

# North Florida Military Family Peer Guide: A Tool to Assist Military Children and Families



Custom Educational Programs & Materials

**Scott Sevin, Director**

**N. FL Military Peer Support Initiative**

**Email: [scott@7-dippity.com](mailto:scott@7-dippity.com)**

**Tel: 305-535-0914**

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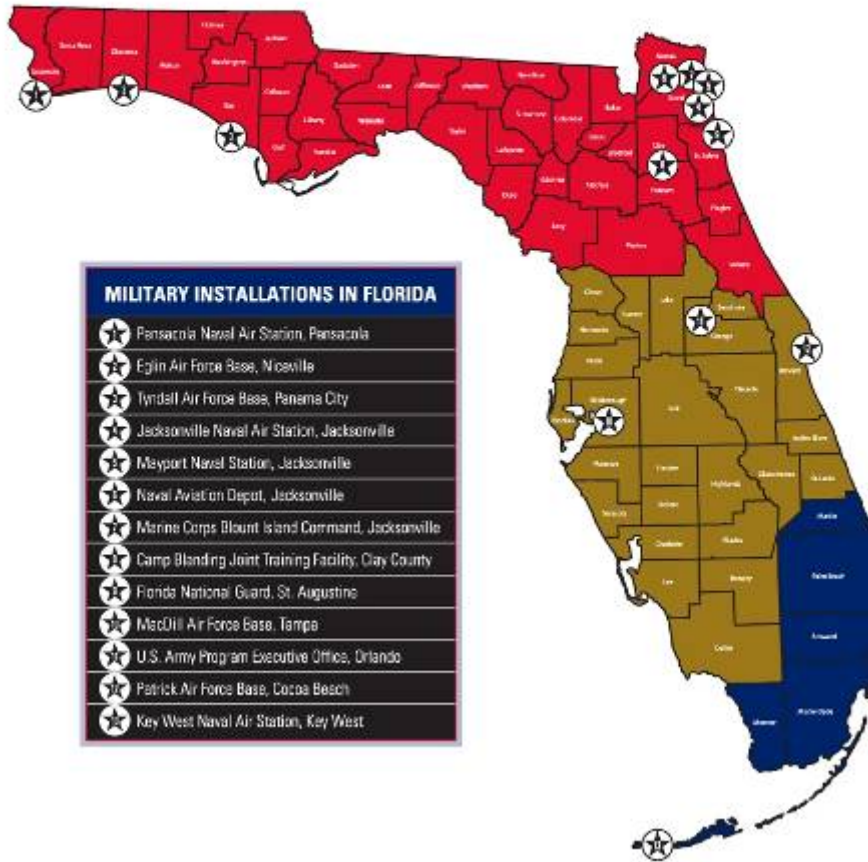
Helping Floridians impacted by deployment to Afghanistan & Iraq

Three community foundations are collaborating to provide access to The FLORIDA BRAIVE Fund throughout the state. The foundations and their respective regions are:

**The Community Foundation in Jacksonville – North Region**

**Gulf Coast Community Foundation of Venice – Central Region**

**Dade Community Foundation – South Region**



#### MILITARY INSTALLATIONS IN FLORIDA

- ★ Pensacola Naval Air Station, Pensacola
- ★ Eglin Air Force Base, Niceville
- ★ Tyndall Air Force Base, Panama City
- ★ Jacksonville Naval Air Station, Jacksonville
- ★ Mayport Naval Station, Jacksonville
- ★ Naval Aviation Depot, Jacksonville
- ★ Marine Corps Blount Island Command, Jacksonville
- ★ Camp Blanding Joint Training Facility, Clay County
- ★ Florida National Guard, St. Augustine
- ★ MacDill Air Force Base, Tampa
- ★ U.S. Army Program Executive Office, Orlando
- ★ Patrick Air Force Base, Cocoa Beach
- ★ Key West Naval Air Station, Key West



**\$15 million was provided over 2 years to create programs in Florida to support military personnel, veterans and families involved in Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and/or Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF).**

# North Florida Military Peer Support Initiative

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**The North Florida Military Peer Support Initiative is a community capacity-building project. Goals include:**

- #1) Enhancing mental health services to veterans and military families.
- #2) Supporting the reintegration of OEF/OIF veterans.
- #3) Helping communities better understand and serve the long-term needs of local military populations.

