

Episode 6: Caregiving

EFMP & Me podcast transcript

Karen Terry:

If you've recently become the caregiver of a loved one, but aren't really sure where to go for support, we're going to give you some resources to help you ease the stress and make caregiving just a little bit easier. We'll talk about that and more in this podcast for EFMP families.

Hi, I'm Karen Terry and today we're going to talk about you, the caregiver. Hi, welcome to your final Exceptional Family Member Program Podcast for this season. Today, we're going to be talking about you, the caregiver. Healthy caregiving is such an important topic and one that isn't addressed as often as it should be in my opinion. So, today we're going to talk about self-care to help the caregivers in any capacity at that role, we're going to help them find some balance and take care of their health and their well-being. I'm Karen Terry, a program analyst for the Office of Special Needs and your host for this episode.

Now, if you have not provided ongoing care for someone with special needs, it might be difficult to understand just the amount of emotional and physical toll it can take on the caregiver. I realize that everyone is different and that you are helping someone you love and that really does go a long way, but I think we can all agree that it does get stressful at times. Every caregiver knows the time and effort involved in providing the care, in managing the care, in getting the support and services needed. And then, somehow, hopefully, finding a moment or two to take care of themselves.

My guest for this episode is Kelly Smith, who is a social worker serving as a Program Analyst for Military Community Support Programs. Kelly, can you tell the listeners some more about what Military Community Support Programs does and how your team helps military families and their caregivers?

Kelly Smith:

Hey, Karen, thank you so much for having me. I really appreciate the opportunity to share about the support that is available through Military Community Support Programs. Our team provides support to military families and their caregivers through three large programs that some of our listeners may be familiar with. The first is Military OneSource. The second is The Military and Family Life Counseling Program. And then lastly, there's the Spouse Education and Career Opportunities Program. And we really like to consider ourselves to be the boots on the ground, providing that support there for our military families.

Karen Terry:

Great. I know all those programs, I'm familiar with them all, I hope everyone out there is. They're all very fabulous in what they do. So, there are a lot of definitions about what a caregiver is. That word is used



for different people serving in different roles. For a family member with special needs, the caregiver can be anyone who helps care for and support that family member. It can be the mother, it could be the father, sometimes it's the siblings or even extended family members become the caregiver. Depending on the situation, the caregiver can also be full time or just part time. So, there's a lot of different scenarios. How do you define the role of caregiver?

Kelly Smith:

I like to bucket them in three categories. So, there's someone that provides support to a loved one with special needs is the first category that I think of. And then secondly, there may be someone that supports a loved one after a life-changing injury. So, possibly our service members that are considered to be wounded, ill and injured. And then lastly, I think of our caregivers as folks that provide support at our child development centers or in a childcare setting. So, those are kind of the three roles that I think of when I think of caregivers.

Karen Terry:

Yeah. And I would add our EFMP family support providers to that last category as well, because they are providing that next tier of caregiving.

Kelly Smith:

Yeah.

Karen Terry:

So, what ways do you and your team work to support these military families with special needs and these caregivers?

Kelly Smith:

Karen, the first stop I feel in seeking support or seeking assistance is for our caregivers to contact those folks that you just mentioned, our EFMP military Family Support staff and providers at the installation. Our EFMP service providers can point our families, our caregivers in the right direction of local, as well as community-based resources and services that may be required, whether they're on or off the installation. To me, that's the first stop.

Now, additionally, Military OneSource has a consultation service that is designed specifically for our EFMP families and it is called EFMP ROC, which stands for, and it's kind of long, but it stands for Exceptional Family Member Program Resources, Options, and Consultations. We have special need consultants that are available by phone or video to help our families navigate the military health care system, TRICARE coverage, as well as educational needs of their family or their loved one.

Then, also they're able to connect our caregivers and our families with those community-based resources or support that may be needed. Families can contact our EFMP ROC consultants at any time to schedule an appointment. They can also live chat with our EFMP ROC consultants as well, and they can reach them just by calling Military OneSource.



