

Military OneSource Podcast — Military OneSource Resources for Healthy and Happy Military Children

Episode transcript

Speaker 1:

Welcome to the Military OneSource Podcast. Military OneSource is an official program of the Defense Department, with tools, information, and resources to help families navigate all aspects of military life. For more information, visit militaryonesource.mil.

Bruce Moody:

Welcome to the podcast. I'm Bruce Moody. Military OneSource [00:00:30] has a lot of information and tools for military families. And today we're going to focus on those which are focused on the wellbeing of children in military families. My guest today is Michelle Aldana. Michelle, welcome to the podcast.

Michelle Aldana:

Thank you so much, Bruce, for having me here. I'm always so happy to be able to speak about Military OneSource, all the resources that we have that we can share with our families, especially since they are no-cost. As a former military [00:01:00] kid and then a military spouse and now the sister-in-law, sister of military members, and maybe even my nephew and niece might go into the military, so we're military through and through, it's really great to be able to be here and be able to speak about resources that not only has helped my family and can help my family, but can help all of our other service members and their families, help [00:01:30] them live their best mil life.

And I know it can be challenging to be that mil kid. I used to teach high school for six years, I've seen some of the challenges of just being a teenager. But then adding that, moving from place to place and being a new kid, it can be kind of hard. So I am so happy to be able to share resources to help that transition be a little easier, and help us have that resilience and grow from that hard thing and make it into a great learning opportunity.

Bruce Moody:

[00:02:00] And for those who are listening, we do welcome your comments. We have a link in the program notes. You can send us your questions, your comments, or you can even suggest a topic for a future episode. Or you can just say hello. We look forward to hearing from you. Michelle, parents want their kids to be happy and healthy. We know

that childhood and adolescence can be stressful for a whole lot of reasons. And then the realities of being part of a military family; you've [00:02:30] got relocations, school changes, deploying parents. These can compound all of these feelings, all of these anxieties. So my question is how can Military OneSource help?

Michelle Aldana:

Well, one of the best things that I think... First is that we get it. We understand. Like I shared earlier, I've been a military kid, I have families. And we have so many wonderful people that have lived this life to be able to understand, hey, this [00:03:00] would be a great resource for our military families. I know how hard it can be to PCS from place to place. And so it's really great that Military OneSource can provide resources. I would say one of the top things is non-medical counseling. And that's just to talk to someone if you have some stressors or if you want to get ahead of it. If you know you're PCSing and you are like, "I'm kind of worried. I'm moving to a new school. I want to make sure [00:03:30] everything goes smoothly." You can call Military OneSource and say, "Hey, I just need to talk to someone. I want to chat with someone. Because I know there's going to be a PCS and I'm going to have to move."

Or it could be school stressors, like academics. You can talk to someone through non-medical counseling. It could be stress management, or just communications, like, "Hey, it's tough to talk to other people. I struggle to do that face-to-face [00:04:00] chit chat and I just want to learn to be better at this." So it's really great to be able to call Military OneSource, use that for non-medical counseling. When we mean non-medical counseling, I know people are like, "Oh, what's that word mean?" We don't diagnose people. We are a solution-focused program. So if you have a goal that you want to meet, like I said, you want to be able to prepare for PCS, you want to be able to manage stressors of being [00:04:30] a teen, or upcoming tests or upcoming admissions to college, any of those things, you can talk to us and we'll help you with that.

You get 12 sessions per issue. So let's say you're super stressed out and you want to talk to someone about stress. Or you know have upcoming stress you can get 12 about stress management. And then you're there and you're like, you know what, I could do a lot better about how to improve my social interactions. So you can say, "Hey, [00:05:00] I want 12 sessions about social interaction." So you get 12 per person per issue, which is really great. For our military kids, if your age is six to 12, you can do this with a parent. So you have to have your parent with you. It can be in person, it can be in video, it can be on telephone. If your age is 13 through 17, you only have to have your parents give you permission the very first time. And they'll just say, "Yeah, I give [00:05:30] permission for my child to participate in non-medical counseling." And then that child is good to go to be able to be seen. So it's really great to be able to use.

But you can really call us about most of the things, and we're always going to be able to get you to where you need to go. I always say we have a no wrong door policy. If you're

just like, "I am stressed. I don't know what to do." We got great people who will answer that phone and say, "I will help you figure that out and get you to where you need to go." [00:06:00] Which I really love. And we have really nice people that answer the phone, that are trained to be able to ask those questions and make sure you get the best you can.

