

Magellan  
FEDERAL



Webinar Series Presents:

## **AUTISM** RESOURCES FOR **MILITARY FAMILIES**



[mfed.info/inform](https://mfed.info/inform)



[MFedInform@MagellanFederal](mailto:MFedInform@MagellanFederal)

Follow us!



@MGLFed

# Magellan FEDERAL

We inspire healthier, more productive communities by delivering innovative, total well-being solutions to the Federal Government, military personnel, government employees, and their families.



## Agenda

- ✓ UNDERSTANDING AUTISM
- ✓ AUTISM IN THE MILITARY COMMUNITY
- ✓ TESTIMONIAL
- ✓ AVAILABLE PROGRAMS: MFLC AND EFMP
- ✓ TIPS & TAKEAWAYS
- ✓ Q&A





# Understanding Autism

---

LYNETTE WISHART | REGIONAL SUPERVISOR, MFLC

KEYONNIE TRAINER | INSTRUCTOR, EFMP



**AUTISM** RESOURCES FOR  
**MILITARY FAMILIES**

## Introduction to Autism Spectrum Disorders

# 1 in 36

Currently about **1 in 36** are diagnosed with Autism

# x4

Boys are **four times more likely** to be diagnosed with ASD than girls.

# 5 Types

Asperger's, Rett's, Kanner's syndrome, Childhood Disintegrative Disorder, and Pervasive Developmental Disorder

- ▶ Autism has a set of common symptoms in three main areas of communication, social interaction, and behavior but can vary widely even among siblings.
- ▶ Autism can run in families
- ▶ Unique thinkers and accomplished artists that fall into this population: **Albert Einstein, Thomas Edison, Beethoven, Mozart, Emily Dickinson** and **Jane Austin**.
- ▶ Girls may be more likely to compensate with other skills or by masking their symptoms
- ▶ There are **five major types of disorders** falling under the ASD umbrella
- ▶ Higher probability of dual diagnosis i.e. ADHD, dyslexia, ODD, etc.
- ▶ High functioning Autism can be missed or misdiagnosed due to variations and masking

## Early Warning Signs

### COMMUNICATION

- Language development delay, repetitive or quirky sounds.
- Inability to initiate or maintain speech.
- Responds by repeating a question rather than answering.
- Difficulty communicating needs or desires.

### SOCIAL

- Lack of appropriate verbal/nonverbal behavior.
- Lack of ability to develop friendships.
- Social and emotional exchange like eye contact.
- Minimal tolerance to being touched or held.
- Trouble perceiving and talking about feelings, sharing interests.

### BEHAVIORAL

- Restricted or repetitive behaviors.
- Difficulty in motor control
- Distress with change in routine.
- Unusual connection to objects, lining up toys.
- Head banging or rocking.
- Sensory sensitivities.

## Examples of Development Areas Impacted by Autism

- **Speech and Language**

If you teach a child with limited speech to say phrases like “open door,” they might overgeneralize it and say “open door” even if they want something else opened like a bag of chips or a bottle of water.

- **Social and Emotional**

Normally, the first thing a person focuses on is a person’s eyes, and then moves on to the rest of the face. A child with autism may focus only on the person’s mouth, which offers less emotional information than their eye.

- **Cognitive Development**

If you see that your child is struggling putting together a puzzle, you should allow them different ways of solving problems for themselves.



# Autism In the Military Community

---

AMY LEESER | Regional Supervisor, MFLC



**AUTISM** RESOURCES FOR  
**MILITARY FAMILIES**



## Autism in the Military Community

### DIAGNOSIS STATISTICS OF AUTISM IN MILITARY DEPENDENT CHILDREN

- **1 in 36** in General Population
- TRICARE 2020 data **34,361** across all branches of service.
- **60%** of those were children of Active Duty Service Members

### NAVIGATING AUTISM WITH A MISSION MINDSET

- Permanent Change of Duty Station (PCS)
  - Finding Care-"Back to the End of the Line"
  - Impacts on the Child With Autism
- Deployment
- Family Stress

**AUTISM** RESOURCES FOR  
MILITARY FAMILIES

# Testimonial

---

CHRISTY PENDEGRAFT | SYSTEMS NAVIGATOR, EFMP



**AUTISM** RESOURCES FOR  
**MILITARY FAMILIES**

## Serving as a military family with special needs


### RECOGNIZING SIGNS OF A DISABILITY

- ▶ Questioning: is something wrong?
- ▶ Comparing: he/she is not like their peers
- ▶ Denying: maybe he/she will grow out of it
- ▶ Accepting: seeking professional guidance



**AUTISM** RESOURCES FOR  
**MILITARY FAMILIES**

## Challenges of obtaining diagnosis in military environment

- 
- ▶ Primary care
  - ▶ Referral to specialist
  - ▶ Enrolling in EFMP
  - ▶ Enrolling in ECHO for therapy coverage
  - ▶ Establishing your plan
  - ▶ Continuity of services and starting over after changing stations



