

Student spouses understand stressors, best practices to manage stress

By Robert Martin, USAWC PAO 05 December 2021



Stress management workshop facilitator Payal Talwar leads discussions with USAWC student spouses during the stress management workshop, Dec. 2 at the LVCC at Carlisle, Pa.

Senior leader spouses participated in a workshop to explore stressors associated with transitional military life and the unique stressors linked to senior level positions of influence, Dec. 2 at the Army War College. The Military Family Program is a unique feature of the 'Carlisle Experience,' sponsoring workshops and programs tailored to the needs and expectations, both personal and professional, of War College student spouses.

"The workshop helps with self-awareness. When you know yourself, you can change your behavior and actions," said Kyla Sikorski, whose husband is a War College student. "This workshop helped improve the conscious

mindset of what I can do to help myself, allowing me to become a better leader and a better parent.”

“I have worked in elementary schools before where we focused on positive behavior reinforcement, and I am hoping to learn something for myself and interact within an adult mindset and to acquire additional tips and tricks,” said Sikorski.

The attendees participated in many facilitator-led exercises built into the session so that they learned not only from the facilitator but also from each other.

The expert in the room was the spouse of an international student in the Army War College class of 2022. Payal Talwar, from India, is a master practitioner and holds an MBA (HR) degree. She has more than 14 years of experience in training and facilitation, and is passionate about working with people, she said.

“There is a certain level of stress under which it will motivate us. Then, we get compelled to take action,” said Talwar. “When it goes over that level, our bodies start giving up, and our mind goes into distress.

“Once you start noticing you are getting stomach discomfort, headaches, or backaches, this is when stress is over the optimum level.”

“If you change your physiology, your mind will change,” said Talwar. “Relax your body. Leave the space that is causing you stress. Do a physical workout if you can – or breathe deeply,” she offered as immediate steps to take upon noticing stress.

“After making a physical change, you can then benefit from external measures to lower stress levels, such as talking to someone, listening to music, looking at colors, and appreciating scents,” said Talwar.

This workshop is aligned with the Fitness and Resiliency mindset at the Army War College. By helping family members feel more secure and connected in daily life, families can build resilience to cope with everyday military stressors like deployment, permanent change of station, combat injury, and operational stress.

“Understanding the Inner Game, Workshop on Stress Management’ offered spouses a way to explore the thoughts and the beliefs that lead to an accumulation of stress in their lives,” said Christina Daily, USAWC Military Family Program Director.”

“The techniques help the participants discover ways to become adept at handling stressors. Sustaining a normal family life when faced with frequent PCS moves, living apart from family networks, and the military lifestyle demands can take a toll on the mind.

“Spouses are the key to sustainability, which the family and its well-being depend on,” said Daily.

[Learn more about the Military Family Program for Army War College](#)

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