

Military Community Advocacy Content Guide (Family Advocacy; Child and Youth Advocacy)



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

Content Tips (FAP)

- 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).
- Focus on a strengths-based perspective and integrate protective-factors language.
- Incorporate prevention into content.
- 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.
- Use language that is affirming for victims, is victim-centered and trauma-informed.
- 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 are the guiding principles, 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.”
- Verify that the link for the Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline in Family Advocacy Program content is <http://www.childhelphotline.org/>, and not <http://www.childhelp.org/>.

Content Tips (CYA)

- Ensure that nonclinical language and tone are used for the parenting audience.
- Direct parents and caregivers to service providers, pediatricians, OneOp and the National Child Traumatic Stress Network — not to the Family Advocacy Program.
- Incorporate prevention into content.
- Use child-first language.

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- Use clinical language in problematic sexual behavior in children and youth content created for service providers, clinicians, FAP managers and multidisciplinary teams.
- Use the word “exhibiting” when speaking about sexual behavior. Exhibiting sexual behavior is expected and a necessary part of child development.

Things to Avoid (FAP)

- Avoid discussing 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.
- Don’t 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.
- Refrain from using statistics, unless vetted through the Office of Secretary of Defense Family Advocacy Program.
- Avoid making assumptions and telling people what they should, need to, must, ought to or can’t do.

Things to Avoid (CYA)

- Don’t conflate adult-initiated behaviors such as child abuse with child-initiated behaviors.
- Avoid directing parents to FAP in cases of PSB-CY. Directing them to the “installation FAP” is acceptable.
- Don’t make assumptions and tell people what they should, need to, must, ought to or can’t do.
- Refrain from using the following words in reference to CYA content:
 - child sex offender, post-adjudicated sexual offender, perpetrator
 - victim

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

Abbreviation or acronym	Full title
CAPM	Child Abuse Prevention Month
CPS	Child Protective Services
CYA	Child and Youth Advocacy
DAVA	domestic abuse victim advocate
DAVA Locator	Domestic Abuse Victim Advocate Locator
DVAM	Domestic Violence Awareness Month
FAP	Family Advocacy Program
FAPC	FAP clinical provider
FAPM	Family Advocacy Program manager
FAST	Family Assistance Support Team
MDT	multidisciplinary team
MFSC	Military Family Support Center
MLL	MilLife Learning
MPO	military protection order
NCRT	Non-Clinical Referral Tool (DD Form 3179)
NPSP	New Parent Support Program

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Abbreviation or acronym	Full title
PSB-CY	problematic sexual behavior in children and youth (use “in children and youth” for clinical/service provider audiences; use “between children and youth” when talking to parents)
SCRA	Servicemembers’ Civil Relief Act
SIDS	sudden infant death syndrome
SUID	sudden unexpected infant death
UCMJ	Uniform Code of Military Justice

Preferred Terms

Acceptable
alleged abuser (instead of offender); Note: Alleged only applies to an abuser, never a victim.
can, may or might (instead of will or are)
child abuse and/or neglect (instead of child abuse)
child exhibiting (instead of perpetrator, offender, abuser (when referring to a child))
child impacted by (instead of victim impacted by)
could benefit from clinical interventions (instead of needs clinical interventions)
domestic abuse (instead of domestic violence)

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Acceptable

domestic abuse victim advocate (use DAVA on second reference) (instead of Family Advocacy Program victim advocate)

Domestic Abuse Victim Advocate Locator (use DAVA Locator on second reference) (instead of domestic abuse victim advocate locator)

Domestic Violence Awareness Month (instead of Domestic Violence Prevention Month)

Family Advocacy Program (use “the program” on second reference, or FAP, if necessary for clarity)

family advocacy programs (instead of Family Advocacy Programs, if the plural form is used)

FAP (instead of “the FAP...”)

harmful behavior between children and youth (instead of abusive behavior between children and youth)

installation Family Advocacy Program (instead of base Family Advocacy Program)

intimate partner violence (instead of intimate partner abuse)

Military and Family Support Center (use MFSC on second reference)

military protection order (use MPO on second reference) (instead of military protective order)

more than (instead of over)

multidisciplinary team (use MDT on second reference) (instead of multi-disciplinary team)

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Acceptable

nonthreatening (instead of nonviolent)

normative sexual behavior in children and youth (instead of normal sexual behavior in children and youth)

often or generally (instead of always)

parent or caregiver (instead of husband or wife, mother or father)

partner or spouse (instead of husband or wife)

problematic sexual behavior in children and youth (use PSB-CY on second reference) (instead of unhealthy sexual behavior)

some or many (instead of most or all)

spectrum (instead of scale)

tend to (instead of usually)

transitional compensation (instead of Transitional Compensation Program)

victim advocate or advocacy (instead of Victim Advocate Program)



