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Communications

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Dr. Sharon Webb is Red Cross Volunteer Providing Online Workshops to Manage Stress

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—Dr. Sharon Webb, coordinator for Clinical Mental Health Counseling Programs and associate professor at Gardner-Webb, is working with the American Red Cross (ARC) during the COVID-19 crisis as a facilitator for online, interactive workshops for the military community. The programs are designed to help military personnel manage COVID-19 pandemic-related stress and learn healthy coping methods.



Although members of the military are accustomed to handling constant change and uncertainty, COVID-19 is adding a host of different stressors. They are finding themselves in situations where families may have delayed reunions, or they are experiencing uncertain deployment schedules. Veterans are having to seek out broader support systems and may have difficulty accessing community resources.

Before COVID-19, the workshops met in person, had one facilitator, and included topics on effective communication, trauma talk, connecting with kids, stress solutions and other subjects. Now, the online format includes two facilitators and covers such topics as managing the stress of isolation, working from home, learning relaxation exercises and more. The Zoom sessions are going well, Webb said. In the first two weeks the online format was offered, she received four requests to conduct the workshops.

Webb has volunteered with the ARC in various capacities for 22 years. “I started volunteering in disaster mental health in 2006, and I’ve since taken on additional commitments to serve the organization as I’ve heard about so many other ways they



serve communities,” she shared. “Many people just think of blood drives as the main thing ARC does, but the organization has vast service in many other areas. I am in my second year of service to the Armed Forces Facilitator, and most recently I took on the responsibilities as the Blue Ridge Piedmont Chapter Mental Health Lead, consisting of 12 counties.”

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