AUTISM RESOURCES FOR  
MILITARY FAMILIES



## Utilizing Available Program Resources

- ▶ Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) Systems Navigators
- ▶ Military & Family Life Counseling Program (MFLC)



**AUTISM** RESOURCES FOR  
**MILITARY FAMILIES**

## Available Programs: MFLC and EFMP

---

AMY LEESER | Regional Supervisor, MFLC

ME'LISA RAM | Program Manager, EFMP



**AUTISM** RESOURCES FOR  
**MILITARY FAMILIES**

## Military Family Life Counseling Program Support

- ▶ Military Family Life Counselors provide non-medical counseling support to service members and their dependents.
- ▶ 1477 Magellan MFLC Counselors from East of Mississippi and Europe. Program is Worldwide
- ▶ They also provide psychoeducation and consultation to service members, families, and stakeholders such as schools, Child Development/Youth Programs, and Command



**AUTISM** RESOURCES FOR  
**MILITARY FAMILIES**

## Connect to a Local MFLC: The MFLC Network



MFLCs as Help Multipliers



Supporting Families with Children with Autism in Scope



## Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP)

- ▶ The Army designed the EFMP to be a comprehensive, coordinated, multi-agency program that provides community support, housing, medical, educational, and personnel services to military families with an exceptional family member (EFM).
- ▶ 3 Pillars of EFMP:
  1. Medical
  2. Human Resource Command (HRC)
  3. Family Support Command
- ▶ Steps to enroll in EFMP
  - Visit Medical Provider
  - Next visit EFMP Case Manager with the appropriate forms
  - Regional Health Command
- ▶ Magellan supports the Army by providing Systems Navigators in 32 locations around the world, to provide services to the special need community



## Autism Care Demonstration (ACD)

- ▶ ACD covers applied behavior analysis (ABA) services.
- ▶ You must be enrolled in EFMP and Extended Care Health Option (ECHO)
- ▶ ACD enrollment
  - Step 1 Get Diagnosed
  - Step 2 Referral and pre-authorization
  - Step 3 Complete out-come measurements
  - Step 4 Schedule an appointment
  - Step 5 Work with an Autism Services Navigator (ASN)
- ▶ For more information visit TRICARE or <https://www.tricare.mil/autism>  
Or EFMP & Me: The Exceptional Family Member Program Resource  
([militaryonesource.mil](http://militaryonesource.mil))



## Tips & Takeaways

---

KEYONNIE TRAINER | INSTRUCTOR, EFMP

LYNETTE WISHART | REGIONAL SUPERVISOR, MFLC



AUTISM RESOURCES FOR  
MILITARY FAMILIES

## EFMP Systems Navigators

- ▶ Systems Navigators facilitates connections between military families who have special needs and the systems of required care.
- ▶ Autism is one of the many disabilities that our System Navigators assist family members with on a daily basics.
- ▶ Systems Navigators are Army Community Service Exceptional Family Member Program staff members located on most Army installations around the world.
- ▶ System Navigators identify Exceptional Family Members and family strengths and needs.
- ▶ Systems Navigators help identify and prioritize family goals by developing a Family Service Plan (FSP).





## Empowering Family Members with Autism

System Navigators empower military family members with special needs to self-advocate for themselves.

They provide them with the tools, rules, regulations and above all the **SUPPORT** to be their own best advocate.

### APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS (ABA)

System Navigators will refer family members to a Tricare-approved ABA to assist military families with autism.

### EDUCATION & SUPPORT

System Navigators identify and create relevant workshops, support groups and social activities to help spread awareness about a variety of topic, such as autism.

### SELF-ADVOCATE

Systems Navigators support and empower the family to promote and protect the rights and welfare of their loved ones.



**AUTISM** RESOURCES FOR  
**MILITARY FAMILIES**

## Compassionate Responding



**Calm** Remain calm, use distraction, verbal cues, or special interests like reading or playing cards can help calm the child.



**Attune** Learn triggers for emotional upset, attune to variations of mood and need to avoid preventable outbursts.



**Self-Care** Utilizing support, resources, respite care in your area, asking for help is a necessary survival skill.



## Words to Remember

QUOTE

“When you  
meet one  
person with  
autism, you  
have met ONE  
person with  
autism.”

TEMPLE GRANDIN



## Q&A

---



# AUTISM RESOURCES FOR MILITARY FAMILIES







Stay informed.  **Subscribe** today!

Presented by **Magellan**  
FEDERAL



[mfed.info/inform](https://mfed.info/inform)



[MFedInform@MagellanFederal](mailto:MFedInform@MagellanFederal)

Follow us!



[@MGLFed](https://twitter.com/MGLFed)