



News Release

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

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PREVENTING ABUSE IS TOP PRIORITY FOR CAFB FAMILY ADVOCACY PROGRAM

CHARLESTON AIR FORCE BASE, S.C. – More than three million children are reported as abused or neglected in the U.S. each year and every day three children die from these inhumane acts.

This statistic, according to a Prevent Child Abuse America study, highlights the need to take measures to try and turn this trend around and prevent future abuse.

Although military families are among those involved in these national statistics, the Department of Defense rate of child abuse is distinctly lower than its counterparts in the U.S. civilian population, according to a report by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Resources.

One way the Air Force works to keep its members from being involved in abuse incidences is through base Family Advocacy Programs.

“The Family Advocacy Program is a prevention program. We are here for the prevention of maltreatment,” said Capt. Patricia Finckenberg, Family Advocacy Program chief.

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Finckenberg said the primary mission of the 437th Family Advocacy Program is to ensure that military members are mission ready.

“If a member has a problem in their home, whether it is themselves or another family member, it is very stressful, and it makes it very difficult for them to focus on their task at hand,” said Finckenberg.

Finckenberg explained that they do this through a variety of programs, including pregnancy and parenting classes, the Exceptional Family Member Program and a maltreatment program.

When identifying situations involving maltreatment, Finckenberg and staff look into child physical, emotional, sexual and neglect abuse and spouse physical and emotional abuse. For spouses, sexual abuse and neglect fall into the category of emotional abuse.

“When dealing with these situations, we work with military members and their immediate family,” Finckenberg said. “There has to be a family dynamic, whether it be a member and their spouse, or a single member with children, for us to be involved.”

As Finckenberg mentioned, their programs are designed to prevent maltreatment. If an incident occurs though, FAP has a system in place to assess the situation and then call a Family Maltreatment Case Management Team. The FMCMT is a team of military members taken from around the base who are specifically trained to investigate the incident, make the determination of whether or not the incident fit the criteria for maltreatment, and if it does, make a recommendation for treatment, said Finckenberg.

Charleston AFB saw a decrease in the total number of maltreatment referrals in fiscal year 2001, according to their annual maltreatment statistical summary.

There were 104 maltreatment referrals in FY 2001, compared to 136 in FY 2000, and 121 in FY 1999.

As part of the National Child Abuse Prevention Month, the Family Advocacy Program Office has posted displays around the base to educate personnel on the various help programs.

(These stories are public domain. You may use any part of the story for your publication. Media interested in interviews with Family Advocacy personnel, contact Capt. Krista Carlos at 963-5589 or 2nd Lt. Jennifer Andrews at 963-5537.)