

Cultivating Gratitude for Mental Wellness

November 2024 FAP/chat
Family Advocacy Program

As we move into November and the season of Thanksgiving, the Family Advocacy Program (FAP) want to reflect on the transformative power of gratitude and its impact on mental wellness. In a year that has challenged each of us in unique ways, the practice of gratitude can serve as a grounding tool, fostering resilience and enhancing overall well-being.

Why Gratitude Matters for Mental Wellness?

Gratitude is more than a momentary sense of appreciation; it's an intentional practice that nurtures a positive mindset. Research shows that regular gratitude can reduce stress, enhance mood, and even improve physical health. By shifting our attention to the positives—even small moments of joy or connection—gratitude empowers us to find balance and resilience, especially during challenging times.

Benefits of Practicing Gratitude:

Reduces Stress and Anxiety. Focusing on things we're thankful for can lower stress hormones like cortisol, helping us to manage feelings of worry or overwhelm. Gratitude improves relationships. Expressing gratitude to those around us—family, friends, or colleagues—strengthens our relationships and builds a sense of connection, creating a supportive community around us.

Gratitude boosts our overall mental health. Gratitude has been shown to increase happiness, reduce depressive symptoms, and foster a sense of contentment and fulfillment.

Find moments of gratitude in daily life. In our busy and demanding roles, it can be hard to pause and reflect on what we're grateful for. Here are a few ways to integrate gratitude into your daily routine:

- **Gratitude Journaling:** Take a few minutes each day to jot down three things you're thankful for. These can be simple—like a moment of calm or a kind word from a friend. Over time, this practice can help reframe your mindset toward positivity.
- **Acknowledging Others:** Expressing appreciation to the people around you can have a profound impact. A quick “thank you” or acknowledgment can create a more positive, collaborative environment at work and at home.
- **Mindful Gratitude with Family:** Whether it's at dinner or during family time, encourage everyone to share something they're grateful for. This practice not only fosters gratitude but also brings families closer together.

Gratitude in the Face of Challenges

Military and civilian life bring unique pressures—from deployments and relocations to balancing work and family. During difficult times, gratitude can serve as a valuable anchor. Focusing on what we do have—a strong family bond, the support of friends, a fulfilling job—helps us to build resilience and navigate through challenges with a more positive perspective.

Supporting Mental Wellness with Gratitude Resources

As we reflect on gratitude, it's also essential to recognize that wellness extends beyond a single practice. Here at FAP, we offer a range of resources to support you and your family's well-being:

1. **Family Advocacy Program (FAP):** Provides confidential counseling, support groups, and resources for military families dealing with stress or family challenges. FAP is here to help you navigate difficult times with compassion and practical tools.
2. **Employee Assistance Program (EAP):** EAP services are available to civilian employees, offering short-term counseling, stress management assistance, and mental health resources to support you in both personal and work challenges.
3. **Military OneSource:** Offers 24/7 support for military members and families, including counseling, financial guidance, and relocation support.
4. **Chaplains and Community Services:** Chaplains provide confidential support and spiritual guidance for those seeking comfort, especially during difficult moments.
5. **Crisis Resources:** If you or a loved one is in immediate need, remember that there are hotlines available around the clock.
6. **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:** 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
7. **Veterans Crisis Line:** 1-800-273-8255, Press 1
8. **Domestic Violence Hotline:** 1-800-799-SAFE (7233)

Creating a Grateful Community. The Family Advocacy Program would like to take a moment to express our own gratitude for each of you—our military personnel, civilian employees, and the families who support you. Your strength, resilience, and commitment to our community are deeply valued and appreciated.

This November, let's make a commitment to gratitude, prioritizing our mental health, and supporting one another. Together, we can create an environment where gratitude and mental wellness flourish. As a reminder, assistance is available. Reach out to our Employee Assistance Program at 1-866-580-9046, Military Oncesource, or contact the **Family Advocacy Program at 717-770-7066** for more information.