Karen Terry:

Yeah. And I want to interrupt here just to give a little extra shout out to the EFMP ROC call center. We work with them extensively at the Office of Special Needs to ensure that those consultants are getting the information they need and it's consistent with what is happening at the installation so that everybody can feel covered. I love that our families have options and how they receive their support, and that call center is a great example.

There are a number of reasons why a family might not be able to get to an installation EFMP family support provider. I can think of maybe they are Guard, reserve or to those geographically separated from an installation. Maybe they're in a recruiting role or something similar. And then the special needs specialty consultants can give those families just another way to be able to reach out and ask questions.

Kelly Smith:

Karen, you're right. You're spot on. It is just an additional option for our families. Now, let me see, where was I? We're thinking of ways that Military OneSource provide support. So, we talked about EFMP ROC, but then there's also non-medical counseling. Sometimes people say, "Well, what is non-medical counseling?" Guys, it's counseling. It's counseling that is short term and solution focused. And it is available through Military OneSource and it's also available through the Military and Family Counseling Program, also known as the MFLC Program.

Our families, and for this audience, our caregivers, can get up to 12 sessions per issue per year, completely for free with a licensed clinician to talk about everyday life stressors, to talk about some of the challenges that you may experience in caring for a loved one. Some of the challenges that you may just have for yourself. So, they're there to provide that support.

And with Military OneSource, you can talk with a non-medical counselor face to face in your community, we have a network of providers that our consultants can connect you with. You could also talk with them over the phone, and then also you can connect with them via video conferencing, which we've done quite a bit over the last year, as you can imagine.

Karen Terry:

Yeah, I bet.

Kelly Smith:

Then our MFLCs are positioned around the world at or near installations, whether they're at the CDC and the school, at the family service center, even embedded within the units. So, they're there to provide that face-to-face, and sometimes also virtual support to our families to talk through some of the things that they may be experiencing.

Now, another resource offered through Military OneSource, Karen, is our health and wellness coaching. I feel like sometimes it can be easy to forget about our own needs when we're caring for a loved one. Sometimes we let our own health fall to the wayside, but we have health and wellness coaches with



Military OneSource that are available over the phone or via video conferencing to talk through your health and wellness goals.

So, how it kind of works is that you can meet with your health and wellness coach, you set out a plan of what you want to achieve. So, whether that's wanting to make sure that you go for a walk each day, or if you want to lose a specific number of pounds, if you want to have at least one healthy meal a day, wherever your starting point is, our health and wellness coaches can kind of help you navigate that plan, help keep you accountable. I know myself, personally, I always need an accountability partner when it comes to my health and wellness.

Then, help you celebrate your successes. So, they're there to be your cheerleader and to guide you along in your journey of health and well-being. I love health and wellness coaching. It is a huge cost-savings for our families, but is definitely a way to take care of yourself and set time aside for yourself.

Karen Terry:

Yeah. That is a tremendous benefit, tremendous benefit. Yeah. I would love my own health and wellness coach and I would love if she was free or he was free even. I do want to go back to non-medical counseling very briefly and just piggyback on what everything you said and just remind folks that that counseling is confidential. That is part of the program. There's no reporting back, except in specific circumstances, to the command or anything. It's very confidential. So, I just wanted to make sure everybody was aware of that.

Kelly Smith:

Yeah, Karen, thank you for mentioning that. That is really key. Our services through Military OneSource are not connected to the military treatment facilities, it's not connected to command. Our MFLCs' folks know, don't keep notes or records. So, it really allows for a true sense of support where you can feel safe share your information confidentially, knowing that it's not going to be shared with others outside of those mandated reporting situations. But yeah, it is confidential and free.

Karen Terry:

I love it. Free, free. So, I'm guessing that there are very similar challenges to any caregiver, whether they're military or civilian, but there's also some challenges that are very specific to a military family caregiver. Can you share a little bit about that? Are there particular stresses or challenges that follow a military caregiver?

Kelly Smith:

Something that we have seen within the families that we serve with the Military OneSource and those caregivers that are providing support is in... This military community, our families move a lot.

