update on his Facebook profile telling friends his military unit was preparing to go to a specific village. Such a seemingly innocuous action posed a major security breach and had the potential to risk many lives. Practicing OPSEC will help individuals protect critical information.

The IOSS checklist can help DoDEA employees recognize and safeguard personal or critical information. Computer users can consider the following best practices:

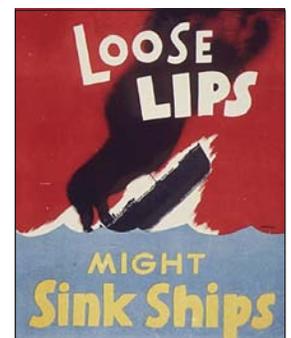
- ✓ Keep sensitive, work-related information off of personal profiles.
- ✓ Keep plans, schedules, and location data private.
- ✓ Protect the names and information of coworkers, friends, and family.
- ✓ Tell friends to be careful when posting family photos and information.

The responsibility to protect information begins with the individual. In an evolving electronic world, it is more important than ever for the individual to exercise judgment before posting information on line. The IOSS safety checklist is available at www.ioass.gov/sns_safety_check.pdf. ■

DoDEA OPSEC Resources

The following resources are available on the DoDEA Intranet in the Personnel Security section (under Safety & Security):

- ▶ *DoDEA OPSEC Employee Guide*
- ▶ *DoDEA OPSEC & Internet Security*
- ▶ *DoDEA OPSEC Annual Refresher Training*



FEMA Freebies for “Disaster Action Kids”

Educators know that one way to help students remember a lesson is to make it fun for the student. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is keeping that notion in mind as they develop materials that use interactive learning to teach kids disaster preparedness. The *Safe Schools Newsletter* has reported in the past on the numerous online resources available to children (e.g., games, coloring pages, cartoon videos) available for children to encourage them to engage with the topic of preparedness and personal safety. FEMA, however, regularly updates available materials as new products become available. Parents and educators may want to check the Web site from time to time to stay abreast of resources related to disaster preparedness for children.



The Disaster Action Kids program, FEMA’s certification program for children, is constantly evolving. The program creates an incentive for children to learn about preparedness by allowing them to earn points toward a “badge.” Children complete a checklist of engaging tasks, such as a family scavenger hunt which serves

the double purpose of getting the family involved in preparing the home for a potential crisis. They also research weather patterns and conduct mini research projects on natural disasters in history. Upon completion of the checklist they become certified “Disaster Action Kids.” With parents’ permission they can receive optional e-mail updates about preparedness and weather. The program and its corresponding materials are available at no cost to children and their families.

For children who prefer not to take part in the Disaster Action Kids program, FEMA offers a variety of “stand alone” materials related to preparedness. Some, such as “Suggestions for Adults: Talking and Thinking with Children About Terrorist Attacks,” prepared by the Department of Education are designed as tools for adults to use in working directly with children. Others, such as story books and activity booklets, are useful for the children themselves. Parents may want to have these items on hand to keep children busy during the summer travel season. Following are a few of FEMA’s newest activity kits, all of which are available through the Web site:

- ▶ *Disaster Preparedness Activity Book (Ages 4-7)*
- ▶ *Disaster Preparedness Activity Book (Ages 8-11)*
- ▶ *Mary & Jett’s Activity Book*
- ▶ *Preparing for Disaster*
- ▶ *Door Knob Hanger: Fire Safety*



On the FEMA for Kids Web page, a Hermit crab mascot explains why it is important to be ready for any kind of natural disaster.

For children or educators with a special interest in weather, both as a natural phenomenon and as it relates to preparedness, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s (NOAA) National Weather Service offers some noteworthy children’s materials. These include a weather booklet (with five sections covering tornadoes, lightning, floods, winter storms, and hurricanes) and also an Atlantic Hurricane Tracking Map. Both of these publications can be requested by sending an e-mail to NOAA-OUTREACH@noaa.gov. The FEMA materials are available through www.fema.gov/kids. ■