

**SUPPORTING
YOUTH
CONNECTED
TO THE MILITARY**



Introductions

Jennifer Thomas M.Ed. CPS

- Carroll County Coalition for Public Health
- Carroll County Veterans Coalition
- NH Women's Veteran Coalition
- Family member of multiple service members

Gary Bent MSL

- Clear Path for Veterans New England
- Lakes Region Veterans Coalition
- Carroll County Veterans Coalition
- Army and Airforce Veteran
- Parent of three Veterans

Agenda

Who are military youth?

What is life like for them?

**Where and how do we
find them?**

**Why is it important to
identify & understand them?**

**Practices & protective
measures to support**

**Close and contact
information**

Resources and references

Objectives

- 1** Participants will be able to define who military youth are.
- 2** Participants will have an increased understanding of what military youth experience.
- 3** Participants will have an increase in awareness of how to identify military youth.
- 4** Participants will be able to iterate at least one reason why it is important to identify military youth.
- 5** Participants will have be able to state one protective practice that is culturally appropriate.
- 6** Participants will have gained an understanding of at least one new practice to use in their organization.

Who are “youth connected to the military”?

**Youth with family members who have or are currently
serving
in the military in any capacity!**

Question

**Who here is
connected to the
military in some
way?**

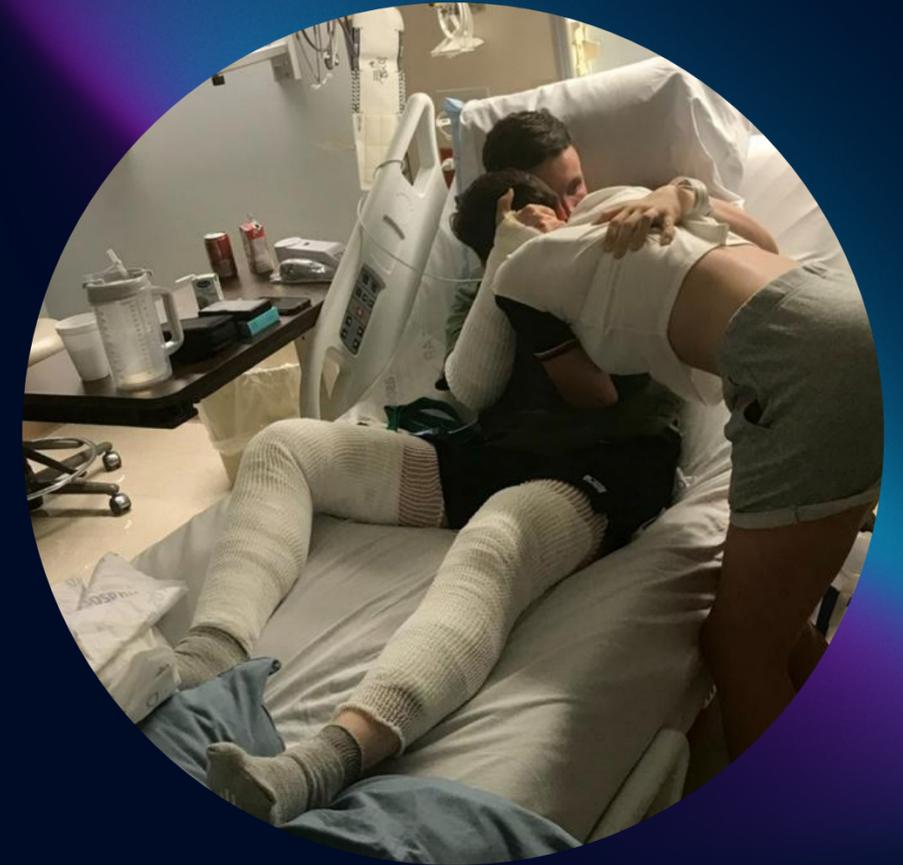


**What was your
experience like?**



Glimpses into Military Life

Gary

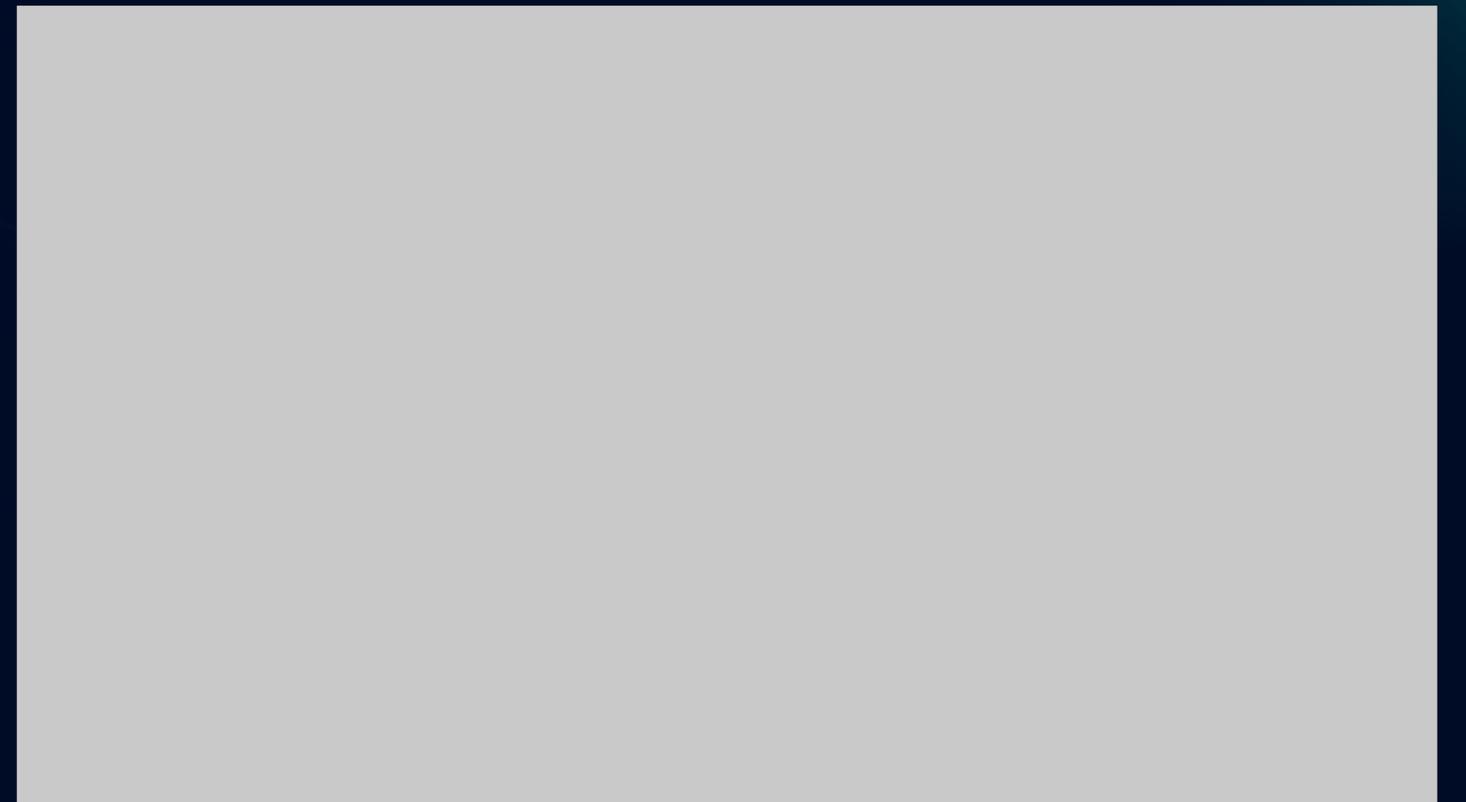


Glimpses into Military Life

Jen



What is life like for the kids?



What is life like for them?

- Unstable housing in some cases
- Constant fear and anxiety
- Increased responsibilities
- Loved one missing milestones
- Daily routines disrupted
- May have to provide support to adult
- Constant sense of loss



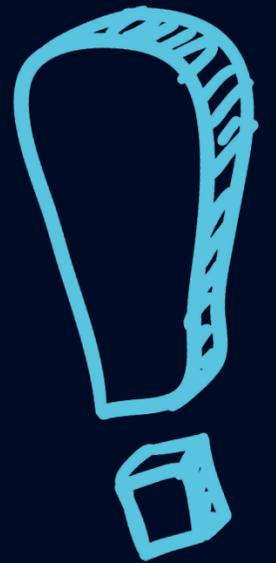
Caregiver may have physical, mental, moral and emotional injuries that cause the youth to become caregivers and have long lasting affects!

Webinars, such as this one from PsychArmor, will help provide some insight!



**Every branch, each division,
each regimen, whether active,
reserve or retired have
different experiences!**

**Even where the family is in the
deployment cycle can create
different experiences!**



That is why it is important to Ask The Question!

How do we find them?

Ask The Question



“

Have you or a family member ever served in the military?

”

- The NH Department of Military Affairs and Veteran Services



On enrollment forms



As part of assessments



During each provider visit



At every interaction



Make sure to follow up with more questions, connect with the family and provide resources!

