

PREVENTION IN ACTION

BOUNDARIES AND BALANCE

HEALTHY BOUNDARIES AND COMMUNICATION STRENGTHEN RELATIONSHIPS

Healthy relationships include boundaries, self-control, communication, and respect. In healthy relationships, people feel supported, connected, and independent.

Think of a healthy relationship you have, or have had in the past, regardless of the type of relationship, or maybe people who have a healthy relationship that you admire. What made you think of that relationship? What do you think makes it healthy?

Communication

- Treat each other with respect.
- Share in decision-making.
- Speak openly about thoughts and feelings.
- Listen to each other; feel heard and supported.
- Celebrate each other's successes.

Boundaries

- Trust each other.
- Spend time with family.
- Spend time with friends and apart from your partner.
- Don't pressure each other to do things.

Build Relationship Skills

[Marine Corps Family Team](#)

[Building](#) offers relationship classes, including Five Love Language, Four Lenses, Real Relationships, and Say What.

The [Family Advocacy Program](#) offers classes, counseling, and victim advocacy.

RELATIONSHIP GREEN FLAGS

- Mutual respect and support
- Healthy boundaries
- Open communication
- Self-sufficiency
- Long-standing friendships with others
- Healthy individual hobbies
- Empathy

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Conflict is a normal part of all relationships, and everyone reacts differently to conflict. Negotiating is one of the best ways to resolve conflicts and problems. Negotiating includes the following:

- Focus on the idea, not the person.
- Allow others to finish statements and thoughts.
- Show interest in others' viewpoints.
- Emphasize shared values, viewpoints, and attitudes.
- Don't let emotions run the discussion.

Express Your Expectations

If someone isn't meeting your needs, it is important to discuss it with the other individual. Unless the other person is aware the behavior is negatively impacting you, there is little chance the behavior will stop.

If you can't positively express your expectations, you could limit your relationship.

An effective way to express your feelings without sounding critical is an I statement. These statements may sound odd at

"I feel _____ when _____ because I _____."

FEELING BEHAVIOR EFFECT

first, but they are logical.

Using an I statement allows you to pose your expectation, point, frustration, or idea without making it about the other person.

Instead of "You never clean up after yourself," try "I feel frustrated **when** the house is a wreck **because** I am too tired to clean up after work." Instead of

"You never have time for me," try "I **feel** lonely **when** we don't have a date night once a week **because** I value spending time with you even with our busy schedules."

Showing **kindness, understanding, and respect** enables individuals to create and sustain healthy relationships.

BALANCE YOUR WANTS WITH YOUR NEEDS TO BUILD FINANCIAL FITNESS

When managing personal finances, distinguishing between wants and needs is crucial.

Understanding the difference will influence budgeting, spending habits, and long-term financial planning.

Needs are essential for basic survival and well-being. These typically include rent or mortgage payments, groceries, and reliable transportation.

Wants, on the other hand, are non-essential items or experiences that enhance life but are not necessary for survival.

Examples include designer clothing, dining out, vacations, subscriptions to streaming services, and personal gadgets.

The distinction between needs and wants is very important to financial health. A budget prioritizes needs first, ensuring

that needs are covered before allocating funds for wants.

Recognizing wants can help reduce unnecessary expenses, leading to less reliance on credit and improved financial health.

By identifying wants, you can make informed decisions about where to reduce expenses, allowing for more savings and investment toward future goals.

Tips for Balancing Your Needs and Wants

1. Track your income and categorize your expenses into needs and wants. Tracking this activity can highlight where adjustments may be necessary.

2. Cover your needs before indulging in wants. This can help maintain financial stability.

3. Allocate a specific amount for spending on wants. This allows for enjoyment without



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compromising financial health.

4. Before buying something, ask yourself if it's a need or a want. Wait 24 hours before making a purchase and use a shopping list to track your spending.

