

## Honoring our Veterans

**VETERANS DAY** is Nov. 11. To support our state employees who are military veterans, the Ohio Employee Assistance Program (OEAP) is dedicating this edition of Frontline Focus, the OEAP newsletter, to veterans and their families. OEAP thanks our veterans for their dedication and service.



## Information for Employers about Veterans

Returning veterans often resume the job they had before they left home. Other veterans may start a new job after discharge. Veterans make very good workers because of their military training. They learn skills in leadership, teamwork and performance under pressure. Military experience fosters respect for procedures. Veterans are not afraid to tackle tough problems.

However, veterans all go through some readjustment after they get back from a war zone. Employers can benefit from understanding their employees' needs and rights. Informed employers can help make the process smoother for both the returnee and the workplace.



### The National Guard and Reserve

About half of those returning from deployment in the current conflicts are U.S. National Guard and Reserves. We are counting on these service members more than ever before. Employers must realize, though, the challenges they face.

When they are deployed, the normal "civilian" lives of reserve component members are highly disrupted. The lives of their families also are disrupted. Spouses must suddenly make decisions without a partner. Families go through financial changes and emotional upset. At the same time, these families often lack the close ties and support that full-time military families share with each other.

The change from active duty back to everyday life is not always smooth for veterans. It can be even harder for National Guard and Reserve members. They no longer have others around them who have shared the same war experience.

### Rights of Employees

Employers also need to be aware of the rights of their veteran employees. The law applies to all public

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and private employers in the United States. For service members meeting criteria, employers must provide:

- Prompt job reinstatement;
- Accumulation of seniority, including pension plan benefits;
- Reinstatement of health insurance;
- Training or retraining of job skills, including accommodations for the disabled; and
- Protection against discrimination.

## Resources

Managers and supervisors can help by learning how veterans may react after being in a war zone. Employers should know the common reactions to trauma. Be aware that most service members will overcome the issue, given time. The website [ptsd.va.gov](https://ptsd.va.gov) contains much information that applies to returning veterans and their families.

Resources for employers:

### Returning from the War Zone: A Guide for Military Personnel and Families

- Describes common reactions after deployment to a war zone.
- Discusses problems that can occur and what can be done if they do.
- Coming back from a war zone means adjustment for all involved.
- Also covers the effects of homecoming on family life and discusses the role of the family in problem-solving.

### Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR)

- ESGR helps both military reservists and their employers adjust after deployment.

### America's Heroes at Work

- A US Department of Labor project to help returning service members affected by Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and/or PTSD succeed in the workplace.
- Designed for employers and the workforce development system.



## Vet Success

- Describes the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VRE) program.
- Serves veterans with service-connected disabilities.

## Veterans' Employment & Training Service (VETS)

- This U.S. Department of Labor program helps veterans maximize their job opportunities and protects their employment rights.

By U.S. Dept. of Veteran's Affairs - Public Domain.

## Military Families Need to Open Doors to Understanding Them

*"My point is no one knows what it is really like on the other side. There are many inaccuracies and misunderstandings, but as military families, we have to face the fact that we hold some responsibility. We need to share our story, educate the community, and speak up for ourselves."*

— Michelle Joyner, National Military Family Association communications director

Joyner was speaking of mistaken assumptions made about military life by those not living it, and how the same can be true for anyone's life if time isn't taken to explain it. She penned this argument in the National Military Family Association's blog, "[Branching Out](#)," and suggests it's up to military families to peel away misconceptions so healthy understanding and mutual support can foster in their communities. Her argument caught our (National Institute on Aging) attention, as it also exposes the challenges families with service members who have psychological health concerns and traumatic brain injury (TBI) face, only compounded by their injuries. These families also need to share their stories, educate their communities and speak up for themselves. If this is you, find your voice with help from resources listed at the end of Joyner's blog post.

### Michelle Joyner's Blog Post

Recent articles about lavish benefits and ketchup choices have sparked many conversations in our community about the lack of understanding of the military lifestyle. Many feel that our civilian friends just don't understand what it's like. There are feelings of frustration and anger pitted against the sacrifices made during these past 12 years of war. As a military spouse, I can identify with the emotions these conversations evoke.

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However, I'll be the first to admit that I don't know what it's like to be the wife of a firefighter or police officer. I don't know what it's like to have a long-haul truck driver, a pilot, a teacher, or a chef in my family. My point is no one knows what it's really like on the other side. There are many inaccuracies and misunderstandings but as military families, we have to face the fact that we hold some responsibility. We need to share our story, educate the community, and speak up for ourselves.

There are several resources to help. One in particular is the movie, "Flat Daddy," now available on DVD. "Flat Daddy" follows four families who used "flat daddies," life-sized cardboard cutouts of their loved ones to ease the pain of separations. Filmed over the course of a year, the film explored the impact of war on those left behind. The filmmaker's primary goal was to raise awareness about the challenges military families face and the long-term effects war can have on families.

Other great tools include the "How to Help Military and veteran Families" print series that offers valuable information to families, friends, neighbors and teachers to assist and support members of the military, their families and veterans. For a lighthearted take, read Sarah Smiley's "Dinner with the Smileys," the story of an adventurous mission Sarah embarked on with her sons to fill the empty chair at the dinner table during her husband's deployment. Each week the Smileys invited a guest for dinner and learned important lessons about families and the community.

What I've learned in the last several years is that I need my family and friends. They understand what my life is like, but that's only because they've had the chance to learn. We have to be brave enough to share and educate.