# North FL BrAive Counties

Project covers 37 counties in N. FL.

## REGION 1

Escambia  
Santa Rosa  
Okaloosa  
Walton

## REGION 2:

Holmes  
Washington  
Jackson  
Calhoun  
Bay  
Gulf

## REGION 3:

Gadsden  
Liberty  
Leon  
Wakulla  
Franklin  
Jefferson

## REGION 4:

Madison  
Taylor  
Hamilton  
Suwanee  
Lafayette  
Dixie  
Columbia

## REGION 5:

Gilchrist  
Union  
Bradford  
Alachua  
Marion

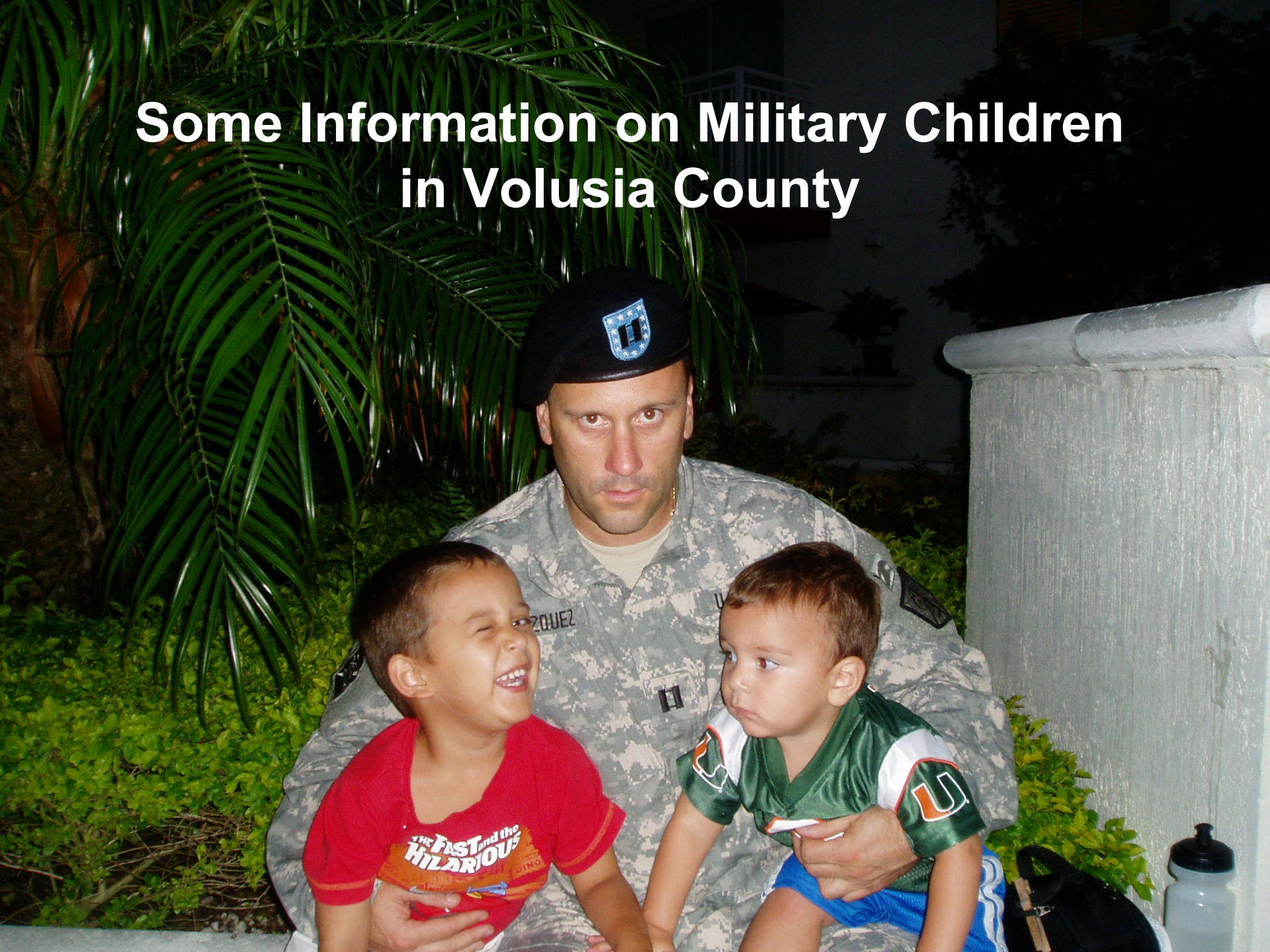
## REGION 6:

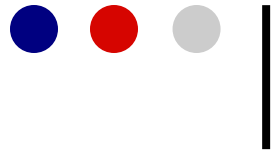
Baker  
Nassau  
Duval  
Clay  
St. Johns  
Putnam  
Flagler  
Volusia



Funding for the **Initiative** has been provided by the Community Foundation in Jacksonville as part of the **Florida BrAive Fund**.

# Some Information on Military Children in Volusia County

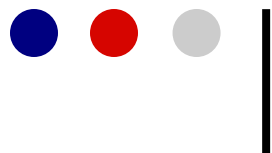




# Top 20 Florida Counties By Military Child Population

Source: U.S. Department of Defense;  
August 2010 statistics

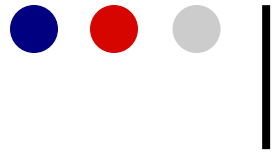
County	Rank	# of Military Children
<b>Duval</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>15,024</b>
Okaloosa	2	9,895
Hillsborough	3	9,522
Escambia	4	5,900
Santa Rosa	5	5,830
<b>Clay</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5,815</b>
Bay	7	4,292
<b>Miami-Dade</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4,121</b>
<b>Brevard</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3,896</b>
Broward	10	3,571
<b>Orange</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>2,774</b>
Pinellas	12	2,421
Pasco	13	1,670
<b>St. Johns</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>1,485</b>
Polk	15	1,454
Palm Beach	16	1,381
<b>Volusia</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>1,154</b>
<b>Seminole</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>1,137</b>
Monroe	19	1,049
Osceola	20	896
<b>Flagler</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>327</b>



# Breakdown of Military Children by Age for Top 20 Florida Counties

Source: U.S. Department of Defense;  
August 2010 statistics

County	Age 0-5yrs	Age 6-12yrs	Age 13-18yrs	Total Children
<b>Duval</b>	6,251	5,525	3,248	<b>15,024</b>
Okaloosa	<b>4,210</b>	<b>3,554</b>	<b>2,131</b>	9,895
Hillsborough	3,405	3,784	2,333	9,522
Escambia	2,538	2,169	1,193	5,900
Santa Rosa	2,322	2,205	1,303	5,830
<b>Clay</b>	<b>2,000</b>	<b>2,274</b>	<b>1,541</b>	<b>5,815</b>
Bay	1,747	1,569	976	4,292
<b>Miami-Dade</b>	1,633	1,541	947	<b>4,121</b>
<b>Brevard</b>	<b>1,443</b>	<b>1,436</b>	<b>1,017</b>	<b>3,896</b>
Broward	1,390	1,320	861	3,571
<b>Orange</b>	<b>981</b>	<b>1,057</b>	<b>736</b>	<b>2,774</b>
Pinellas	938	894	589	2,421
Pasco	558	630	482	1,670
<b>St. Johns</b>	483	551	451	<b>1,485</b>
Polk	489	546	419	1,454
Palm Beach	480	549	352	1,381
<b>Volusia</b>	395	434	325	<b>1,154</b>
<b>Seminole</b>	355	470	312	<b>1,137</b>
Monroe	502	376	171	1,049
Osceola	286	343	267	896
<b>Flagler</b>	116	118	93	<b>327</b>



# Top 10 Zip Codes with Military Children

## Volusia County

Source: U.S. Department of Defense;  
August 2009 statistics

Rank	Zip Code	# of Military Children
1	32725	168
2	32738	131
3	32763	85
4	32720	78
5	32174	71
6	32117	62
7	32168	55
8	32129	47
9	32127	46
10	32119	45

