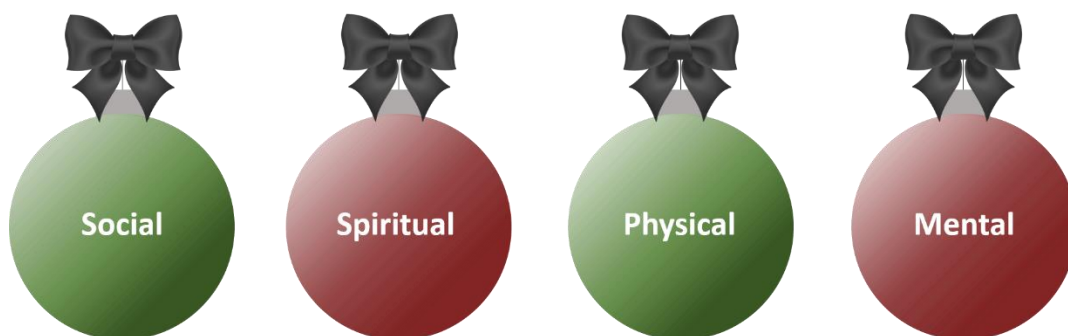


Peers are Stress Busters

With the holidays quickly approaching, it can prove to be an exciting, yet stressful, period for Airmen and their families coping with invisible wounds. The high level of expectations during this time can disrupt sleep, suppress the immune system, and increase anxiety, making it harder to enjoy the magic of the season. Airmen can support fellow Airmen during this time by encouraging them to stay connected to their families and fellow Wingmen.

Holiday GRIT, What is it? How to Release its Power

Operation GRIT is a holistic approach to strengthen resiliency, reinforce protective factors, and reduce unwanted behaviors through deliberate and meaningful personal and professional development. There are several ways Airmen can show GRIT during the holiday season by taking an active approach to ensure Airmen maintain their overall resiliency. The four Comprehensive Airman Fitness (CAF) pillars can assist Airmen and their families in embracing social, spiritual, physical, and mental readiness.



Social – Airmen often refer to their squadron as a “second family” that they turn to for support, friendship, and even protection. The squadron is the warmth by the fireside and another place to connect with fellow Airmen during the holidays. Encourage Airmen to reach out to their fellow Wingmen that may be alone during this time and invite them to share in the Holiday Spirit.

Spiritual – While religion may serve as a component of spiritual health, Airmen do not have to follow any specific religion to be spiritually healthy. Experiences such as traumatic events can lead to questioning values and trying to make sense of what happened. Spirituality can help Airmen cope by connecting them to something bigger. For some, it may be a relationship with their fellow Airmen or family, and for others, it may be a connection with a Higher Power. Leaders can build GRIT in their Airmen through a variety of spiritual practices.

Physical – Airmen should strive to remain physically active during the Holidays. The right amount of physical activity can enhance optimal health and relieve stress, making everyone feel better mentally, emotionally, and physically.

Mental – The Holidays are full of shopping, traveling, and spending time with loved ones. A positive mindset is the perfect gift to unwrap during this time. Encouraging fellow Airmen to provide an environment of support and promote help seeking behavior will further contribute to maintaining one’s mental health.

Support Your Fellow Airmen and Give Back This Holiday Season!



If you know of Airmen that are in need during the holidays or are seeking creative ways to give back to their community, there are a variety of ways to connect and give back to fellow Airmen and their families during the holidays. Below are a few ideas to get started.

Adopt-a-Family: Encourage Airmen to adopt a military or veteran family over the holidays by partnering with a local organization that provides an opportunity for their family to connect with other families through writing letters, baking, and several other activities.

Care Packages: Help fellow Airmen, caregivers, and their families by sending special holiday treats to show appreciation and kindness

to those serving our country.

Visit-a-Vet: Contact a nursing home or veterans’ hospital. A visit from a fellow service member can brighten their day and remind them that they are not forgotten.

For additional opportunities, direct Airmen to their First Sergeant to learn more about activities available at or around their installation.

INVICTUS GAMES

Airmen Spotlight

Congratulations to the men and women who participated on team USA in the Invictus Games! Below are the 2018 Air Force Medal Recipients.

Gold Medal Recipients:

MSgt (Ret) Sgt. Shay Hampton
Capt. (Ret) Lawrence Hufford
SSgt (Ret) Sebastiana Lopez
TSgt (Ret) Ryan Pinney
TSgt (Ret) Joshua Smith
SrA (Ret) Hannah Stolberg
MSgt Brian Williams

Silver Medal Recipients:

SrA (Ret) Jamie Biviano
Capt. (Ret) Kristen Morris
Master Sgt. Benjamin Seekell

Bronze Medal Recipients:

MSgt Kenneth Guinn
1st Lt. Ryan Novack

To view the complete list of team USA competitors and results [click here](#).

COMING SOON...



The Air Force Peer Support Program

This program will focus on the importance of implementing peer-led groups throughout the Air Force community that provide Airmen and their families with a smoother road to recovery through personalized social support.

Keep an eye out for more information on the Peer Support Program in early 2019!