

## COMMUNITY CORNER

# Building resiliency helps us deal with everyday Army stresses

By Col. Kevin Brown  
GARRISON COMMANDER



Col. Kevin Brown

Our Soldiers, Family members and civilian employees are our most valuable resources. Our Soldiers carry out the Army's mission. Their Families support them while they're at home and deployed. Civilian employees provide services and support to our Soldiers and their Families. One, without the others, just doesn't make a complete team.

When we lose a member of our team to suicide, everyone feels it. I want everyone on this post to know suicide is not the answer. I want them to know how they can get help, and that we do care. Sept. 6-12 is Suicide Prevention Week and just one of the weeks throughout the year that we focus on getting the word out.

For six years now our team has been working day and night to keep up with a high operational tempo. It can be

draining. Numerous deployments and the stress of being away from Family can seem insurmountable at times.

Most suicides are in reaction to feelings of loneliness, worthlessness, helplessness, or guilt. Risk factors may include relationship problems, work-related problems, substance abuse, medical problems, and severe or perceived unmanageable stress. It can be easy for some to get trapped into a cycle of negative thoughts.

If that becomes the case for you, don't be afraid to seek help. All units on Fort Riley have trained gatekeepers. If stress is overwhelming you and you've thought about suicide, seek out your unit gatekeeper. Chaplains, in units and for the installation, can provide help. And don't forget about your friends.

They are there for you.

If you are a friend, co-worker or leader that someone reaches out to, know what to do. Be aware though that not everyone reaches out. Pay attention to those around you – your co-workers, fellow Soldiers, the other spouses in your Family Readiness Group. Take what they say and their actions seriously.

If someone comes to you for help, remember the ACE acronym: **Ask your buddy** – Have the courage to ask the question directly, "Are you thinking of killing yourself?"

**Care for your buddy** – Remove means that could be used for self-injury; calmly control the situation; and actively listen to produce relief.

**Escort your buddy** – Never leave your buddy alone; escort them to the chain of command, a chaplain, a behavioral health professional or a primary care provider.

Besides having the resources to help individuals get the help they need when

they need it, Fort Riley also has programs in place to build resiliency and teach our team members how to deal with the ongoing stresses of Army life.

The Victory Resilience program focuses on strengthening our Soldiers', family members' and civilian employees' abilities to maintain healthy physical, mental, spiritual, family and social lives.

Family Life Ministries, our chapel programs and Strong Bonds program help Soldiers and Family members stay in touch with their spiritual sides. Chaplains also provide counseling to help strengthen marriages and provide single Soldiers with the skills they need to develop healthy relationships.

Every morning you can see our Soldiers exercising their resiliency during physical training. At gyms across post civilians and Family members utilize programs and classes to build their physical strength. Civilian employees can participate in the My Life Fitness program, which teaches them healthy

lifestyle choices and how to make working out a part of their lives. We're on our way to providing child care in one of the post's gyms to make it easier for spouses to hit the gym. Look for more information on that in the future.

One of the main components of strengthening our Soldiers' mental strength is the military life consultant program. Military life consultants meet with Soldiers upon their redeployment to talk about stresses or worries they may have. Soldier may meet with or without their spouses, and the off-the-record appointments allow them to find the resources they may need.

Family programs abound on post. Anywhere you turn at Army Community Service, you'll run into someone who provides a service to our Families. From parenting classes to volunteer opportunities, there are numerous ways to strengthen Family ties before, during and after deployments.

One of the things many of us forget to do during our hectic work days is

to schedule time to breathe, enjoy our Family and friends or just do something we enjoy. Make time for yourself. Whether it's participating in a Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers trip, taking a class at the Arts and Crafts Center or getting in a game of golf, connecting with others socially is an important way to build resiliency. Keep an eye on the newspaper for upcoming events you can get involved in. We also post a list of events weekly on the Fort Riley page on Facebook, or check the event list at [www.riley.army.mil](http://www.riley.army.mil).

We all deal with emotions differently. Building our resiliency reserves can give us the strength we need to realize that a situation is something we can deal with, and if we need help, it's okay to ask.