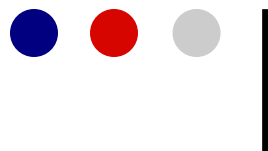
Welcome to  
**Balad Air Base, Iraq**



Home of the  
**332 Air Expeditionary Wing**  
*The Legend Continues...* →



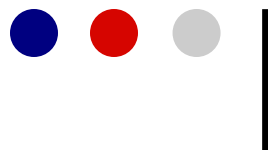
**Some Information on Veterans  
in Volusia County**



# State Rank of N. FL. BrAIVE Counties By Veteran Population

Source: U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs;  
2007 statistics

County	Total Vet Population (All Ages)	Statewide Rank by Total Vet Pop.	Vet Population (Ages 21– 44)	Statewide Rank by (Ages 21– 44)
Alachua	17,725	32	4,933	21
Baker	2,664	50	675	48
Bay	22,996	25	5,090	19
Bradford	3,459	47	1,071	43
Calhoun	1,178	65	369	56
Clay	26,692	21	7,131	16
Columbia	8,021	40	1,889	32
Dixie	2,021	55	334	57
Duval	94,679	5	29,139	1
Escambia	46,393	14	14,538	7
Flagler	11,208	35	1,369	38
Franklin	1,452	62	176	65
Gadsden	3,894	45	957	44
Gilchrist	1,661	60	237	62
Gulf	1,721	58	218	63
Hamilton	1,270	63	271	61
Holmes	2,317	54	416	54
Jackson	5,393	42	1,210	41
Jefferson	1,589	61	294	59
Lafayette	704	66	195	64



# State Rank of N. FL. BrAIVE Counties By Veteran Population

Cont'd

Source: U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs;  
2007 statistics

County	Total Vet Population (All Ages)	Statewide Rank by Total Vet Pop.	Vet Population (Ages 21– 44)	Statewide Rank by (Ages 21– 44)
Leon	18,954	28	5,087	20
Liberty	639	67	152	67
Madison	1,980	56	492	52
Marion	43,051	15	6,284	17
Nassau	8,661	38	1,473	36
Okaloosa	34,470	20	9,411	11
Putnam	8,459	39	1,251	40
Saint Johns	22,158	29	3,013	28
Santa Rosa	38,890	27	4,895	23
Suwannee	4,792	43	764	46
Taylor	2,454	53	478	53
Union	1,663	59	640	49
Volusia	59,509	10	8,940	12
Wakulla	3,003	49	623	50
Walton	6,534	41	1,166	42
Washington	2,537	51	682	47
TOTALS	514,791		115,863	

# OEF/OIF Veteran Stats for Volusia County:



- There are over **222,821** OEF/OIF veterans in the state of Florida.
- Volusia County has well over **4,000** OEF/OIF veterans. Actual numbers are most likely much higher, but not known.
- Volusia ranked **15<sup>th</sup>** in the state by number of OEF/OIF veterans in 2009.
- # of OEF/OIF/GWOT veterans expected to increase in Volusia County.

A satellite map of Volusia County, Florida, showing the coastline, major roads, and various land use patterns. The text is overlaid on the map.

# **Lessons Learned in Volusia County**

**As part of  
our needs  
assessment, we  
learned....**

# **Lessons Learned in Florida**

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**There were several topics of note that came up during the project:**



- Military child suicides.
- Unemployed veterans turning down jobs.
- Family members and the Battle-Mindset.

# **Lessons Learned in Volusia Cty.**

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- No bases = no central location for family support (families scattered throughout area, little connectivity or peer support).
- Most community-based providers lack cultural understanding to properly serve veterans and military families, particularly children.
- Volusia County not prepared to properly support mental health needs of local military populations (capacity; cultural competency; ineffective outreach).

# Volusia's Military Population

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- While military personnel and families from all service branches are present in the County, the following make up the majority of the local military population involved in current operations.
  1. Army Active Duty
  2. Army National Guard
  3. Army Reserve
  4. Navy Active Duty



# Lessons Learned in Florida Schools

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- Limited capacity of schools and after-school programs to properly serve military children (awareness of military children in classroom, limited resources, cultural competency).
- Many school districts need more facilitation on the Interstate Compact and Impact Aid.

**Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission**  
[www.mic3.net](http://www.mic3.net)

**American Association of School Administrators:**  
**Impact Aid**  
[www.aasa.org/content.aspx?id=9000](http://www.aasa.org/content.aspx?id=9000)

- Military children with special needs may need more support in Districts not serviced by an EFMP staff member.