Every two to three years, they're moving to a new location. So, it's like, you get to where you're going, you get set up, you get connected with all the resources for yourself, for your loved ones, you get the kids in school, etc., all those things. Once you're in your rhythm, then it's like, "Oh, we've got our order, it's time to move." So, that can be very overwhelming and challenging even for the most seasoned



caregiver of having to, and you know it's coming, but having to pick up and start over at the next duty station.

Our civilian caregiver counterparts don't typically have to have that experience. They're not moving somewhere new and having to reestablish themselves and their supports in their community when they get there. I think also something that our military caregivers experiences, sometimes feeling a sense of being disconnected, like that there's a lack of support. So, for example, we might have a caregiver that has a young child that may be on the spectrum of autism, but their family, they don't have any family members in the area or ...

Karen Terry:

You're speaking to the choir here on this one.

Kelly Smith:

... they're not close to friends. So, it may feel like and, Karen, you mentioned it, it's hard sometimes to reach out and connect. I, personally, am awkward in meeting new people. So, I can only imagine you're there, it's hard to meet new people. I'm nervous about going to the family service center, who can I talk to, to feel connected? Where are my people at? So, I think sometimes our military caregivers might feel a sense of disconnectedness from their support system. Then, there's one other thing that I know is sometimes a challenge is sometimes hard to just advocate for yourself and for the needs of your family.

Karen Terry:

Absolutely.

Kelly Smith:

Especially when you're somewhere new or you're labeled as that person who is always speaking up and having something to say. But having a family member with special needs taking care of a loved one, it does require you to have to advocate for that person, for your family, for yourself. That is definitely a skill that you have to work on. So, I think that is a challenge that some of our military caregivers might have.

Karen Terry:

Yeah, I would agree with that. Self-advocacy is a hugely important skill to learn, but I think particular to the caregiving role, and you're talking about yourself as the caregiver, is often difficult to speak up and say, "I need a break or I need this to happen for the person I've cared for so that I can just have a moment." So, I agree with you. Learning to speak up for yourself and learning to say, "I need something as the caregiver," is important, because that's your mental health and that's your physical health, and it's not selfish. It is not selfish. It's critical.

So, EFMP has a number of resources to help caregivers learn self-advocacy to build and improve on their skill. We have some great videos, we have some other training that they can do if that's what they need to help build that skill. What would you recommend for those who are caring for an adult? Maybe is it



more difficult when you're taking care of an adult than a child? I would think that the mind-frame you would have to be in may be different if you're looking at your child as an adult that you're still caring for, or your parent, if your parent is now who you're caring for.

Kelly Smith:

In my perspective, a caregiver is anyone who provides help to another person in need, such as an ill spouse or partner, a child with special needs or an aging, like you said, an aging relative or parent. However, I think sometimes our caregivers that are actively caring for an adult, often don't self-identify as a caregiver, they don't feel as though, "I'm a caregiver," or in a "caregiver role," but I think they're doing themselves a disservice when they say that, because supporting an adult or a spouse or an aging parent, that is just as challenging, probably, as caring for a child. It's challenging on all fronts.

So, I think, just recognizing that role as a caregiver, if you're caring for an adult, your partner or aging parent, or older child, we'll help them just to receive the support that they may need. It's like that first step of acknowledging like, "Hey, I do have this caregiver hat on, this is a role that I'm in, I have that caregiver cape on." So, acknowledging that I think is the first step of, "Sometimes I might need some support, and outside of me needing support, it's OK for me to take time for myself and to do for myself so that I can be there for my loved one."

Karen Terry:

Yeah. That makes sense. Particularly, I think, if you're taking care of a parent, you might not recognize yourself, because you're just being a "good son or daughter" and you want to provide that care to your parent as they provided that care to you when you were young. So, you're both, you are a good son or daughter and you're a caregiver. And it's OK to acknowledge that stress that's involved in caregiving. I mean, I love to share my personal life with everybody on these podcasts and I'll do it again.

We, as a family, cared for my aging grandmother for a while, for several years. I could see the stress on my mother. It was very stressful for her. I don't think she took the time that she needed and I didn't as a child acknowledged that that stress was, what that stress was about and what I could do.