The following entities recognize the challenges and facilitate understanding for military families coping with psychological health concerns or traumatic brain

injury. Learning from their resources may help you gather the courage to help others understand your situation.

- Real Warriors Campaign website hosts video profiles of service members with psychological concerns, and video stories on "Real Warriors and Families seeking psychological health care."
- Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury has a broad range of targeted resources.
- TBI educational materials are available at Defense and veterans Brain Injury Center, including fact sheets, booklets and posters.
- National Center for Telehealth and Technology designed [afterdeployment.org](http://afterdeployment.org), a website dedicated to wellness resources for the military community that includes self-assessments, Peer-2-Peer Forum, videos and many other resources.
- Military Kids Connect has resources for children as well as parents.



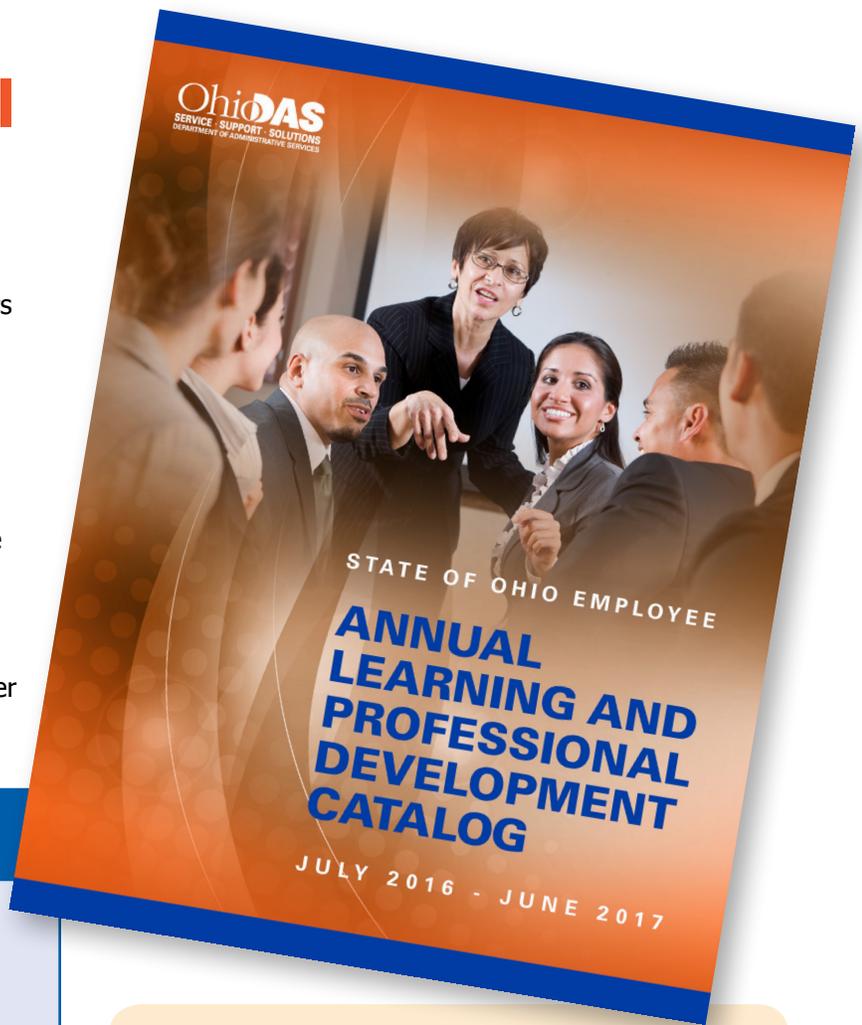
*By National Institute on Aging. Public domain.*



# Get the Professional and Personal Training You Need

The Ohio Employee Assistance Program (OEAP) offers educational and helpful training courses through the course catalog, produced by the Ohio Department of Administrative Services' Office of Learning and Professional Development.

Below is a list of courses offered by OEAP as well as other training courses offered in November. For more details about these and all of the courses, as well as times and locations, see the [course catalog](#) on the [Learning and Professional Development home page](#), which is accessible from [myOhio.gov](http://myOhio.gov) under the Career Resources tab in the top menu.



Date	Course
Nov. 3	Emotional Intelligence
	Holiday Budgeting (Optum)
	Life Matters: Suicide Awareness (OEAP)
Nov. 15	Substance Abuse 101 (OEAP)
Nov. 17	Critical Conversations on Domestic Violence
	See the Signs: Domestic Violence Bystander Intervention
Nov. 18	Assertiveness



**OHIO EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

Your employee assistance program offers confidential help for personal problems and concerns. Concerned about a troubled family member who won't get help? Feel tired and exhausted, but don't know if it's burnout, loss of motivation, depression or all three? Late for work too often? Has the use of alcohol or drugs created a crisis you are facing right now? The bottom line, never wonder if your concern is appropriate to contact OEAP. So, if you've been putting off taking action to solve a serious issue that is weighing on you, give OEAP a call today.

### Share Your Comments about Frontline Focus

Your comments are important. Please share your comments about Frontline Focus via OEAP's confidential email address: [OEAP@das.ohio.gov](mailto:OEAP@das.ohio.gov). Your comments may be published in a future edition of Frontline Focus.

800-221-6327/614-644-8545 [ohio.gov/eap](http://ohio.gov/eap)  
**Andy Bensing**, OEAP Benefits Manager

