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Military website teaches parenting skills

Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash.—A new website from the Defense Department is helping parents communicate with their children. MilitaryParenting.org is a free, online course that gives a “boot camp” approach to the basics of parenting.

“The demands of parenting are difficult, especially for a military parent,” said Dr. Pam Murphy, psychologist for the parenting website at the National Center for Telehealth & Technology. “It’s a daily challenge for them to stay close and connected with their children with the frequent separations and hazards of a military lifestyle.”

The interactive course modules help parents deal with everyday problems and family issues that are unique to the military lifestyle. Videos of military and veteran families sharing their stories throughout the course add a unique first-person perspective.

Senior Airman Matt Siegele and Staff Sergeant Sabrina Siegele, an Air Force couple stationed at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, said they liked the way the modules felt like the parenting and behavior classes they attended.

“We noticed the information about stress relief and being patient is exactly what you would get if you went to see a therapist or a professional,” said Staff Sergeant Siegele.

The six modules are: Back into the Family, Promoting Positive Parent-Child Communications, Helping Your Child with Difficult Emotions & Behaviors, Positive Approach to Discipline, Managing Stress & Emotions as a Parent, and Parenting with Emotional & Physical Challenges.

This course helps parents and their children through the uncertainties of military life. Stories about children living with a parent’s physical and emotional injuries help parents understand what their own children may not be able to express.

According to a 2011 Defense Department demographic report, more than 44 percent of military members have families. Sixty-seven percent of those families have children younger than 12 years old.

MilitaryParenting.org, a standalone course developed by leading behavioral health experts, can also be used with in-person counseling. The course was developed as a joint project of the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs.

The National Center for Telehealth & Technology, located at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash., serves as the primary Department of Defense office for cutting-edge approaches in applying technology to psychological health. T2, as it is commonly known, is a component center of the Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury. More information about T2 and the MilitaryParenting.org website is at T2health.org/programs/militaryparenting.

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