*If you would like to comment on this article, or suggest a topic for a future Community Corner, e-mail rtle.post.newspaper@conus.army.mil.*

## Dietician helps community with health issues, eating habits

By Shandi Dix  
STAFF WRITER

Health issues are as wide ranging as heart disease, diabetes and weight control. Many ways exist to control these health bits but the hardest way may be to control food intake.

For Beth Gallaher, a registered dietician and certified diabetes educator at Irwin Army Community Hospital, her role as a clinical and supervisory dietician and her duties as a nutrition counselor for in and out patients has proved to be rewarding.

"It's a great job, because I'll see all different types of patients," Gallaher said.

Gallaher also teaches nutrition classes. The majority of those classes are taught twice a month. Gallaher said people interested in attending classes do not need to be referred, but can self-refer.

Weight control classes include a Family member weight control class, which is open to non-active duty military. Active duty weight control is open for self-referred by the unit or a physician.

Nutrition classes include the heart healthy class. Dietary intervention to reduce cardiac risk factors is used in this

class. High blood pressure and cholesterol are the biggest risk factors for heart conditions.

"One diet we go over, it's called DASH Diet. It doesn't stand for Mrs. Dash; it stands for Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension," Gallaher said. "With diet intervention some disease processes can be either delayed or eliminated or greatly improved through lifestyle and dietary change."

The diabetes nutrition class includes a multi-disciplinary clinic as part of the class. Many health care providers are involved, including Gallaher, Sue Kollhoff, pharmacist, and Wayne Darsow, the diabetes specialist health care provider.

Instead of a classroom setting, patients can come and visit with all of the providers, just one or a couple in an individual setting. The diabetes classes are held two to three times a month.

One of Gallaher's diabetic patients is Vesters Worrell. He has faced the pain and suffering of diabetes firsthand and is highly motivated to make dietary and lifestyle changes.

"Growing up I saw a lot of my Family members with diabetes have to get amputations," Worrell said.

He added that some of his Family



Nikia Simon | IACH

Beth Gallaher meets with Vesters Worrell during a wellness appointment at IACH Diabetes Clinic. Worrell's initial weight four months ago was more than 240 pounds. He is now down to 215 pounds.

members developed eye problems that resulted in blindness.

Gallaher said Worrell is dedicated to exercise and is following a healthy eating plan. He has lost about 24 pounds in four months. Worrell also has reduced his blood pressure and dropped his glucose from 8.6 percent to 6.6 percent.

Worrell said he feels better and has more energy.

"We can't always eliminate, but we can, often, either greatly delay or definitely decrease those types of complications like blindness, amputation, heart

disease," Gallaher said.

Gallaher sees patients of all ages and even offers prenatal nutrition classes. Pregnant women can refer themselves to this class. They may be referred by a physician based on the results of a nutrition survey or other health issues. Classes are given in a group session unless a person has a history of gestational diabetes, eating disorders or anxiety in groups.

Gallaher also informs the community of nutrition through Riley TV and health fairs.

"The Victory Kitchen is an excellent example of community nutrition," Gallaher said. "It's a brand new thing. The purpose of it is to teach our Soldiers and Families and the community how to better take care of themselves. Part of taking better care of yourself is eating healthy."

The Victory Kitchen chefs prepare a menu that Gallaher reviews and selects a nutrition component for the chef to discuss.

"I'll take a piece then do short, brief nutrition comments about it," Gallaher said. "One of the first menus they did included fish tacos. So what I picked out of that menu was Omega 3."

Some others included brown rice and black beans that demonstrated the use of fiber. A menu that included pork chops explained the benefits of lean pork and thiamin. A carrot cabbage slaw brought up the topic of beta carotene and vitamin A.

"This has been brand new to me," Gallaher said. "I've never been in front of a camera. I was probably stiff as a board. I was fine until they turned the camera on."

Along with the community Gallaher also teaches nutrition in the schools through health fairs. She teaches a nutrition class at School Age Services with the My Pyramid Web site at [www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov). The site allows children to play a game where they have to fill their "gas tank" in order to get their "space ship" to blast off.

Gallaher attended Kansas State University graduating with a bachelor's degree in dietetics. She began working as a dietician in 1987. She worked at Fort Riley from 1990 to 1999 before coming back in 2002.

For more information or appointments, call 785-239-7644.