I do know when I was left with her care for a couple of hours here and there, it was very stressful for me as well, because it's difficult and it's embarrassing. My grandmother was embarrassed and I was embarrassed and it's very stressful, is all I'm trying to say. So, we've talked about stress and we've talked about the importance of self-care and self-advocacy and all those really good things. Can you describe the effects of stress and what the signs of caregiver stress are? So people can maybe recognize those signs in themselves.

Kelly Smith:

Karen. So, listening to you, I love that you are transparent on these podcasts and you share with our listeners about some of your experiences, because listening to you speak about your grandmother and your family reminds me of when my grandmother had fallen ill and my father found himself in the role of a caregiver. But I bet you a million dollars, even to this day, he probably didn't consider himself to be



a caregiver. And thinking about those stressors that he was experiencing and its impact on him really showed itself during that time of when he was taking care of his mother.

So, as a caregiver, they're so focused on their loved one, making sure that they're settled, that they have what they need, doing all the things that you have to do that sometimes you don't realize that your own health and well-being may be suffering or it may be placed in jeopardy. There are some signs that I recommend caregivers watch for when it comes to their stress levels, because we know stress is going to happen. But when there is constant worry or you are constantly finding yourself tired, and it's not like, "Oh, I just need to take a nap," tired. It's like there's no sense of rest even when you get decent sleep. So, it's like a different kind of tired. Or if you find yourself being easily irritated often or popping off angry often.

Karen Terry:

Like a deeper bone-tired.

Kelly Smith:

Yes, Yes. Or those frequent headaches or bodily pain, those are some warning signs that our caregivers have to look out for. And caregiver stress, some folks are at greater risk for having high levels of caregiver stress. Some of the risk factors that come to mind for me, Karen, are if we find ourselves as a caregiver sleeping a very long time and still not feeling rested. Or if you lack those coping skills or difficulty solving problems, that's another risk factor.

Then, also, and this makes me think of my dad, which literally just came to mind as being a risk factor for him is that he didn't have a choice in being a caregiver. I know oftentimes that may be the case for some of our military caregivers, like you didn't choose to be a caregiver, it's just a role that was placed on you. Sometimes that may allow for some feelings that come up in you that you didn't realize that you had. So, just having that sense of awareness of that and awareness of some of the stressors that may present themselves and then knowing when to take a break or ask for help is critical for our caregivers when it comes to that stress and those effects of stress.

Karen Terry:

Yeah. I think those are great. Thanks for sharing all those. I think two things come to mind. First, that it's important for the caregiver to understand those signs, but it's also important if you are the spouse or maybe it's the spouse that's caring while the military member is doing his or her job, and then comes back to the home and can see those things, because like you and I both said, we saw it in our parent, but I don't think our parents acknowledged that they were feeling that stress, although we could see it happening.

So, I think it's important if you're not the caregiver or the primary caregiver, if you see it happening that you say something, and that goes back to the earlier conversation about the non-medical counselor, the MFLCs, that's a great opportunity to get some help. It's completely natural, especially if you feel like you had a lack of choice in being a caregiver, to maybe even be kind of resentful about it, it doesn't make you a bad person, it just means you need to talk.



So, I'm just going to remind people that talking is good and it relieves stress and they can help you with some of those coping skills and problem-solving skills that you might need. So, I'm going to say that, but that all goes back to self-care and self-advocacy. So what would you recommend for self-care aside from counseling that we just talked about? Would you have some examples of some self-care strategies that they can maybe use?

Kelly Smith:

Karen, even the most resilient people get strained when having to care for someone 24/7. I know it's easy to say, as a caregiver, it's important to take steps to preserve your health, your well-being, take time for self-care, but I really want to normalize the concept of self-care and that it looks different for everyone. It's not always a bubble bath or going to the spa. It's not always exercising. It's not always having a glass of wine, it's different for everybody and it really looks different based on the season of your life.

Your loved one that you're caring for may be doing fantastic and so your self-care may look different or they might be in a rough patch and it looks a little bit different. You might be in a rough patch and it looks a little bit different. So, I encourage our listeners to not be so critical of themselves for not doing self-care or for doing too much self-care, because it looks different for everybody.