Definitions

Term	Definition
child	The Defense Department defines child as an unmarried person under 18 for whom a parent, guardian, caregiver or any other person providing out-of-home care is legally responsible.
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.</p> <p>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>
Child-first language	Also known as “child-focused language,” this is language that distinguishes the person from the behavior so that it is clear that the child is not the behavior.
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

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Term	Definition
	<p>other's name or refusing to share the decision-making on household finances</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interference with personal liberty, which may include tracking the victim through electronic devices, apps or social media, or forbidding them 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>
domestic abuse prevention and response services	Domestic abuse prevention, victim advocacy, and clinical and nonclinical support services are provided via the Family Advocacy Program.
domestic abuse restricted reporting	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 while abroad 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.

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Term	Definition
	<p>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 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.
domestic abuse unrestricted reporting	A process by which an adult victim of domestic abuse reports an incident for appropriate intervention. Under



Term	Definition
	<p>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

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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.
Domestic Abuse Victim Advocate Locator	Find contact information for your nearest Family Advocacy Program office and domestic abuse victim advocates by using the Domestic Abuse Victim Advocate Locator. Victim advocates can help those impacted by abuse and explain options for reporting abuse, assessing risk, developing safety plans and linking to other resources.
domestic violence	<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 <p>In 2019, the UCMJ was updated to include domestic violence as a specific crime for which the accused can be prosecuted by court-martial.</p>

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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.
FAP manager (use FAPM on second reference)	<p>The FAPM is the chairperson for MDT meetings. FAPM actions must be carried out either through the multidisciplinary team process or in instances of normative and cautionary behavior through a warm handoff or service guidance.</p> <p>According to DD Form 3179, individuals from FAP (e.g., FAPM, clinical case manager, clinician) who receive the PSB-CY referral from Department of Defense Education Activity, child development or youth programs will receive the PSB-CY NCRT, with input from the referral source, to determine if an MDT should be engaged.</p>
harmful behaviors in children and youth	Child-initiated behaviors occurring between children and youth — such as aggression, bullying and problematic sexual behavior — that harm the child or children impacted by the behavior, the child exhibiting the behavior, or others.
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>

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	<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 having a future together) • Familiarity and knowledge of each other's lives
multidisciplinary team (use MDT on second reference)	An MDT is a group with varied and complementary experience, qualifications and skills that contribute to the achievement of the team's specific objectives. The MDT addresses the needs of families, children and youth, as well as the on-installation military community. Its key role is to provide safety and supervision planning.
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 in 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.
Non-Clinical Referral Tool	This is the only DOD-approved tool that FAP providers, DoDEA and CDP/YP staff use to categorize whether a child's exhibiting sexual behavior is normative, cautionary or problematic. It also informs the next steps in the process

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	of handling an incident. (This is from the official DOD form for categorizing reports of sexual behavior.)
primary managing authority (use PMA on second reference)	The primary managing authority is the installation Family Advocacy Program responsible for leading and managing the MDT for the duration of the PSB-CY case. If multiple service branches in close proximity have children exhibiting or impacted, the FAPM of the installation that supports the child who exhibited the concerning sexual behavior will coordinate across the branches to ensure that all MDT members from all services are present and participating.
problematic sexual behavior in children and youth	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.
protective factors	These are conditions in individuals, families or communities that, when present, increase the health and well-being of an individual or family.
Safe Exit button	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.
strength-based language	This is language that emphasizes strengths, abilities and opportunities, instead of challenges, conditions or perceived deficiencies.

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technology-facilitated domestic abuse or digital abuse	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.
vulnerability factors	These are conditions in individuals, families or communities that, when present, pose a risk to the health and well-being of an individual or family.
warm handoff	A warm handoff is a handoff that takes place between two members of the health care team, in front of the patient (and family, if present).

Official Resources (FAP)

Defense Department policy

- [DOD Instruction 1342.24, “Transitional Compensation \(TC\) for Abused Dependents,” Sept. 23, 2019](#): This instruction implements policy, assigns responsibilities and prescribes procedures for payment of monthly transitional compensation to dependents of members separated from military service for dependent abuse.
- [DOD Manual 1402.05, “Background Checks on Individuals in Department of Defense Child Development and Youth Programs,” Jan. 24, 2017](#): This instruction establishes policy, assigns responsibility and prescribes procedures for criminal history background checks for all existing and newly hired individuals involved in the provision of child care services as federal employees or contractors or in federal facilities to children under the age of 18.
- [DOD Instruction 6400.01, “Family Advocacy Program \(FAP\),” May 1, 2019](#): This manual prescribes uniform standards for all installation Family Advocacy Programs and provides installation FAP officers with an instrument for executing their programs.
- [DOD Instruction 6400.03, “Family Advocacy Command Assistance Team \(FACAT\),” April 25, 2014, Incorporating Change 1, effective April 3, 2017](#): This instruction establishes policy, assigns responsibility and prescribes procedures for the implementation of the Family Advocacy Command Assistance Team. The FACAT

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helps local installation personnel manage cases of child sexual abuse in a DOD out-of-home care program when the team identifies multiple children as known or suspected victims.

