



# COMMANDER'S CALL TALKING POINTS

## OCTOBER 2019



### October is National Domestic Violence Awareness Month

October is National Domestic Violence Awareness Month. When questions about domestic violence arise, the most important resource for members of the Command Team is the installation Family Advocacy Program (FAP), per [AFI40-301](#). Family Advocacy is a critical component of creating safe place for all Airmen to come forward and ask for help, including those who may be living with domestic violence. Below are additional domestic violence information and resources to help leaders and their Airmen create a supportive environment within our Squadrons.

Domestic violence occurs in many forms (e.g. beating, burning, strangling, stalking) and can happen to anybody, including our Airmen. In fact, 1 in 4 women and 1 in 7 men are survivors of some form of physical violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime.<sup>1</sup> Take the initiative to learn about domestic violence and how to recognize someone who needs help. Talk openly with Airmen and encourage help-seeking behavior to create a supportive, caring culture within our Squadrons.

### Invisible Wounds and Domestic Violence

All Airmen who have experienced or witnessed a traumatic event are susceptible to developing an invisible wound. Domestic violence can be both physically and emotionally traumatic. If the trauma is left untreated, it could lead to any number of invisible wounds, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or traumatic brain injury (TBI). Survivors of domestic violence often express having symptoms of PTSD and other negative impacts to their daily lives, such as feeling fearful or concerned for their safety.<sup>2</sup> Domestic violence is also correlated with a higher rate of depression and suicidal behavior.<sup>3</sup> Knowing the signs and symptoms of invisible wounds can help you recognize and support any Airman in need.

**Signs and symptoms of invisible wounds include:**

Flashbacks	Sensitivity to light and sound	Poor self-care	Feeling depressed
Irritable, frustrated, angry	Headaches, migraines	Feeling anxious	Chronic pain
Trouble with memory and attention	Fatigue	Trouble sleeping, insomnia	

### Supporting Our Airmen—"This is My Squadron"

As part of the Air Force family and within our squadrons we must take care of one another. Airmen may have experienced or are currently living in situations of domestic violence. As a family we need to support each other. Encourage our Airmen to reach out to their squadron leadership or Wingmen to talk and ask for help. In addition to our squadron support, Airmen who experience domestic violence or exhibit signs and symptoms of an invisible wound have the following Air Force [resources](#):

- ✦ **Family Advocacy Program (FAP):** The FAP is the most important Air Force resource for domestic violence situations and provides services to help with safety planning, intervention, victim advocacy, and treatment.
- ✦ **Trusted Advocates:** Communication is key. Family members, fellow Wingmen, and Command Leadership are there to support our Airmen through challenging times.
- ✦ **Chaplains:** Air Force chaplains offer 24/7, fully confidential care, counseling, and spiritual support.
- ✦ **Military Treatment Facility (MTF):** The local MTF offers medical treatment options for direct health and wellness care, including the Behavioral Health Optimization Program (BHOP) and Mental Health Clinic.
- ✦ **Military and Family Life Counseling Program (MFLC):** The MFLC offers solution-focused, short-term counseling to Airmen to enhance morale and quality of life. Encourage Airmen to contact the local Airman & Family Readiness Center to use MFLC services.

### Resources



The DoD's [Family Advocacy Program \(FAP\)](#) is your best Air Force resource for domestic violence. Visit your [installation's FAP](#) for help with safety planning, intervention, victim advocacy, and treatment.

The National Domestic Violence **HOTLINE**  
1.800.799.SAFE (7233) • 1.800.787.3224 (TTY)

The [National Domestic Violence Hotline](#) offers 24/7 free, confidential services via highly trained, experienced advocates that provide compassionate support, crisis intervention information, educational services and referral services in more than 200 languages.



[Military OneSource](#) offers military families resources to help offenders, victims and family members get the support, intervention or treatment needed to promote family safety and well-being.

<sup>1</sup> National Coalition Against Domestic Violence. Statistics. (2019). <https://ncadv.org/statistics>  
<sup>2</sup> CDC. The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey: Facts Everyone Should Know About Intimate Partner Violence, Sexual Violence, & Stalking. (2016). <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/NISVS-infographic-2016.pdf>  
<sup>3</sup> National Coalition Against Domestic Violence. Statistics. (2019). <https://ncadv.org/statistics>