NH Data on Military Families



Total Number of NH Children of Active Duty, National Guard and Reservist = **2,389**



Number of VA eligible veterans in NH = **90,386** (excludes NH National Guard, Reservists and less than honorable discharge)



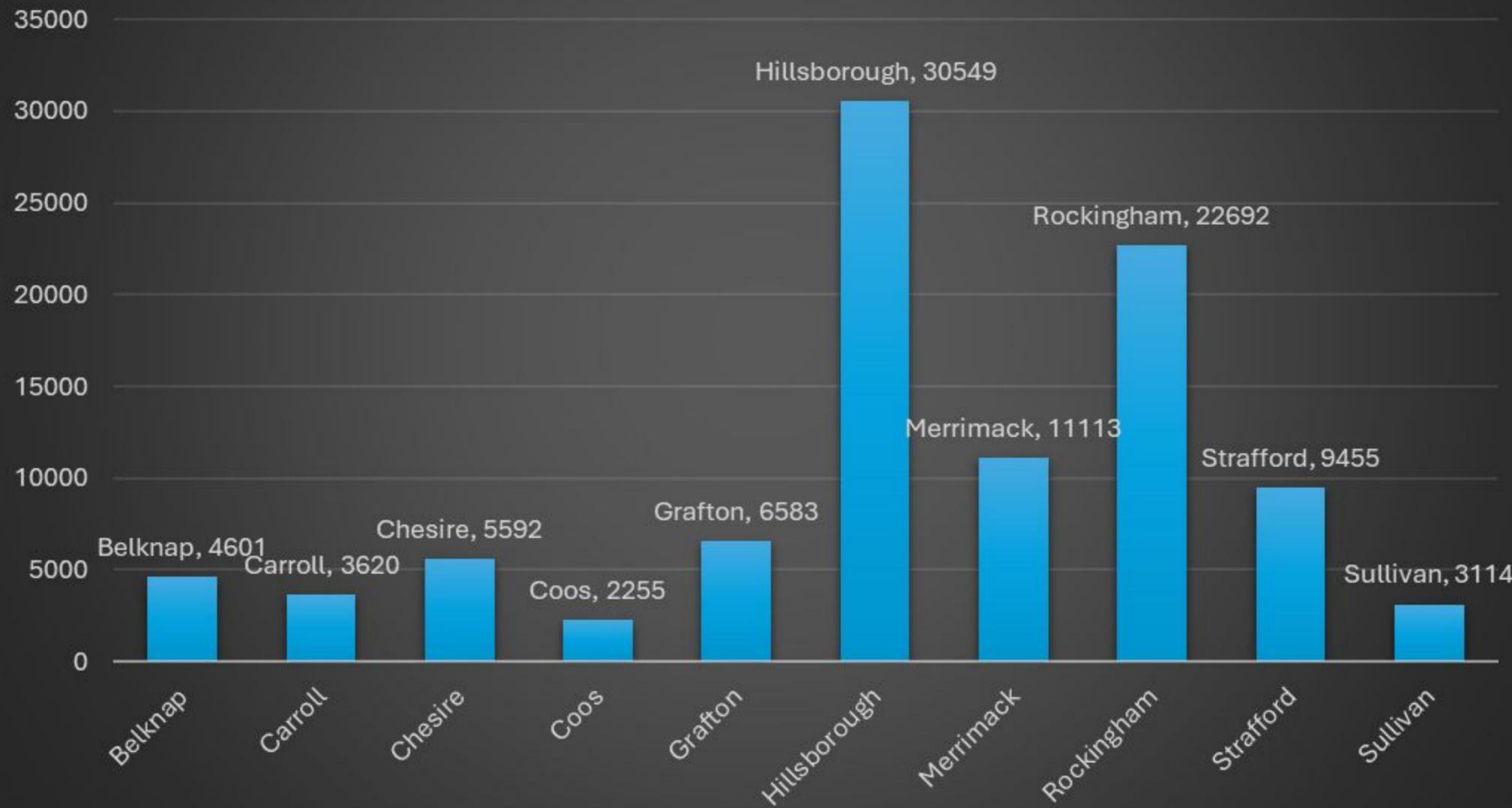
Youth of retired military **are NOT accounted for by any survey**
(VA or otherwise) = **unknown quantity**



Veteran Serving Organizations estimate the number of youth associated with the military in NH is believed to be about 3x the amount of VA eligible veterans = **271,158**



Approx. Number of People Associated with the Military By County



Data obtained by using the approximate total number of people in NH associated with the military from above and multiplying by a County's percent of total NH population. Using US Census data ([Census.gov | U.S. Census Bureau Homepage](https://www.census.gov)) from 2023. For example: 101,124 (.3021) for Hillsborough



This data **excludes** retired NH National Guard, Reservists, children/spouses of VA eligible veterans, and those with less than honorable discharge

Why is it important to identify and understand them?