- [DOD Instruction 6400.05, “New Parent Support Program \(NPSP\),” June 13, 2012, Incorporating Change 1, effective April 15, 2020](#): This instruction implements policy, assigns responsibilities and prescribes procedures under DOD Directive 6400.1 for the NPSP, a standardized secondary prevention program for parents who are at risk for engaging in child abuse. The NPSP uses an intensive, voluntary home visitation model developed specifically for expectant parents and parents of children from birth to 3 years of age to reduce the risk of child abuse.
- [DOD Instruction 6400.06, “DoD Coordinated Community Response to Domestic Abuse Involving DoD Military and Certain Affiliated Personnel,” Dec. 15, 2021, Change 3 effective July 11, 2024](#): This instruction establishes, implements and updates domestic abuse policies and identifies and assigns responsibilities for preventing and responding to domestic abuse. It includes provisions related to military protection orders, Fatality Review and other topics that are relevant in child abuse cases.
- [DOD Instruction 6400.09, “DOD Policy on Integrated Primary Prevention of Self-Directed Harm and Prohibited Abuse or Harm,” Sep 11, 2020](#). This policy establishes and integrates policies and responsibilities to reduce/eliminate self-directed harm and abusive or harmful acts to promote force readiness.
- [DOD Instruction 6400.10, “DoD Coordinated Community Response to Problematic Sexual Behavior in Children and Youth,” Dec. 30, 2021](#): This instruction establishes policy, assigns responsibilities and prescribes procedures for the DOD-coordinated community response for preventing and responding to problematic sexual behavior in children and youth, as defined in DOD Instruction 6400.01.
- [DOD Manual 6400.01, Volume 1, “Family Advocacy Program \(FAP\): FAP Standards,” July 22, 2019](#): This instruction establishes the Family Advocacy Program and assigns responsibilities for working to prevent family maltreatment, identifying victims of abuse, assessing families experiencing domestic and child abuse, and providing treatment for those families.
- [Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness Memorandum, “Duration of Payment for Transitional Compensation for Abused Dependents,” June 14, 2004](#): This directive-type memorandum implements changes to the Transitional Compensation Program mandated by congressional legislation.

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Military OneSource websites

- [Articles on the Family Advocacy Program](#)
- [Benefits page on the Family Advocacy Program](#)
- [MilLife Guides on the Family Advocacy Program](#)
- [Products page on the Family Advocacy Program](#)
- [Resources page on the Family Advocacy Program](#)
- [Sexual Development in Children — Resources for Military Families](#)

Official Resources (CYA)

Defense Department Policy

- [DOD Manual 6400.01, Volume 1, “FAP Standards,” July 22, 2019](#)
- [DOD Instruction 6400.10, “DOD Coordinated Community Response to Problematic Sexual Behavior in Children and Youth,” Dec. 30, 2021](#)
- Service-specific guidance regarding PSB-CY MDTs:
 - [Army Regulation 608–18, “The Army Family Advocacy Program,” Oct. 30, 2007](#)
 - [Marine Corps Order 1754.11A, “Marine Corps Family Advocacy Program,” April 8, 2021](#)
 - [SecNav Instruction 1752.3B, “Family Advocacy Program,” Nov. 10, 2005](#)
- [Department of the Air Force Instruction 40-301, “Medical Command,” Nov. 13, 2020](#)

Military OneSource websites

- [Normative sexual behavior, article, “Healthy Sexual Behaviors in Children”](#)
- [FAQ and Resource Guide for Parents and Caregivers: Problematic Sexual Behavior in Children and Youth](#)
- [Flyer on the Non-Clinical Referral Tool, “Recommended Sequence for FAP Training on PSB-CY flyer”](#)
- [Guide on problematic sexual behavior, “Problematic Sexual Behavior in Children and Youth – Multidisciplinary Team Quick Guide”](#)
- [MilLife Guide on harmful behaviors in children and youth, “Preventing Harmful Behaviors in Children and Youth”](#)

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- [Podcast episode on the PSB-CY spectrum, “Caregiver Engagement in Cases of Problematic Sexual Behavior in Children and Youth”](#)
- [Podcast episode on child-focused language, “The Words We Use Matter”](#)
- [PowerPoint on primary managing authority, “Multidisciplinary Team Roles, Responsibilities and Primary Managing Authority PowerPoint”](#)