# **Barriers To Identifying Guard/ Reserve Military Kids In Schools**

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**National Guard and Reserve families often do not identify themselves in schools because:**

- Many Guard and Reserve family members don't consider themselves military.
- OPSEC – told not to identify themselves.
- Service member discourages family from identifying.
- Families unaware of benefits to child and school system if they identify (e.g., extra support for the child; additional funding for schools).

# Barriers To Obtaining Support

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- **Largest barriers to obtaining mental health support for military family members in Volusia County include:**
  - Lack of knowledge of available resources
  - Time
  - Transportation/Convenience
  - Stigma
  - Cost
  - Distrust of civilian providers (cultural competency, lack of professional peers, lack of established track record)
  - Service member/veteran interference

**Some tools you  
can use to support  
military children  
and families**



# Military Family Peer Guide



## NORTH FLORIDA MILITARY FAMILY PEER GUIDE



# What Is A Peer Guide?

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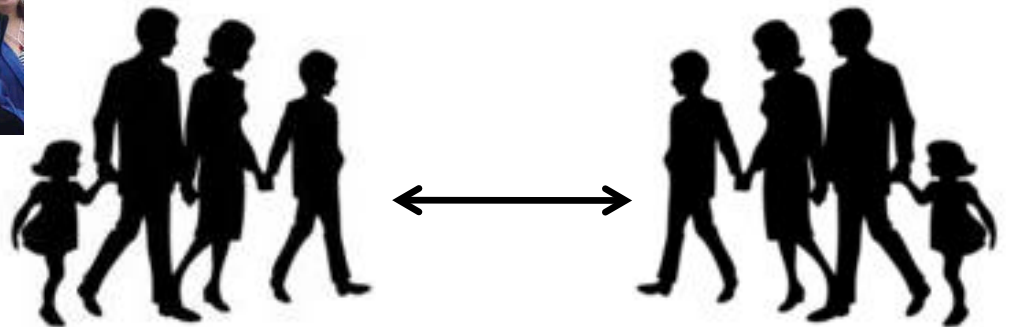
- Specialized, psycho-educational tool.
- Use in education/outreach.
- Powerful adjunct in clinical setting.
- Utilizes advice, insights and lessons learned from military families who have previously experienced deployment to help other families going through similar challenges.
- Interviews of military family members were conducted to gather information.
- Contains a Resource Guide of military and community-based providers.

# Who Are Peers?

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Parents, Siblings, Spouses,  
Significant Others, Children,  
Extended Family



# Interviews

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Interviews were conducted anonymously with volunteers from across North Florida.

Participants were representative of multiple demographics such as age, ethnicity, gender, location, service branch affiliation and rank.

Project partners helped in obtaining volunteers and providing a comfortable facility to conduct interviews.

# Peer Guide Layout

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**Chapters in the book mimic  
the deployment cycle.**

- **Military Families (ease into using the book)**
- **Pre-Deployment**
- **Deployment**
- **Homecoming and Reintegration**
- **Effects of Stress**
- **Seeking Assistance**
- **Resource Guide**

# Resource Section

**Resource Guide**  
contains providers  
serving various needs  
of vets and families  
(homeless, financial,  
mental health, etc).

**Begins with military  
resources followed by  
statewide resources  
then local resources.**

**All providers were vetted  
before being able to be  
listed in the peer guide.**



This section contains a list of providers in North Florida who can support OEF/OIF service members, veterans, and their families. Programs may or may not have changed since this information was collected in the fall of 2011. Please contact the providers directly for more information.

Photo courtesy of Florida National Guard

RESOURCE GUIDE

# Quotes

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**Quotes are  
color-coded:**

- **Quotes from  
Family Members  
are in blue.**
- **Quotes from Vets  
are in green.**

# Utilizing The Peer Guide



**NORTH FLORIDA  
MILITARY FAMILY PEER GUIDE**



# Distribution

- Develop a distribution plan for your Peer Guides. How will you reach families and veterans? What providers do you need to partner with? Are you reaching Guard and Reserve families?
- Peer Guides are not to be left on a take-away table. They are meant to be handed, in person, to a service or family member.



