

Navy Medicine Education & Training Command

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Ombudsman Newsletter



December 2012

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From the Desk of Marité:

I hope this newsletter finds everybody ready for the Holiday Season, and I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a Happy New Year.

In this newsletter you will find some ideas to cope with the hurdles that this time of the year brings to most of us. If you are a parent of young children, you probably share an almost universal desire to make holidays special for your children. You also may have to overcome certain obstacles in creating your own special experiences such as finances, distance from family members because of deployment or any other circumstances, and the special situations created by divorce, step-parenting, and blended families. Hopefully you'll find some ideas presented from experts in the field helpful.

Also during this time of the year, safety should be on everybody's mind. We had a guest in our Ombudsman Assembly last month: Mr. Chris Kolb from AFR Christian Karate School, who provided us with very useful self-defense advice, and I am happy to pass along all his recommendations centered on crime avoidance.

Please remember that any contact with me as your Ombudsman will be treated as described in OPNAVINST 1750.1G- the Navy Family Ombudsman instruction. This instruction establishes very strict guidelines and a code of conduct that all Ombudsmen must follow. Therefore, with the exception of suspected domestic violence, child abuse, suicidal and homicidal situations and extreme money hardship, which requires the Command's action to initiate immediate assistance to those involved, **all other situations will be kept confidential between the family member and me.**

Please contact me (or text) at (904) 402-3511. My "normal" phone hours (for referrals and

non-emergency situations) are between 4:00 PM and 8:00 PM. **For emergency situations, I'm here 24 hrs. a day.** If you get the answering service, please leave a message and a phone number. I'll return your call as quickly as possible. Or you can also reach me at NECE.Ombudsman@yahoo.com

SELF-DEFENSE ADVICE FROM AN EXPERT

Mr. Chris Kolb, AFR Christian Karate School, attended our Ombudsmen Assembly and provided demonstrations of how to incapacitate an attacker to include very useful tips to pass along.

First, if you are a victim of a **robbery the police recommends NOT to fight. Give up your purse, wallet or other valuables without hesitation. That said, if the assailant wants to TAKE YOU to another location or to a car, then statistically your odds are much better if you fight, yell and get away.** That is when the expert showed us a couple of moves.

Since the main goal is to make you a **HARD TARGET**, Mr. Kolb suggested:

Buddy Up! If you **ABSOLUTELY HAVE** to be out after dark shopping or eating at your favorite restaurant, ask a friend to be with you. If that is not possible, wait until more people leave the building at the same time or request an escort from the business to walk with you to your car.

Mr. Kolb mentioned that the way you present yourself could prevent a crime. For example, be aware of the people around you. Making eye contact and looking alert and confident should deter an attacker. Excessive drinking or texting and not being aware of your surroundings are always situations that you should avoid.

If possible, park your car in a well-lighted spot away from any suspicious vehicles to include those without windows.

ALWAYS have your car keys and cell phone READY in your hands before venturing to your vehicle. Be alert; do not place a call on your cell when leaving the building. Keep the phone close and ALWAYS charged, ready to call 911 if necessary. The attacker wants an easy target, which is a distracted person looking for keys and/or engaged in a phone conversation or under the influence of alcohol.

He recommended that if somebody grabs your hair, or any part of your body, yell for help (if you can). Also use **ANY** weapon available to include **heels**, which are always great to kick and stomp, keys to gouge, or pepper spray. Mr. Kolb also showed us a couple of moves to twist the attacker's fingers back. The surprise factor is what you need to be able to get away.

I don't know if some of you have noticed that I carry a **very interesting keychain on the OUTSIDE of my purse.** In addition to my car and house keys, I have a small LED flashlight, a small but very loud whistle, a piercing panic alarm with an emergency activation (I just have to pull the pin) and a small Swiss-like pocket knife with several gadgets. Take a look at your keychain or inside your purse, see what you can use, and make it easily available. Guys, these gadgets could make great stocking stuffers and at the same time give you and your loved ones peace of mind.

Again, the idea is to surprise the attacker, get away and scream for help.

For protection in your home, Mr. Kolb recommends instead of pepper spray that has a very short shelf life, wasp spray. It will do the same trick, it lasts much longer, and it obtains the same effect, which is stalling the assailant, giving you time to escape. Remember to keep it by your bed (AWAY FROM THE REACH OF CHILDREN) and also bring your cell phone with you if leaving the house to check the mailbox or when you go to bed.

Mr. Kolb suggested rehearsing often in your mind what you would do and what you can do to make yourself a HARD target. Share the thoughts with your children.

TIPS FOR MAKING HOLIDAYS SPECIAL

1. Develop traditions. Create activities that are special to your family. They don't need be elaborate or costly, but they need to be enjoyable and reflective of your family. Traditions can be as simple as a special recipe that everyone associates with the family holiday. Once formed, these traditional activities contribute to a

sense of identity and uniqueness for your children about their family.

2. Match your plans with your resources. If you are hurried and stressed, your contribution to your children's holiday may result in a short temper and irritability rather than patience and enthusiasm. Also, instead of waiting until the last possible moment, plan on buying gifts throughout the year. It is often easier on your budget.