Something that I loved doing at the start of the pandemic for my own self-care was getting into my car and driving around the Beltway here in the D.C. area alone, by myself, listening to audible.com, books on tape kind of thing and to do that for myself. That really helped to reenergize me. I didn't have to go run a mile or cook a fancy meal or whatever the case may be, but that was my self-care. So, I know it looks different for everyone.

I mentioned earlier, there's a health and wellness coaching, because some people like to do that kind of stuff. Or there's another neat tool that's available through Military OneSource and that is our Chill Drills, there's an app that we have now that folks can access via the Apple app store or Google Play for free. And then you can also order the Chill Drill Playaway on the Military OneSource site for free.

But what it is, is I want to say it's six tracks, maybe five, tracks of relaxation recordings that you can just pop in your ears and listen to. So, whether it's if you're trying to get back to sleep, if you're wanting to release stress, it's like a soothing kind of recording that you can listen to. That's just an easy way, five minutes here and there, to just take care of yourself if that works for you.

Another thing that I heard recently on another session that we had with one of the professionals out of, oh goodness, where is she from? One of the treatment health facilities. Was sometimes for some folks vegging out and watching your favorite TV show or reading one of your favorite books or scrolling on your social media for 10 minutes. Setting aside that time for yourself is self-care as well and that's perfectly OK.

Karen Terry:

It's a good time to binge.

Kelly Smith:



Yeah. Don't let anyone shame you for doing that. If that helps you to feel rejuvenated, hey, that works for you. So, again, I just want to kind of normalize doing what works well for you. Then, also, one last thing, Karen, around strategies for self-care, I encourage most to focus on what they're able to provide. So, it's normal to feel guilty sometimes, but understand that no one is a perfect caregiver, no one, there's no such thing as being perfect.

Believe that what you are doing is your best and that you're making the best decisions that you can at the time that you're given. So, extending yourself grace, lots of grace.

Karen Terry:

I love that.

Kelly Smith:

I think also is a way to incorporate self-care into your daily strategies.

Karen Terry:

Yeah. I love that idea of just extending yourself grace and just realizing that it's not going to be perfect, nobody can be perfect. It's like when you become a mom and you have these really high expectations of what that looks like with the perfect mom, and maybe you're comparing yourself to other moms on social media or other moms you know, and you find yourself lacking. Don't. Your children are alive, they're healthy, you're doing your job, you're doing your job and they're going to love you and you love them. It's all good.

I do like the idea of just driving around the Beltway, and anybody who's ever been stationed in the D.C. area will be appreciative of that idea. I do love that idea, playing Audible. And I want to plug another feature on Military OneSource that is one of my favorite things, and that's the digital library where people can go and they can find those kinds of downloadable stories that they can listen to and just veg. I love to veg. I'm a great vegger. Is that a word, vegger? I'm great at it. I'm great at it.

But when you're really keyed up, it's hard to just allow yourself the time to do that and you have to remember that. If those are the times when you really need to do that, is when you're so opposed to it, because you're like, "I have to be doing something. I have to be doing something." That's the time that you really need to take some time for yourself and just do nothing. Just give yourself permission to do nothing.

So, we've talked about so much, I love this conversation. It's been so good. What would you say is one of the most important things you want families to know about healthy caregiving? We've talked about what it looks like when it's not so healthy. What's healthy caregiving?

Kelly Smith:

What comes to mind first to me, Karen, is to take care of others, you must take care of yourself first. It makes me think of the thing that they always say. Well, I haven't flown on an airplane in a while, but what they see on the airplane is that in case of emergency, the oxygen masks will drop, to put yours on



first before helping anyone around you. I know it's hard sometimes to do that, but it's so true. It's so true that you have to set aside time for yourself and do for yourself in order to really fully be present, or at least as much present as you can be for others and for those that you're taking care of.