Bruce Moody:

You're absolutely right. They are really wonderful people. One of the really smart things that you guys do is you bring us into the call center. And we've had the opportunity to meet the people who are at the call center, and they really are wonderful people and they really care. So let's move on with the conversation here. During the summer months, when sports [00:06:30] and summer camps may be underway, some kids may be taking a break from the sports that they participate in during the school year. What resources are available to them to help them maintain and improve their fitness?

Michelle Aldana:

Well, for kids that are 13 and up, you can meet with their health and wellness coaches for free, which is one of the other great things about Military OneSource. It is at no cost to our military service members and their families. [00:07:00] And usually that kind of stuff costs a lot, as a health and wellness coach, I think. I don't know, I've never used them, but from what I hear. But you can contact our health and wellness coach. And let's say you want to try out for volleyball in the fall. You can contact our health and wellness coach and say, "Hey, my goal is to make my volleyball team in the fall. Can you suggest any workouts, exercises, things that I can do to be able to increase my chances [00:07:30] and make sure I'm physically fit to do that?" Which is, again, a wonderful thing to be able to do. They'll come up with the plan with you.

Our health and wellness coaches will help hold you accountable. They'll check in, say, "Hey, how are you doing? Tell me what's going on. How is this working for you?" If you want just a goal of, let's say you want to be able to run a 5k, you can do that. If you have concerns about your overall health, they can help you have a healthy meal plan or healthy plan forward. [00:08:00] Those things as well. So it's really great to be able to have those examples or those resources for our families and their kids. We had one really great one, it was during the pandemic, but we had a family call. And the pools at the time were closed and they wanted to just be able to maintain their physical fitness so that when the pools opened and the swim teams were able to try out again, they could try out and make the team. And they were moving from [00:08:30] CONUS to OCONUS, I want to say they were moving to Hawaii.

And they called, they got them a plan. They were like, "Here are all the great exercises you can do that you can't do since you don't have the water to swim in, a public pool, but here's some things you can do to substitute." And they're able to have that plan.

And then when it was time for the pools to open and they had tryouts, that kid was able to make the swim team and was able to maintain their fitness so that they could earn their spot on their team. So it's a great resource to be able to use [00:09:00] that is free.

Bruce Moody:

It does feel like one school year comes to a close and the next one is just around the corner. How can Military OneSource help prep for the next year? How can it help keep kids sharp on their educational skills year-round?

Michelle Aldana:

One of the things that we can do and provide is one, providing a resource. We have an education specialty consultation. You can call and say, "Hey, these are my goals." If you know what your goals [00:09:30] are in high school and like, "Hey, I want to go to med school. What are some schools that have the majors that I need that are in my area? How do people pay for school?" You can call us. We can help gather all that information for you, figure out that plan and way ahead. Because it can be super overwhelming. I know it was overwhelming for me when I was picking schools. I was like, oh my goodness, I just wanted one close, with not too many people, that had my major. [00:10:00] We're able to help with that. And be able to help research scholarships as well to help our military kids, and then be able to provide that, connect the dots with what your goals are, and how you can reach those educational goals.

Bruce Moody:

Michelle, you touched on this earlier, but I want to get back into it again because it's really important. For children who want to access Military OneSource, talk to us about how this [00:10:30] works. Do parents need to request the support? Is this something teens can do on their own? Talk us through that.

Michelle Aldana:

For parents and children, for kids to be able to get that support from Military OneSource, your parent can call us by calling 1-800-342-9647 and say, "Hey, I just want to connect my child to some resources." And then they're able to connect. You can also go onto [00:11:00] our militaryonesource.mil site, use our secure chat feature and be able to connect. The parent is going to have to do that. They ask a ton of questions like service member location. So we want parents to make sure they're the ones that are calling to provide that information and be able to provide that connection. But depending on the age of the child, once the parent gives the okay to use a resource like non-medical counseling, if they're 13 to 17, once their parents [00:11:30] say, "Yeah, it's okay, they can use it." We're like, "Thanks," and they'll start their sessions. But if it's kids

six to 12, when kids get that resources and get that help, the parent has to be with them all the time when they're receiving any type of services to be able to use.

Bruce Moody:

Got it. Got it. Okay. Is there anything else on Military OneSource, be it tools for children or otherwise that you want to share with our listeners today?