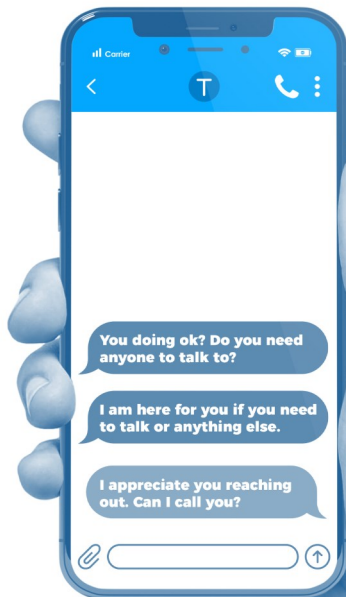
By balancing needs and wants, you can reduce stress by avoiding shortfalls on essentials, which distract from mission readiness.

Support is available from Personal Financial Managers at installations, who provide free financial counseling and education on a variety of topics, including budgeting.

Visit your local [Personal Financial Management Program](#) for more information.

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KNOW THE NUMBER



ABOUT THE NEWSLETTER

The United States Marine Corps' Marine & Family Programs Division publishes Prevention in Action each quarter.

The contents of this newsletter are for informational purposes only and not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment.

To access hot links, right-click on link, copy link, and paste it into a browser window.

Visit <https://www.usmc-mccs.org/news/prevention>



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To suggest topics or questions, email hqmcprevention@usmc.mil.

SET BOUNDARIES WITH YOUR TEENS

Every teen can benefit from parents who set boundaries that match their growing maturity. This helps them develop the critical skill of self-control and supports them as they navigate their path to independence.

Tips for Setting Boundaries:

1. Start with love. Begin talks about limits positively, expressing care. Help teens understand that boundaries are for their safety, you love them, and it's your job to keep them safe.

2. Start early. Set boundaries consistently from a young age. As they grow, loosen boundaries based on their responsibility and judgment. Children thrive when they have boundaries and understand what the limits and expectations are.

3. Timing is key. Choose a calm time to discuss limits, not when you are angry or excited. Level-headed discussions lead to

better understanding.

4. Understand privileges vs. rights. Explain that food, clothing, and housing are rights, while staying out late and using a cellphone are privileges.

Consequences should relate to whatever the issues are. Food, clothing, and housing are never used as a punishment, but privileges can be taken away.

5. Be willing to negotiate. Ask for your teen's input on boundaries and be flexible to a point. When teens have a say regarding the boundaries, they are more likely to follow them. Remember that safety and morality are non-negotiable.

6. Practice what you preach. Demonstrate living within limits. Setting an example helps teens accept their own boundaries.

7. Follow through with consequences. Allow natural consequences and stick to established consequences for



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broken rules. This reinforces the importance of boundaries.

With thoughtful communication, you can set effective boundaries that help your teens explore safely.

Raising a teenager can be challenging, but boundaries are helpful. To learn more tips and strategies for parenting children who are 10 to 18 years old, register for the free online Branch Out

parenting program at thrive.psu.edu.

Through a collaboration between the Department of Defense's Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy (DoD MC&FP) and the Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness at Penn State, [Thrive Initiative resources](http://thrive.psu.edu) are available to military families.

Make Healthy Choices When Shopping for Groceries

Grocery shopping doesn't have to be intimidating. Planning your weekly meals can reduce stress and help you save money by buying only what you'll use, minimizing food waste. Start by focusing on four dinners throughout the week, allowing flexibility for dining out or leftovers.

What to Buy to Aid Your Meal Planning

Produce: Fresh produce is packed with nutrients but can perish quickly, so buy only what you need for the week. Opt for in-season fruits and vegetables to keep costs low. Remember, frozen and canned produce can be just as nutritious since they are harvested and processed at peak freshness.

Lean Proteins: Proteins are typically the priciest items on your list. Stay on budget by choosing budget-friendly cuts (like roasts and loins), buying in bulk (to freeze for later), and



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selecting items on sale. Lean proteins help reduce saturated fat intake while supporting heart health. Incorporating beans and legumes can also increase meal volume and provide a budget-friendly protein source.

Whole Grains: Incorporating brown rice, quinoa, whole wheat pasta, and oats adds fiber to your diet, promoting satiety and

stable energy levels. Ensure the label reads "whole grains" for genuine options.

Healthy Fats: Healthy fats like avocados, nuts, seeds, olive oil, and fatty fish (like salmon) are crucial for overall health and can enhance meal variety.