Increased risk for poor mental health and substance misuse



Establish and grow collaborations with other youth and military organizations



Provide culturally appropriate supports and referrals to resources



So can utilize inherent strengths as protective factor



Attract military families to NH



Reduce suicide rates for youth and service members

Risks to Mental Health or Substance Misuse

- Loss of trusted adult
- No sense of connection or belonging to civilian community
- Loss of other trusted adults: Coaches, teachers, etc.
- Lack of culturally appropriate supports and resources if off base
- Loss of established friendships
- Constant fear, anxiety, worry
- Parentification

Negative Outcomes

- Negative psychological impacts - anxiety, depression
 - Increased risk for substance misuse as a coping mechanism
- Behavior disorders, adjustment disorders, anger, outbursts, fighting
 - Feelings of withdrawal, unhappiness; acting distant
 - Increase in mental health outpatient visits, PHPs, ED visits, acute stress reactions
 - Increase in use of all mental health services
- Academic performance decline
 - Risky behaviors



Protective Factors

- **Sense of community and shared values - on base only**
- **Clear expectations and accountability/parental monitoring**
- **Strong sense of pride and patriotism**
- **Strong family connections and support**
- **Highly resilient and adaptable**
- **Advanced life skills and problem solving skills**
- **Fiercely independent**



Supportive civilian community members, civilian programming and civilian community events are protective only if the youth are identified, their strengths are utilized and their needs met! Other wise they become risk factors!

What practices and protective measures can be taken to support?

- **“Ask The Question” - everywhere**
- **Build off youth resilience and other military skills**
- **Allow for independence/autonomy whenever possible**
- **Involve other community members**
- **Become familiar with military culture**
- **Incorporate information about the military into lessons**
- **Use a trauma informed approach- with military lens**
- **Do check-ins with family and youth**
- **Make sure staff are trained and familiar with the needs**
- **Include information on IEPs or similar**

Resources

- [Ask the Question | Department of Military Affairs and Veterans Services](https://www.askthequestion.nh.gov/) - <https://www.askthequestion.nh.gov/>
- New Hampshire Veterans Coalitions - refer to www.carrollcountyveteranscoalition.org resources page
- Military cultural tailored trainings available through local veterans coalitions and their networks
- Suicide Prevention trainings through local veterans coalitions and their networks
- Training engagements by the NH National Guard
- Psych/Armor training website - <https://psycharmor.org/>
- NH Suicide Prevention Council's Military and Veterans Committee and NH Governor's Challenge for preventing suicide among Service Members, Veterans, and their Families.
- Tailored trainings developed by New Hampshire Division of Community Based Military Programs, NHDMAVS
- Military OneSource- <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/>
- Our Military Kids - <https://www.ourmilitarykids.org/>
- Wounded Warrior - <https://www.woundedwarriorproject.org/>

References and Credits

- The NH Department of Military Affairs and Veterans Services
- The Manchester VA
- NH Veterans Coalitions - found on resources tab at www.carrollcountyveteranscoalition.org
- Military One Source
- DEERS
- Bullock, A., Williams, L. & Goubanova, E. (2022). Sources of risk and resilience among adolescents from military families. *Military Behavioral Health, 10*(2), 124-133. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21635781.2022.2098883>
- Chandra, A., Lara-Cinisomo, S., Jaycox, L., Tanielian, T., Han, B., Burns, R. & Ruder, T. (2011). Views from the Homefront: The experience of youth and spouse from military families. *Rand Health Q, 1*(1), 12
- Mahar, A. L., Cramm, H., Garces, I., Aiken, A. B., Chen, S., Ouellette, B., Manser, L. & Kurdyak, P. (2022). Retrospective cohort study of outpatient mental health visits in children and youth in Canadian military families. *Journal of Military, Veteran and Family Health, 8*(1), 110-124. doi: 10.3138/jmvfh-2021-0071
- Park, N. (2011). Military Children and Families: Strengths and challenges during peace and war. *American Psychologist, 66*(1), 65-72. DOI 10.1037/a0021249



**Please
remember our
currently
serving
military
families!**

Contact Information

Jennifer Thomas:

jennifer.thomas@graniteuw.org

Gary Bent:

gbent@clearpathne.org

