FOCUS (Families OverComing Under Stress)

TARGET AUDIENCE

This program is for military Service members and their families.

SUMMARY

FOCUS (Families OverComing Under Stress), a community-based, family-oriented program, is designed to provide support and resiliency training to military families as they prepare for and cope with the different stages of deployment.

EVIDENCE

One evaluation of FOCUS found positive outcomes for parents and children up to 6 months after program completion. Parents demonstrated improvements in anxiety and depression at post-intervention and follow-up. Decreases in Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder symptoms and unhealthy family functioning were found from intake to post-intervention. Children reported a reduction in total difficulties and an increase in pro-social behaviors at post-intervention and follow-up. There were also reductions in clinical-level conduct problems and emotional symptoms and an increase in positive coping strategies, such as cognitive restructuring, emotional regulation, and problem-solving for children from intake to post-intervention. Results should be interpreted with caution as this evaluation lacked a no-treatment control group.

COMPONENTS

FOCUS is available to families at designated installations for the U.S. Navy, Marine Corps, Army, and Air Force and is designed to teach families coping skills to help them manage their feelings and concerns, learn to communicate more clearly, and address daily and long-term challenges. FOCUS includes five key learning skills:

- Understanding emotional regulation;
- Using helpful communication;
- Examining problem-solving;
- Learning goal-setting; and
- Managing deployment reminders.

Sessions are delivered as spouse/partner-only, children-only, and family sessions. Participants are taught how to listen and respond to each other regarding specific problems they may be experiencing. Each session focuses on helping the family members talk about their concerns and fears about their loved one being deployed to a war zone.

PREVIOUS USE

Since 2008, FOCUS has been implemented at U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps installations in Arizona, California, Florida, Hawaii, Mississippi, New Mexico, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, and Washington and in Germany and Japan.

www.militaryfamilies.psu.edu
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TRAINING

This program is delivered by clinicians who are master's level or higher. Training is required and is delivered through the Training Institute at the Nathanson Family Resilience Center. Training consists of independent learning, a 2-day interactive training, and ongoing consultation. The fee for one person is $1,870 and includes 1 year of access to an Online Learning Center, Consultation Calls, and the live training. Please email info@nfrc.ucla.edu for more information.

CONSIDERATIONS

Considerations for implementing this program include securing facilitators who have a suitable educational background and ensuring they receive training, finding a location to deliver sessions, and potentially providing child care during parent-only sessions.

The Clearinghouse can help address these considerations. Please call 1-877-382-9185 or email Clearinghouse@psu.edu

IMPLEMENTATION

If you are interested in implementing FOCUS, the Clearinghouse is interested in helping you! Please call 1-877-382-9185 or email Clearinghouse@psu.edu

FOCUS includes eight sessions that take place from pre-deployment to post-deployment. Sessions one, two, and five are for parents only; sessions three and four are for children only; sessions six through eight are family sessions. Spouse/partner and family sessions are 90 minutes each, and child sessions are 30 to 60 minutes each.

Implementation cost information was not located. Please contact the developer using details in the Contact section for this information.

EVALUATION PLAN

To move FOCUS to the Promising category on the Clearinghouse Continuum of Evidence, at least one evaluation should be performed demonstrating positive effects lasting at least one year from the beginning of the program.

The Clearinghouse can help you develop an evaluation plan to ensure the program components are meeting your goals. Please call 1-877-382-9185 or email Clearinghouse@psu.edu

CONTACT

Contact the Clearinghouse with any questions regarding this program. Phone: 1-877-382-9185 Email: Clearinghouse@psu.edu

You may also contact FOCUS Headquarters by mail UCLA Semel Institute, 760 Westwood Plaza Room A8-159, Los Angeles, CA 90024, phone 1-310-794-2482, email info@focusproject.org, or visit www.focusproject.org/contact

SOURCE

www.focusproject.org; https://nfrc.ucla.edu/FOCUS; and Lester, Nash, Green, Pynoos, and Beardslee (2011).