Michelle Aldana:

Well, [00:12:00] like I said, online we have a ton of things on our Military OneSource site. So I always tell people, go there, find out all the great things we have. But we have things you can download as well through the app stores. You can download our Chill Drills app, which I really love. It's a guided breathing and a progressive muscle relaxation exercise, if that is your jam and that's your thing, I will say I'm a really fidgety person. I probably should do it, [00:12:30] but I cannot sit that long. But it's great for people who love that kind of thing. You download our Chill Drills app, you can just play it from there. It'll help you, guide you through that breathing. I know a lot of kids that use it. Before they go to sleep they just listen to that and help them get their mind in a place where they can rest and be able to be their best selves the next day. Because we know how important sleep is. But you can use it any time and which is really wonderful to be able to have that resource [00:13:00] very quickly to use.

Another thing that teens can do, those teens that are working and collecting a paycheck and maybe don't know about taxes, they can call Military OneSource and ask tax questions. And if they're going to file taxes separately, they can do that as well, as long as they're dependent of their service member. They can provide that. I mean, I'm a real older grownup and I still struggle with taxes, so [00:13:30] I have to ask questions. It's a complicated thing. So the earlier you can find out about it and get on the get right, the better it is. And then we have just our Military OneSource app. Like I said, the website has a lot of information, but our OneSource app, we all use our phones, so to be able to connect very quickly on there is a resource as well. For not only parents, but children that have access to those phones.

Bruce Moody:

You [00:14:00] mention MilTax. We did a podcast episode just a couple of days ago on MilTax. And specifically, I guess, what relates to this conversation is that military families are going to file taxes based on the things that military families are experiencing, which is unique to military life. And the folks behind Military OneSource, they totally get that. And so you really need to go to Military OneSource, look up MilTax [00:14:30] and see what that can do for you. And then afterwards, then you check out the Chill Drills, because you're definitely going to want to balance out with both of those. I guess my last question to you, because we're going to post links in the program notes to Military

OneSource and specifically the Military Parents Resource Center. Talk to us about what's there and how people can contact Military [00:15:00] OneSource to engage.

Michelle Aldana:

One of the great things that we also offer for our military parents in our resource center, one, we have lots of articles, lots of different tidbits of information that help you be your best parent. Because when you're your best selves, then you're going to be able to parent better for your child. We also offer parents, I mentioned like non-medical counseling, you had to be six and up, but I know I forgot to mention if [00:15:30] you have a kid that's under six, how can we help you be that best parent? And we had that mil parent support too. So parents can call Military OneSource, again, at that number, that 1-800-342-9647, and say, "Hey, you know what? I need help on helping me manage some difficult behaviors that my child might be having." Or, "I need some help. Can someone just tell me how to potty train a kid?" Or any of those things.

Parents can [00:16:00] use that resource for those littles, to be able to help you, again, be your best parent and your best self. When we're able to take care of ourselves as parents, we're going to be able to take care of our kids better as well. So they're able to do that. But as parents, they can again engage in that live chat that we have on our militaryonesource.mil site. And if you want to see someone in person, [00:16:30] we do have our boots on the ground, military family life counselors, that are usually located at your Military and Family Readiness Centers.

We also have those MFRACS at our CYB locations if you want to see those people in person. But our Military Family Support Centers have our information as well. So we have a lot of resources, and they're available to all of our active duty [00:17:00] service members, their immediate family, our National Guard and Reserve, regardless of activation status, which is again, really great. Because sometimes there's gaps in being able to get that support if you're not on active order. So military OneSource can take care of those parents and those service members and their kids, their dependents, regardless of their activation status.

And even as you retire or you separate from the military, we can still help those military [00:17:30] members and their kids for that full year after you separate from the military. So we're going to make sure you get that warm handoff and take care of you, because that transition, whether you're PCSing, whether you're transitioning out of the military, it affects all of our family members. So we want to make sure that everyone's taken care of and able to get that support.

Bruce Moody:

Michelle Aldana, thank you for what you do. Thank you for your energy and your passion, [00:18:00] and for joining us today.

Michelle Aldana:

Oh, thank you for having me. I love being here and being able to share how we can all live our best mil life.

Bruce Moody:

Absolutely. Well, we hope to have you back.

Michelle Aldana:

Thank you.

Bruce Moody:

Good, good. I want to remind you that Military OneSource is an official resource of the Defense Department, and we want to hear from you. So use the link in the program notes to send us your questions, your comments, or let us know what you'd like to hear in our future podcast. We look forward to hearing from you. [00:18:30] And be sure to subscribe to this podcast wherever you listen to your podcasts, because we cover a wide range of topics that help military families navigate military life. I'm Bruce Moody. Thanks so much for listening. Take care. Bye-bye.