It's hard, but speaking for myself, I feel like I am a better person, whether it's showing up in my work life or in my personal life at home and the different roles that I have here at home. But when I set aside time for myself, then I'm a much better person for my family and my children and my colleagues and my friends. So, taking care of myself first is so important in order to be there for others.

Then, the other thing, and anyone who knows me is that you have to live in grace. And I know I just said it, but ...

Karen Terry:

It's worth repeating.

Kelly Smith:

... grace, extending yourself grace, extending others grace. Yes, lots of grace. Just believing that everyone is doing the best that they can and that is including yourself and giving yourself the space to sometimes make mistakes. Or, like Karen said, to veg out or to do for yourself. So, yeah, grace and taking care of yourself in order to take care of others. Those are what I consider to be healthy caregiving, living in that space.

Karen Terry:

That's awesome. So, one of the caregiving roles that I, as a professional, find important is that with our EFMP service providers, family service providers, they are in a caregiving role as well, although it's a little distance from the family member directly probably, but it can get heavy. I mean, you're exposed to a lot of different people who are having a lot of different issues and you are a caregiver by nature probably, so you want to help. Do you have any advice or tips for the caregivers of the caregivers? How do we support those people and how can they support themselves?

Kelly Smith:

Our lovely EFMP service providers, yes. Caregivers of the caregivers, Military OneSource has a ton of stuff for service providers and there's a lot of stuff for EFMP service providers. I encourage them to check out the community resource finder. So, if you have a Military OneSource account, it's free, there is a community resource finder that has thousands of vetted, DOD-approved resources that service providers have access to. It essentially is what our Military OneSource consultants use when they are triaging calls from families of, connecting them with resources in their area.

Karen Terry:

Awesome.



Kelly Smith:

Again, these are vetted, community-based resources that are available for our families and our service providers have access to that. Another suggestion that I have, Karen, is for our EFMP service providers to call and just have a conversation with the EFMP ROC consultants. And I know that might sound weird, but it's like, let's share the resources that we have, let's do something in collaboration, let's find out what kind of calls are you getting? What things are you addressing? You can do that.

Or if you have a case that you might be struggling with, or you've been racking your brain with, call a consultant, call an EFMP ROC consultant and talk it through with them and establish a working relationship, that I think that would be a great way to enhance the work that our EFMP service providers are doing in the field.

I'm a big believer that they know their families the best, they're there with them. So, having another service provider in your back pocket is a great way to improve the work that you're doing or to have support with the work that you're doing.

Then, lastly, I encourage our EFMP service providers to take care of themselves as well and to have time for self-care. Don't save up all of your annual leave and never use it. I know there are some folks that just never take leave, never take time for themselves. Guys, take time for yourselves. The work that you do in this helping profession can take a toll on you and we don't want you to burn out. So I encourage you to use that leave, take some time for yourself, spend some time with your family, do whatever you want to do, but I encourage you to just take care of yourself, so you can continue supporting our military families and our families with special needs. Yeah.

Karen Terry:

Those are great points. I'm just going to add one. I'm going to encourage all the EFMP family support providers to visit the provider section EFMP and Me, it's kind of new. It's been around since January of 2021. So, relatively new. In that section, there are links and guides and all kinds of things that the EFMP family service provider can use for themselves, and then also share with their clients.

So, everybody listening to this podcast, you're probably a family member or a service member or a service provider, or even a military leader. There is something specifically for you on the EFMP and Me. There are links and resources that have been waded through and curated to meet the needs of your role. You will find links to everything that we've talked about today, more information, everything links to something we've talked about. So, it makes it easy. It's just one place to look.

Kelly, this has been a great conversation and I really appreciate you helping me out today and being here for our listeners. I know they've learned a lot, a lot of resources and signs of stress, things that they can do. I hope they have heard us say, take care of yourself. It's OK. It's OK. Is there anything else you'd like to say before we wrap up this session?

Kelly Smith:

One thing I want to share with our... One last thing, I guess, maybe, I want to share with our caregivers, our listeners, particularly our listeners that are caregivers is that, guys, if you're like many other



caregivers, then you may have a hard time asking for help. Unfortunately, having that mindset of not wanting to ask for help can sometimes lead to feeling isolated or frustrated or sometimes even depressed. It can be a heavy burden to carry.

