



Building Networks of Support

1. Welcome to the Camp Lejeune-New River Building Networks of Support Training. Given by your Exceptional Family Member Program.
2. Our Learning objectives are to differentiate between formal and informal networks and identify various ways to build your network.
3. First let's talk about circles of support. Here is an example. They're all of the different support networks that are in your system. In the example here you see your local community, health providers, Marine Corps family, friends and biological family. Let's do an activity. On a piece of paper, draw your own circles and list all of those who are your support systems. In addition to what you see listed think about some of these. Are you a member of a group or club? Do you attend church? Do you work? Maybe you go to school. Or, do your children go to school? Do you attend any classes? Pause this training and think of



those in your circle. Feel free to add as many circles as you might need.

4. A healthy support network is vital to everyone; not just military families, but especially for military families and consists of both formal and informal networks. Informal networks are people who a part of your social network. Like family members, friends, neighbors, coworkers or members of a faith based community you belong to.

Formal networks are typically individuals from organization or agencies that provide help or a service to your family like EFMP and other Marine and Family Program agencies. Think back to the activity we did. In your circle of support did you have both informal and formal supports in your network?

5. Formal supports are a given when you are enrolled in EFMP. But how to you build an informal network? You can join a cause. Get together with people working towards a common goal. You can volunteer at a clinic, at



schools, community centers, with Marine Corps Community Services (MCCS) Youth Sports Programs and your Unit Family Readiness Program. Join a class at the gym, community center or even enroll in school. As we will see in a little bit MCCS has so many opportunities for enrichment and connecting to other military families. Get outside, go to the park or take you children to play groups. Walk around you neighborhood, mingle with other parents, caregivers and families and use Facebook or www.meetup.com to join local groups or even start one of your own to meet those with common interest.

6. Let's look at the MCCS Camp Lejeune-New River website. There are so many options. Take Youth Sports or Adult Sports for instance. The page is a little slow to load but here you'll see all the opportunities that are current and ongoing for sport and physical activity. The other option is to volunteer as an official. Next let's look at Outdoor Adventure. There are always opportunities to get out,



expand your horizons and engage with others in your local community. You can see here listed on their calendar all of the upcoming classes and activities to get involved in. The other option is with the on base community centers. They put on different Fun-Runs as well as youth activities and classes. We can scroll down and see their calendar of events. Now let's look at the fitness centers and group exercise classes. The MCCS Group Exercise classes are a great opportunity to get out and meet new people. You can see all of the offerings at different location around base and they are also inclusive. If you need any additional assistance in attending a class you can reach out to them and let them know what you specific need might be. And last, let's look at some Marine and Family Programs. You can see Marine Corps Family Team Building has lots of additional opportunities for soft development and personal development. As well as working on skills like



relationship building for both your spouse, your family and community.

7. You already have EFMP in your formal support network.

But you can also reach out to current professional support such as early intervention providers, physicians or even case managers. If you are not receiving appropriate services, request a referral from your physician to additional medical or mental health services to increase your formal support.

8. Let's take a look at some examples of how networks can

build upon each other. Take for instance following the MCCS Facebook page. You find a class or workshop to participate in or attend a recreation activity. While there you have the opportunity meet with others that share common interests and they have their own support networks that you then can share common interests with. Perhaps you start a local group based on what your interests are. You can spread the word on Facebook, at



school, church or your kid's functions. You can organize a weekly meet-up with that group to start to increase your informal network. Or even organize an activity or a meet-and-greet in your neighborhood. Can you think of some other ways you can build your social network?

9. It's great to get out to these different activities. But to be able to engage with other can sometimes be a little bit of an uncomfortable situation. A good acronym to keep in mind is F.O.R.M. Family, Occupation, Recreation and Message. It is an easy reminder for the different types of questions you can ask in getting to know someone and finding something you can connect on. Message is really import. It is what you want to leave them with and how you can plan to engage them in the future. Like saying, "I really enjoyed talking with you, we should get coffee sometime or maybe do X, Y, or Z activity together." Let's do an activity. Walk around the room and mingle, spark conversation and remember that acronym F.O.R.M. What



can you connect with someone else on? Pause this video. Wasn't that easy or did you find that difficult? Did conversation naturally flow? Did you eventually find something to connect on? Remember the acronym F.O.R.M when having small talk; either meeting someone at the supermarket at the gym at church or your child's school.

10. Your social wellness is a health priority. Much research now supports that our social wellness has concrete and significant impact on our physical and mental health. You can read the whole article following the link below. But I'll share some of it with you here. Studies have started to link your social connectedness with measures as varied and dramatic as motor skill retention, cancer survivors, general immune function, and memory function and over all longevity. On the flip side social isolation has been connected with Alzheimer's and heart disease. Those with close relationships are probably more



likely to receive encouragement to take care of ourselves and seek out medical care when needed. But stress they say, likely plays a significant role in social relationships. Particularly friendships reduce stress and its chronic impact on our physical and mental health. Friendships in particular provide a key outlet for our emotions, a meaningful network of support and in the case of old friendship a unique mirror for our lives; the ups and downs, challenges and achievements. Friendship can give us a fresh perspective and emotional space from our problems. They can also ground us to the trajectory of our experience and other primary relationships.

11. That's it for us, do you have any questions comments? Reach out to us. You've got our Camp Lejeune and New River offices and you can always find us on Facebook and start to increase your informal social network through the EFMP Facebook page. Thanks so much for attending.