

Putting Research to Work for Military Families



Focus:
Multiple
Branches

Evaluation of a Psychological Health and Resilience Intervention for Military Spouses: A Pilot Study

Kees, M., & Rosenblum, K. (2015). Evaluation of a psychological health and resilience intervention for military spouses: A pilot study. *Psychological Services, 12*(3), 222-230. doi:10.1037/ser0000035

SUMMARY: Deployment can be a particularly difficult and stressful time for spouses or partners of Service members. The HomeFront Strong program was designed to strengthen military relationships and increase resilience, and the well-being of Service members' partners was compared before and after program participation. Partners reported high levels of program satisfaction, reduced anxiety and stress, and increased life satisfaction after participating in the HomeFront Strong program.

KEY FINDINGS:

- Participating military wives or female partners experienced reduced anxiety and stress and increased life satisfaction after the HomeFront Strong program.
- Participants reported high levels of satisfaction with the program, including appreciation of learning new coping skills.
- Levels of depression, life engagement, and optimism did not change following the program.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMS:

Programs could:

- Offer peer support groups for spouses to foster community support during deployment
- Encourage military spouses to consider online support groups during deployment to augment in-person resources
- Provide workshops for couples during the reintegration phase of deployment to help them reconnect with each other and cope with family adjustment

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICIES:

Policies could:

- Continue to encourage the development of programs that support military spouses across the deployment cycle
- Encourage training for community professionals regarding particular stressors faced by military spouses during deployment
- Recommend the provision of marriage enrichment programs, particularly after deployment, for Service members and their spouses

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METHODS

- Participants were recruited via flyers and social media, with 63% of screened participants completing the study.
- Participants completed assessments pre- and post-intervention, providing information regarding demographics, program satisfaction, stress levels, coping, depression and anxiety symptoms, and overall well-being.
- Participant well-being (e.g., anxiety, stress, depression) were compared pre- and post-intervention.

PARTICIPANTS

- The sample included 10 female spouses or partners of Service members who were deployed or recently deployed.
- Ages of the spouses ranged from 22-50 years, and 50% were 25-30 years old; nine women were White and one was Black.
- Spouses had experienced one (40%), two (20%), or four or more (40%) deployments.

LIMITATIONS

- The sample was small, exclusively female, and primarily White; thus, results may not generalize to a broader population of military spouses.
- There was no comparison group, and it cannot be determined whether changes in well-being were caused by the intervention.
- No long-term follow-ups were conducted, so it is unclear whether improvements in well-being would be sustained.

AVENUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research could:

- Conduct a similar study with a control group to compare to the HomeFront Strong group post-intervention
- Compare the effects of the HomeFront Strong program with similar existing programs to increase relationship well-being
- Explore family level variables (e.g., communication, coping) that may play a role in the association between program participation and partner well-being

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