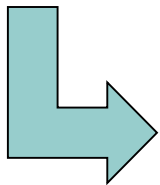
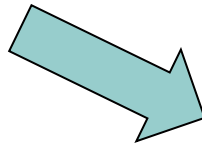
# Distribution



**NORTH FLORIDA  
MILITARY FAMILY PEER GUIDE**



**Military Families**



**Service  
Providers**



**Veterans/Service Members**

# Extended Family Members and Close Friends

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We encourage you to provide copies of the Peer Guide to all individuals who play an important role in a service member's life, including:

- **Parents and siblings:**
  - Even the vet's children (if old enough)
- **Extended Family Members:**
  - Grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins
- **Close Friends:**
  - Both military and civilian
- **Other:**
  - Employers, faith-based leaders, etc.



# Using Military Family Peer Guides with Schools

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**The Military Family Peer Guide can be a very powerful tool for schools – for educational and support purposes:**

- **When conducting cultural competency trainings for schools:**
  - Can be used as a focal point for competency trainings for school staff.
- **Utilized in a clinical capacity:**
  - Utilized by Student Support Services staff in clinical settings (e.g., when counseling or providing support to a military child or family).
- **Reaching military families:**
  - Schools can be an excellent avenue in getting copies of the Peer Guide into the hands of military families, especially Guard and Reserve - who can be difficult to access.
- **Who should get copies:**
  - Teachers, Administrators, School Counselors, Social Workers, Psychologists, Nurses, Front Office staff, After-School Program Leaders, School Board Members

# Parents Need To Inform Their Child's School Of A Deployment

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- *“Talk to the educators...A lot of times they don't understand that they have a military child in their classroom or that their parent may be deployed...We've taught our spouses forever about Operational Security, 'Don't tell people your spouse is deployed.' But in the school setting, they need to know that so they can accommodate that child or understand if the child is having behavior issues.”*



# Challenges Post-Deployment: Roles and Responsibilities

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**Part of reintegration involves returning to pre-deployment roles and responsibilities or developing new roles within the family.**

*"It was almost like a tug of war for power. 'Who is gonna be in charge? Who is gonna do what?' We did have a couple tiffs...I got used to certain chores when he was gone and he was like, 'You are doing this wrong. You are doing that wrong.' I was like, 'You have not been here for nine months and now you are trying to tell me how to do this!' It was hard for me. I didn't want to argue with him too soon."*

# Handing Out Peer Guides At Outreach Events

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When handing out peer guides at outreach events or to groups of people (e.g., PTAs), do not just leave the material on a table. It's important to hand a copy to them. Create and use an “elevator pitch” to explain what the material is and how it may be helpful. Key points can include:

- **Peer Guide was created specifically for military families in N. FL.**
- **Contains the insights and lessons learned of other FL military families who have experienced deployment and reintegration – in their own words:**
  - Open to a page in the book and have them read (or you can read to them) a few quotes. Try to use a pertinent section that the family or service member will connect with.
- **In the back is a Resource Guide that contains a list of providers:**
  - Ask where they live and point out relevant resources.

# **SUPPORT AND EDUCATE: BUT HAVE SOME FUN!**

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**Be creative in your use  
of the Peer Guide!**

**Come up with new  
and fun ideas!**

**Let us know how  
you've helped our  
military families!**



***IT'S A TEAM EFFORT! IT CAN BE DONE!! BE COMMITTED!!!***

# *Helping Children Cope with the Challenges of War and Terrorism*

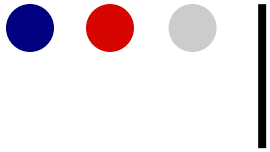


Helping Children Cope  
with the Challenges  
of  
War and Terrorism

A GUIDE FOR CARING ADULTS AND CHILDREN

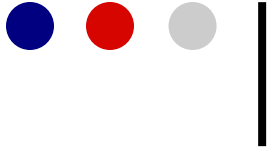
- Developed by 7-Dippity and Dr. Annette La Greca (Professor of Psychology and Pediatrics at the University of Miami).
- Tool to assist children and families with deployment and worries about war or terrorism.
- Download the material:  
[www.7-dippity.com/other/op\\_hcc.html](http://www.7-dippity.com/other/op_hcc.html)

# About *Helping Children Cope*



- Designed for use with parent/caring adult and child 6-12yrs of age (adapt for older/younger).
- Information and activities are research-based.
- Main Goals:
  - Enhance support and communication.
  - Help parents/adults to identify stress reactions in children.
  - Help to promote adaptive coping (and prevent future problems).

