

Family Advocacy Program

Content Guide

The following established style guidelines reflect the long-standing practices of developers and editors of content for the Family Advocacy Program. They are consistent with rules and guidance outlined in the Associated Press Stylebook and reflective of Office of Military Community and Family Policy style and usage preferences.

Do

- Pay attention to the overall organization and flow of an article. Information and ideas should be logically organized, and there should be a sense of continuity or flow from one idea to the next.
- Emphasize the importance of community when writing about child abuse and neglect (e.g., strong communities strengthen families; community members can help by being informed, attentive and supportive).
- Use language that is family first (e.g., build family togetherness and readiness versus only building readiness) when writing about child abuse and neglect. Do not do this, however, when discussing domestic abuse, because victim safety and choice is the guiding principle, which may require separation from the alleged abuser and dissolution of the family unit.
- Use language that is person first (e.g., person who is experiencing abuse, person who is using abusive behaviors) when writing about domestic abuse. Do not use “alleged victim” or “potential victim.”
- Avoid redundancy.
- Use language that is affirming for victims, is victim-centered and [trauma-informed](#).
- Write in gender-neutral terms, except if otherwise appropriate (e.g., gender-specific services or groups).
- Use relationship-neutral words such as “partner,” “spouse” or “couple.”
- Flesh out and clarify statements and ideas.
- Ensure that subheads reflect the content that follows.
- Emphasize the positive as much as possible when producing content.
- Focus on a strengths-based perspective and integrate protective-factors language.
- Incorporate prevention into content.
- Keep the wide audience range in mind.
- Use softening or qualifying words such as “generally,” “maybe,” “can be” or “might” to avoid making blanket statements about how people feel, react, etc.
- Remove language that suggests or implies that a victim should leave a relationship. Leaving the relationship statistically increases the risk to the victim and to the children, including the potential for a life-threatening incident.

- Verify that the link for the Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline in Family Advocacy Program content is www.childhelphotline.org, and not www.childhelp.org.

Do Not

- Discuss unhealthy relationship behaviors without including a reference to the Family Advocacy Program, where individuals who are concerned for their safety and well-being can find information and help.
- Make assumptions.
- Use messages implying that a victim could have prevented the abuse, or even language that suggests that they have a role to play in prevention. Unless worded carefully, this can sound like victim-blaming.
- Tell people how they feel.
- Tell people what they should, need to, must, ought to or can't do.
- Tell people what they should always or never do.
- Use statistics, unless vetted through the Office of Secretary of Defense Family Advocacy Program.

Formatting

- Less is more — be concise.

Preferred Terms

Preferred	As opposed to
can, may or might	will or are
child abuse and/or neglect	child abuse
child exhibiting	perpetrator, offender, abuser (when referring to a child)
child impacted	victim
domestic abuse	domestic violence
domestic abuse victim advocate (use DAVA on second reference)	Family Advocacy Program Victim Advocate
Domestic Abuse Victim Advocate Locator (use DAVA Locator on second reference)	domestic abuse victim advocate locator

Domestic Violence Awareness Month (use DVAM on second reference)	Domestic Violence Prevention Month
Family Advocacy Program (use “the program” on second reference or FAP if necessary for clarity)	FAP
installation Family Advocacy Program	Base Family Advocacy Program
intimate partner violence	intimate partner abuse
LGBTQIA+	LGBTQ
Military and Family Support Center (use MFSC on second reference)	Family Support Center
military protection order (use MPO on second reference)	military protective order
more than	over
multidisciplinary team (use MDT on second reference)	multi-disciplinary team
nonthreatening	nonviolent
normative sexual behavior in children and youth	normal sexual behavior in children and youth
often or generally	always
partner or spouse	husband or wife
problematic sexual behavior in children and youth (use PSB-CY on second reference)	unhealthy child sexual behavior
same-sex couple, same-sex partner, partner, partners, or use spouse for partners who are legally married	husband and wife, wife and wife, husband and husband
some or many	most or all
spectrum	scale
tend to	usually
transitional compensation	Transitional Compensation Program
victim advocate or advocacy	Victim Advocate Program

Definitions

Term	Definition
child abuse and neglect	<p>The Defense Department and each of the military services define child abuse and neglect as the physical, sexual or emotional abuse or neglect of a child by a parent, guardian or foster parent caregiver — whether the caregiver is intrafamilial or extrafamilial — under circumstances indicating that a child is being harmed or having their welfare threatened. Such acts by a sibling, other family member or another person will be deemed to be child abuse only when the individual is providing care under an expressed or implied agreement with the parent, guardian or foster parent.</p>
domestic abuse	<p>The Defense Department and each of the military services define domestic abuse as a pattern of behavior resulting in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional or psychological abuse, which may include excessive jealousy, personal insults or verbal harassment, as well as threatening language suggesting the use or future use of physical violence • Economic control, which includes one spouse or partner controlling how the other spends money, intentionally accumulating credit card debt in the other’s name or refusing to share the decision-making on household finances • Interference with personal liberty, which may include tracking the victim through electronic devices, apps or social media, or forbidding the victim to leave the home • Spousal neglect, in which one spouse or partner fails to provide the necessary care or assistance to the other spouse or partner in situations where they are incapable of self-care physically, emotionally or culturally <p>To be classified as domestic abuse, department policy requires that the harmful behavior be directed toward a person who is a current or former spouse, a person with whom the alleged abuser shares a child in common, a current or former intimate partner with whom the alleged abuser shares or has shared a common domicile, or a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic nature with the accused and is determined to be an intimate partner.</p>

