

Putting Research to Work for Military Families



Focus:
Multiple
Branches

Promoting Parenting to Support Reintegrating Military Families: After Deployment, Adaptive Parenting Tools

Gewirtz, A. H., Pinna, K. L. M., Hanson, S. K., & Brockberg, D. (2014). Promoting parenting to support reintegrating military families: After deployment, adaptive parenting tools. *Psychological Services, 11*(1), 31D40. doi:10.1037/a0034134

SUMMARY: The After Deployment, Adaptive Parenting Tools (ADAPT) program is a 14-week group-based, Web-enhanced parenting training intervention. In this article, researchers report early feasibility (recruitment, retention) and acceptability (participant satisfaction, positive group experience, home practice satisfaction) data for the first cohort of families participating in the ADAPT program. Results indicate that participation and satisfaction with the program was high.

KEY FINDINGS:

- Seventy-eight percent of families assigned to the intervention came to at least one session; 79% attended at least 50% of the weekly, two hour sessions.
- More frequent attendance at in-person group sessions was associated with more frequent use of most of the related online material.
- Participants reported being quite satisfied with every group session (average was 3.3 on a scale from 0 to 4).
- Group attendance did not differ by gender (fathers and mothers attended), or by deployment status (deployed and civilian parents attended).

IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMS:

Programs could:

- Promote military father involvement in parenting programs by providing parenting tools specifically for fathers
- Encourage engagement by designing curricula that reflect military values such as commitment, structure, clarity, routines, and protocols
- Frame interventions as prevention or health promotion efforts (versus mental health treatment) and by delivering such interventions in community settings (community center, church, etc.) to encourage participation

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICIES:

Policies could:

- Continue to support the development and evaluation of programs supporting military families
- Recommend continued research focus on engaging both parents in feasible, acceptable interventions may be useful
- Encourage collaboration between DoD and community-based parenting programs so that military families can get military and non-military affiliated support

This product is the result of a partnership funded by the Department of Defense between the Office of Military Community and Family Policy and the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture through a grant/cooperative agreement with The University of Minnesota.



Putting Research to Work for Military Families



METHODS

- Families randomized to services-as-usual (control) were sent print (tip sheets) and online parenting resources.
- Families randomized to the intervention did not differ from controls on the basis of marital status, income, number of children in the home, education, employment, race, or ethnicity.
- Participants had to have at least one child living with them who was between four and 12 years, and have at least one parent who had recently deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan.

PARTICIPANTS

- Thirty-three families (66 military-affiliated parents) participated in the intervention.
- The majority of participants were female (52%) and White (89%). Age of participants was not reported.
- This study focused on Service members in the National Guard and Reserves (69% enlisted, 31% officers).

LIMITATIONS

- The small sample of Midwestern, primarily National Guard families limits generalizability.
- Participants may differ from non-participants in a way that was not measured, but affected the outcome variables (e.g., those who responded may represent highly committed parents).
- The wide variability in attendance and home practice completion makes it unclear which components of the program might be core in predicting engagement and outcomes.

AVENUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research could:

- Replicate this study in a larger, more demographically diverse sample including Service members from other branches and components of the military
- Explore the components of the intervention that best predict engagement
- Test associations between participation and specific parenting outcomes

ASSESSING RESEARCH THAT WORKS



For more information about the Assessing Research that Works rating scale visit:
<https://reachmilitaryfamilies.umn.edu/content/assessing-research-that-works>