

Putting Research to Work for Military Families



Focus:
Multiple
Branches

Changing the Personal Narrative: A Pilot Study of a Resiliency Intervention for Military Spouses

Kees, M., Nerenberg, L. S., Bachrach, J., & Sommer, L. A. (2015). Changing the personal narrative: A pilot study of a resiliency intervention for military spouses. *Contemporary Family Therapy*, 37(3), 221-231.
doi:10.1007/s10591-015-9336-8

SUMMARY: In this study, military spouses participated in the HomeFront Strong program, an eight week group-based resiliency intervention. The study's purpose was to assess participants' perceptions of deployment and depressive symptoms after participation in HomeFront Strong. At three-month follow up, spouses showed significant change in how they perceived deployments, impacting their overall well-being.

KEY FINDINGS:

- Prior to program participation, higher depressive symptoms were present in spouses who perceived deployment negatively.
- Participants who perceived deployment positively reported greater life satisfaction at three-month follow up.
- After participation in HomeFront Strong, spouses reported feeling supported and less overwhelmed during deployment.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMS:

Programs could:

- Provide evidence-based resiliency workshops for military spouses and their families
- Offer education for spouses regarding self-awareness and stress relief at all phases of military life
- Develop workshops for military spouses and families that are embedded in the community

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICIES:

Policies could:

- Continue to support evidenced-based resiliency workshops for military spouses and their families
- Encourage community-based programs to develop workshops for families that do not live near a military installation
- Encourage further research to be conducted to test evidenced-based resiliency interventions

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

- Recruitment of spouses involved advertising HomeFront Strong to civilian and military partnerships.
- The study was conducted over the course of eight weeks with a three-month follow up assessment.
- Spouses completed surveys and semi-structured interviews assessing depressive symptoms and deployment experiences.
- Analyses included a thematic analysis and a comparison of participants' symptoms of depressions from pre-intervention to three-month follow-up.

PARTICIPANTS

- The study consisted of 14 female military spouses who completed both the pre and three-month follow-up program assessments; 25% retention rate in program follow-up.
- Spouses ranged in age from 22 to 50 years, with eight under the age of 30 years.
- Twelve participants were White, one Black, and one who was multi-ethnic.
- Spouses' military affiliation included National Guard (n=7), Reserves (n=2), Active Duty (n=1), and Veteran (n=4).

LIMITATIONS

- This study lacks a comparison group, limiting the ability to determine if the results would be similar in another sample of military spouses.
- The sample is small and homogenous, raising concerns about the generalizability of the findings.
- The study had a 25% retention rate, thus, limiting the ability to determine intervention effectiveness at post-assessment among those who only completed the initial assessment.

AVENUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research could:

- Explore the long-term impact of the HomeFront Strong program
- Examine the effectiveness of HomeFront Strong with a larger, more diverse sample
- Continue the intervention and assessment over all stages of the deployment cycle to assess depressive symptoms and deployment experience over time

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>