# Using *Helping Children Cope*

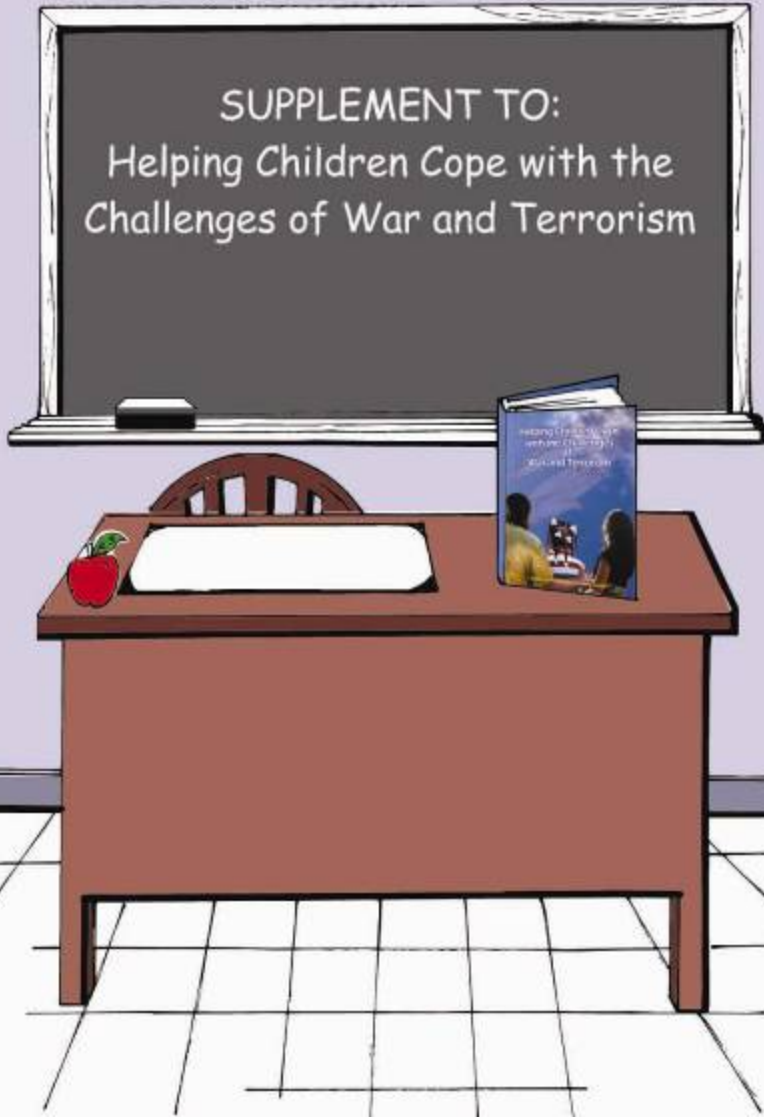


- 13 topics covered, divided into five chapters.
- For each topic there is an "Adult Page" on the left and "Child Page" on the right.
- Some Adult Pages have Joint Activities for adults & children to complete together.
- Activities and information can be used to help children with other trauma or challenges (earthquakes, hurricanes, etc.).

# Helping Children Cope: Chapter Overview

- Chapter I – "ease into" using the book; discussing war & terrorism with children.
- Chapter II – will help identify a child's feelings and worries.
- Chapter III – coping strategies helpful for most children.
- Chapter IV – managing anger; coping with sad feelings; understanding others.
- Chapter V – additional info on coping with deployment; some helpful websites.

# Supplement to *Helping Children Cope with the Challenges of War and Terrorism*



- Supplement designed for use in schools or with groups of children.
- Aligned to national education standards.
- Contains additional information and activities for parents and/or caregivers.
- Download the material:  
[www.7-dippity.com/other/op\\_hcc.html](http://www.7-dippity.com/other/op_hcc.html)

Questions?