Rather than struggle on your own, I encourage you to take advantage of the resources available through the military and in your local community, through Military OneSource. Our EFMP family support providers and Military OneSource, they are available to connect you, to be there to support you, to be your partner through this journey of caregiving.

Also, I said one thing, but here's one more thing, Karen, with Military OneSource, our caregivers can outsource their to-do lists. If they establish that working relationship with that EFMP ROC consultant, or if they talk with any of the consultants with Military OneSource, you can outsource your to-do lists. You can say, "Hey, I'm looking for XYZ in this area. Or I want to know, does this child care facility have any openings? Are there ABA services here?" And that consultant can provide you a list in that area, they can make the phone calls for you.

So, I consider that to be another way of taking care of yourself. So, that's what I want to leave our listeners with. Don't struggle alone, there is help out there, there is support out there for you. And lastly, take care of yourself. Don't feel bad about it. It'll make you a better person.

Karen Terry:

So, we're going to go out and eat some ice cream and drive around in the Beltway after this.

Kelly Smith:

Take care of ourselves.

Karen Terry:

It's our time. My vice was sweet tea. I'm from the South. So, I would have sweet tea on the Beltway.

Kelly Smith:

Well, I can't do the sweet tea, I'm from the Southwest and we don't do the sweet tea, but I can do the Beltway and ice cream. Sorry.

Karen Terry:

I want to thank everyone for listening. This has been really a good conversation and I want to encourage you to go to EFMP and Me and take a look at all the topics and checklists we have there. And as I said earlier, many or all of the resources mentioned today are linked within the checklist and can be found on Military OneSource. And Kelly's done a great job of giving you some insight of the kind of things that are available for you.

Quick reminders that when you visit EFMP and Me, you're going to have a chance to provide feedback and help us with what we create for the next version of the tool. We want to make it even better. It is



our goal to make it very responsive to what you need. When you're on EFMP and Me, and you see the Contact button in the upper right-hand corner of your screen, go ahead and click that. Then, there's going to be a drop-down menu and one of those drop-downs will be Feedback. And if you click on that, you can provide us feedback directly. It's just that easy.

Service members and families, you can check out the caregiving checklist on EFMP and Me and learn even more about self-advocacy and some of the other topics we were discussing today. They're free online courses offered by the Military of Defense at MilLife Learning. This is the website, EFMPandme.militaryonesource.mil, MIL, or MilLife, M-I-L-L-I-F-E, learning.militaryonesource.mil. One of those two websites, they will be in the episode description. So, you don't have to write them down really quickly.

Then, service members and service providers, I'm sorry, and leaders, remember that we have recently added sections for you specifically on EFMP and Me that I just mentioned. Then, everyone, let me just highlight three quick things. It'll help you. The Chill Drills, these are very, very popular, because they're awesome. You can get them for free, free is great. So, please go onto Military OneSource, type in Chill Drill, it's going to give you all the information you need.

The second thing I want to highlight is we talked extensively about non-medical counseling. I just want to remind you that it's available 24/7 by phone or chat, and it is free and confidential. And then lastly, the Military and Family Life Counseling Program, or lovingly known as MFLCs, you can find them in the child care, the child youth programs, you can find them at the schools, you can find them at your military support centers. There's a lot of different places to find them. Did I say that right, Kelly? Are those all the places you can find them? Or are there more?

Kelly Smith:

You did and they're also embedded within the units.

Karen Terry:

Oh, there you go. Also in the units. So, there's no excuse. You, you have somebody to talk to. We are here for you and thank you all for joining us. I hope you found the information we shared valuable and helpful. Don't forget all these resources we mentioned, they are there to help you. So, if you have feedback or a question, you can reach out to us at public.militaryonesource.mil/feedback. That'll be in the episode description and we are going to come back next season with a whole new series of podcasts. So, we will see you then. Thank you all very much.

You've been listening to a podcast for EFMP families brought to you by the Office of Special Needs and Military OneSource. I'm Karen Terry. Thanks for listening.