Dairy or dairy alternatives: Dairy provides calcium, vitamin D, and probiotics, along with quick protein. Opt for low-fat or skim options to reduce calories and saturated fat, as well as options that are fortified with essential nutrients like calcium and vitamin D if you're choosing almond milk or other milk alternatives for dietary reasons. Don't overlook store-brand choices for savings.

With this plan, grocery shopping can be efficient, budget-friendly, and nutritious. To learn more about developing healthy habits, connect with your local [fitness team](#).

STRIKING A BALANCE CAN HELP YOU MANAGE STRESS

Challenges and tough times impact everyone, and Marines face some unique challenges throughout their careers. But using alcohol to cope can lead to serious problems, including addiction, health issues, and damaged relationships.

Marines consistently report the highest rates of binge drinking and heavy drinking across the Department of Defense. Alcohol misuse can lead to disciplinary action, lost promotions, and even discharge.

When we experience difficult events, our bodies respond in ways that can be helpful short-term but harmful long-term. Take a Marine Corps Total Fitness approach to enhance healthy coping skills, so you're ready and resilient when stress levels peak.

Social Fitness

Building strong, supportive relationships, seeking help from trusted friends or groups, and engaging in activities that do not involve alcohol can reduce isolation and promote emotional well-being.

Spiritual Fitness

Meditation, prayer, mindfulness, and [connecting with a higher purpose](#) or community can help foster inner peace, resilience, and a sense of meaning.

Mental Fitness

Grounding techniques, [mindfulness](#), exercise, counseling, healthy routines, [breathing exercises](#), and self-compassion can help decrease reliance on substances and increase wellness.



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Physical Fitness

Regular exercise such as strength training, [cardio](#), yoga, and walking help improve mood, reduce stress, and promote overall well-being.

[OSCAR Team Members](#) play a crucial role in identifying stress early in their unit, connecting peers to additional help when needed, and providing support across the [stress continuum](#).

[The Substance Assessment and Counseling Program \(SACP\)](#) provides non-medical substance misuse services for Marines and attached service members and assists with referrals as needed.

Don't let stress, adversity, and alcohol misuse control your life. Reach out today. Seeking help is a sign of strength, not weakness.

Helping Others Can Help You Burn Stress

Volunteering provides a sense of purpose and connection, helping to reduce stress while making a positive impact on others.

To relieve stress, start by practicing self-care. Get more sleep. Increase your movement. Eat a healthier diet.

While establishing such habits takes time, practicing by taking small initial steps helps one to adapt to the ever-changing demands of life.

In the meantime, consider becoming more socially connected by volunteering.

Volunteering within your community can:

- Reduce stress and improve mental health: By focusing on helping others, volunteering can help you combat depression, anxiety, and feelings of isolation.
- Build spiritual fitness: Volunteering can help you develop a sense of connection to something larger than yourself, fostering spiritual growth and well-being.
- Improve physical health: Volunteering can keep you active and engaged.
- Develop mental skills: Volunteering can help individuals build problem-solving and negotiation skills, among others.
- Enhance resilience and social connections: You can build strong social networks and develop the resilience needed to navigate life's challenges by volunteering.

The [Volunteer Management Program](#) can help you find a volunteer opportunity. Contact your local volunteer coordinator to get started.

If you need help managing stress, reach out for help. Support is within reach. Connect with your [Community Counseling Program](#) for additional support.

It is OK to ask a fellow Marine, chaplain, friend, or family member to listen to your concerns or to help you reduce your stress.

PREVENTION RESOURCES

DoD resources and tools: Check out the Department of Defense's www.prevention.mil. It includes information about resources, tools, research, and policy.

Marine Corps Interactive Suicide Prevention and Mental Fitness Resource: This online

resource provides suicide prevention and skill-building information for all Marines and their families.

This is a resource users can come back to as often as they need it. Go to www.usmc-mccs.org/mfitness.

MCCS website: Visit the Marine

Corps Community Services website (www.usmc-mccs.org) to find information about programs and resources and read articles that offer skill-building information.

Prevention in Action— Stakeholders Training: Visit www.marinenet.usmc.mil and

search Prevention in Action. This self-guided online training is designed for service members and civilians who engage in prevention activities. In this course, participants learn more about how and why to champion prevention activities.