3. Be sensitive to your children's wishes. This is the time of year when it's difficult to avoid the many conflicting issues between parents and children. This is often true when children become teenagers and the value of family time changes. Blended and divorced families pose special challenges for the holidays. Children often lose the delight and excitement of the holidays and instead feel the demands of trying to make all their parents happy. If you anticipate any of these circumstances, plan ahead. Discuss with your teenagers how they and you will spend their time. Communicate with your child's other parent to determine how time will be spent.

4. Help your children understand the value and the meaning of the holidays. Don't rely upon others to convey the meaning to your children; do it yourself. Talking about how you view the holiday is important. If the holidays are a religious experience for you, impart to your children through participation in religious activities. If it's a sharing experience, provide your child an opportunity to share; if it's predominantly a family reunion experience, arrange a family get-together for your child.

5. Remember that it's also the time of the year to give not only to receive. What could be more pleasantly surprising than to hear your children tell the Grandparents the only thing they want is to donate to their favorite animal rescue organization? We have decided in the past few years that instead of a gift that may not be used, a donation to a local animal shelter or a nonprofit organization is a perfect substitution. OR, you may want to volunteer together serving meals to homeless families or collect toys for disadvantaged children.

For example, we donate our time every weekend in December taking pictures of Santa with pets on behalf of an animal rescue/adoption organization. Half the price of the frame and picture taken at Petsmart is donated to a rescue organization. All the money collected at this time of the year is used to pay the hefty vet bills that the organization accumulates during the year. In addition it's a fun opportunity to take pictures of a potbellied pig, hedgehogs, an Australian Flying Squirrel and of course hundreds of dogs and a few cats.

6. Finally, have fun yourself. Don't expect perfection. Remember just as your family doesn't need or want a perfect person, neither do they need a perfect holiday... just a special day will do.

Tips & Tricks To Setting Holiday Ground Rules For Divorced Parents Sharing Custody

by Lindsay Cross

Here are a few ways to make it easier for co-parents to come together and reach a consensus.

- Separate the days, not the hours. Make things simpler. Keep the days intact.
- Make some lists. Both parents can make a list of what days are most important to them. You and your partner both have days that mean a lot to you. Figure out what those are, and then try to find ways to make the most happy on both lists.
- Don't forget all the "set up." In our family, the holidays are a whole lot more than one morning opening gifts. There's baking cookies, shopping day, building gingerbread houses. All of that stuff takes up time, and it needs to be planned on the calendar in advance.
- Listen to your child. If your little one is old enough to have an input, then you need to give them the opportunity. It's not just what aspects of the holiday season are most important to you; it's what they treasure the most. So make sure to talk to your kids about what they don't want to miss out on.
- Make a family calendar, and stick to it. There should be one calendar, and you all should share it. (Try an online shared calendar system. They're wonderful!) Once that calendar has been set, it's really important to honor it. Don't start trading this day for that. Don't start making excuses to move something back. You could end up a week before Christmas with a hundred things you want to do without nearly the time to do it all.
- Enjoy the time you have. Don't sit around being angry that your partner got Christmas morning this year. Yes, it's hard not to be there on that special day. But if you're just whining about what you're missing, you won't have time to appreciate all the wonderful traditions you have time for. What's more, you don't want your child to feel guilty for going to your ex's house and having a good time. Let them know that you're excited for them and that you'll be just fine until they get home.

SITTERCITY MILITARY PROGRAM

The Department of Defense funds Sittercity memberships for active duty and Reserve Navy families to help secure care during the holidays, which can be a busy time, or **anytime you need services. Families have access to more than 2 million in-home caregivers across the nation including babysitters, senior caregivers, pet sitters, housekeepers and tutors.** Military families can activate their DoD paid membership at www.sittercity.com/DOD

IMPORTANT WEB SITES

HEALTH

- **Tricare claim forms**
www.tricare.osd.mil
- **Active Duty Family Member Dental Program Plan until April 30th, 2012**
www.ucci.com
- **Active Duty Family Member Dental Program Plan after May 1st, 2012**
www.mybenefits.metlife.com/tricare

EMPLOYMENT

- **Florida Job Seekers**
www.floridajobs.org
- **Federal employment**
www.UAJobs.com
- **Military Spouse Job Assistance Programs**
www.msepjobs.militaryonesource.mil
www.whitehouse.gov/joiningforces
www.aiportal.acc.af.mil/mycaa

HOUSING

- **Navy/Marine Corps Housing/Rental Partnership Program**
www.housing.navy.mil
- **NE Florida Assn. of Realtors**
www.nefar.com

FINANCIAL MATTERS

- **Northeast Florida Chapter**
www.nefloridarecross.org
- **Navy Marine Corps Relief Society**
www.nmcrs.com
- **Operation Homefront Florida**
www.operationhomefront.net/Florida

BABBY SITTER

www.sittercity.com/DOD

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www.handsonjacksonville.org