

Stories of Prevention Across Commands

PREVENTION IN ACTION

U.S. AIR FORCE

Building Resilience Together: Inside McConnell AFB's Innovative Approach to Integrated Primary Prevention

As the Integrated Resilience Office Director for the 22nd Air Refueling Wing at McConnell Air Force Base (AFB), Ms. Christine Murray leads a team of five members of the Integrated Primary Prevention Workforce (IPPW). Murray's work at McConnell AFB aligns to the tactical level of the IPPW. Murray has been a part of the McConnell AFB community in Wichita, Kansas for the past six years, and previously served in training and curriculum development roles at Sheppard AFB.

Embracing and Preparing for Change

After years of Air Force civilian experience, Murray has been a part of the shift to integrated primary prevention in the Department of Defense in recent years. **To prepare the McConnell community for this change, the Integrated Resilience Office ramped up their professional development course offerings** to include training on giving effective feedback, and a coaching skills class to aid communications.



"Without the efforts of each Airman, our mission doesn't happen. We can't separate resilience, team cohesion, and readiness efforts. They are integrated and nobody gets the job done solo. Taking care of Airmen and our families is one of our responsibilities as commanders, leaders, and teammates.

Without our Airmen being able to operate the best, our mission fails because our aircraft can't launch, our airfield isn't ready, our base isn't secure, our facilities and services don't function. We need our Airmen and we need them to know what helping agencies and programs are available and how they can build and grow, and that we're here for them. Care the most, so they can operate the best."

- Air Force Col. Cory Damon, 22nd Air Refueling Wing Commander



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[PREVENTION]

A Focus on Critical Protective Factors

The protective factor of connection is key at McConnell, and Murray and her team have recently focused on creating opportunities to help airmen and other community members connect with each other.

“Connection is such a simple, easy process. Saving a life can be as simple as making a friend or letting someone know they are not alone,” says Murray. These community connection events at McConnell are designed to create opportunities to support social resilience and often involve the Wichita community outside the gates. Recent McConnell AFB events include a month-long connections challenge, McConnellCon – a local take on a comic book convention, a hobby fair, and a color run. The March 2024 Resilience Day had maximum participation with support from the 22nd Air Refueling Wing Commander. Flying was shut down for the day to allow everyone to focus on the resilience day programming.

Collaboration Across the Base to Diffuse Primary Prevention Information and Resources

“Connections aren't just what we preach, we have to practice them. Prevention and resilience are everyone's job,” says Murray. To that end, the Integrated Resilience Office convenes the Community Action Team (CAT) (includes all base helping agencies, commander spouse representatives, legal representatives, and the Military and Family. Readiness Center) and a Community Action Board (CAB) (includes the wing commander, commanders, and senior enlisted leaders) to facilitate collaboration across McConnell AFB “All commanders come to our [CAB] meetings, and we make it a collaborative session. They have been very supportive. Our wing commander really gets it. He understands what we do and why we do it. It makes a huge difference. He models that behavior and expects it from his commanders.” With direction and support of the CAB, IPPW are being incorporated into the quarterly commanders calls to support a culture of help-seeking. “We want to infuse about 10 minutes of primary prevention information. We want our airmen to know their local helping agencies and get them out in the units so that if airmen need things, they know who to come to, and what our initiatives are,” says Murray.

Value Added Through Enhanced Command Climate Assessment

Murray describes the new command climate assessment process and the IPPW involvement in creating the Comprehensive Integrated Primary Prevention (CIPP) plans as another point of collaboration between the Integrated Resilience Office and the leaders on base. “Our involvement with the Defense Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS) has given us greater knowledge of focus areas and allowed us to do deeper dives in the units. Previously we didn't know that information, and now we're able to dissect and understand how we can help our units and commanders.”