<p>domestic abuse restricted reporting</p>	<p>A process allowing an adult victim of domestic abuse — who is eligible to receive medical care from the DOD, including civilians and contractors who are eligible to receive military health care OCONUS on a reimbursable basis — to report an incident to an individual in a named position without initiating the investigative process or notifying their or their alleged abuser’s commander or supervisor. Restricted reporting allows an adult domestic abuse victim to receive medical treatment, victim advocacy services and clinical treatment without requiring that notice be provided to the alleged abuser’s commander, a military criminal investigative organization or law enforcement agency. Child abuse incidents do not qualify for restricted reporting.</p> <p>Four groups of professionals have been granted the authority to keep information about domestic abuse confidential under the restricted reporting option:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Domestic abuse victim advocates• Domestic abuse victim advocate supervisors• FAP clinical providers• Health care providers* <p>*Some state-specific laws may require medical providers to report known or suspected incidents of domestic abuse to law enforcement, regardless of a victim’s preferences. Contact your local FAP or legal assistance office to learn more.</p> <p>Making a restricted report means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Law enforcement is not notified.• Command is not involved.• The person impacted by domestic abuse has access to the full range of FAP services, including counseling and support from
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Term	Definition
	<p>a domestic abuse victim advocate — who will work with the victim to develop a safety plan and identify their next steps, including pursuing options outside the military system.</p>
<p>domestic abuse unrestricted reporting</p>	<p>A process by which an adult victim of domestic abuse reports an incident for appropriate intervention. Under these circumstances, the incident is reported to command authorities and law enforcement to initiate the official investigative process.</p> <p>Making an unrestricted report means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FAP refers all unrestricted reports to military law enforcement officials, who then decide if an incident meets the criteria for a special victim investigation. • Military criminal investigative organizations will investigate all unrestricted reports of domestic abuse involving sexual assault or aggravated assault with grievous bodily harm. • FAP will notify command of the unrestricted report and communicate the level of risk to the victim. • The victim has access to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Protection and support from command, including through a no-contact order or military protection order ○ The full range of FAP services, including counseling and support from a domestic abuse victim advocate — who will work with the victim to develop a safety plan and identify their next steps ○ Legal services ○ Assistance in applying for transitional compensation, if applicable
<p>domestic violence</p>	<p>Domestic violence is used by the military to specifically name the offense under United States Code, the Uniform Code of Military Justice, or state/local law involving the use, attempted use or threatened use of force or violence against a person, or violation of a lawful order, such as a military protection order or civilian protection order that was issued for the protection of a:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current or former spouse • Person with whom the alleged abuser has a child in common • Current or former intimate partner with whom the alleged abuser shares or has shared a common domicile • Person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the accused and determined to be an intimate partner

Term	Definition
	In 2019, the UCMJ was updated to include domestic violence as a specific crime for which the accused can be prosecuted by court-martial.
domestic abuse victim advocate	Trained domestic abuse victim advocates and clinicians offer a range of services and programs, including workshops to build skills for healthy relationships and help in planning for safety in a crisis, as well as support to new and expecting parents. They also respond to reports of domestic abuse, child abuse and neglect, and referrals concerning PSB-CY.
Family Advocacy Program	This Defense Department program is designated to address domestic abuse, child abuse and neglect, and problematic sexual behavior in children and youth. The program is delivered through the military services, which work in coordination with key military components and civilian agencies to promote victim safety and empowerment and provide appropriate treatment for affected service members and their families.
Intimate partner	<p>Within the context of eligibility for FAP services, an intimate partner is a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the alleged abuser, as determined by the length of the relationship, the type of relationship and the frequency of interaction between the person and the alleged abuser.</p> <p>An intimate partner is informed by, but not limited to, the totality of factors, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous or ongoing consensual intimate or sexual behaviors • History of ongoing dating or expressed interest in continued dating or the potential for an ongoing relationship (e.g., a history of repeated breakups and reconciliations) • Self-identification by the victim or alleged abuser as an intimate partner or identification by others as a couple • Emotional connectedness (e.g., relationship is a priority, partners may have discussed a future together) • Familiarity and knowledge of each other’s lives
National Domestic Violence Hotline	Visit or call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 800-799-7233. Callers can speak with victim advocates en Español and more than 140 other languages.
New Parent Support Program	The NPSP provides voluntary home visitation to expectant parents and parents of children from birth through age 3. The NPSP is part of FAP.

<p>problematic sexual behavior in children and youth</p>	<p>Problematic sexual behavior in children and youth is defined as behavior, initiated by children and youth, which involves using sexual or private body parts in a manner that is developmentally inappropriate or potentially harmful to the individual(s) initiating the behavior or the individual(s) impacted by the behavior.</p>
<p>protective factors</p>	<p>These are conditions in individuals, families or communities that, when present, increase the health and well-being of an individual or family.</p>
<p>Safe Exit button</p>	<p>This button — which Military OneSource has installed on content that is designed to help someone in an abusive relationship and aligns with industry best practices — allows the user to exit an article online and instantly view Weather.com in its place. Within the content itself, it is referred to as the Exit Site button.</p>
<p>technology-facilitated domestic abuse or digital abuse</p>	<p>Technology-facilitated domestic abuse, or digital abuse, is the misuse of technologies such as texting and social networking to bully, harass, stalk or intimidate a partner.</p>