

Putting Research to Work for Military Families



Focus:
National
Guard

Assessment of a Postdeployment Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program for National Guard Members and Supporters

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SUMMARY: The Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program (YRRP) was developed to help support and provide resources to Service members and their families throughout the stages of deployment. This study examined perceived level of support and usefulness of the YRRP. Findings revealed Service members and their families found the YRRP useful, especially in providing them with information and resources for support.

KEY FINDINGS:

- Participants found the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program (YRRP) most helpful in providing information regarding education and health resources followed by information on employment, family and relationship concerns, and legal matters.
- Services such as employment opportunities (56%) and family and relationship support (43%) were learned for the first time through the YRRP and were most helpful to family members.
- Greater concern regarding education, employment, and health was indicated by Service members, while family members voiced concerns over family and relationship issues.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMS:

Programs could:

- Enhance education for military families related to financial literacy such as budgeting and investment
- Provide education to military couples to improve positive communication skills throughout their military experience
- Offer workshops to help deployed military members' spouses learn about available supportive services to handle increased household responsibilities

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICIES:

Policies could:

- Promote programs that include assistance for Service members' family in adjusting to all stages of the deployment cycle
- Encourage the development and continuation of programs that can promote resilience in Service members, their partners, and their children
- Support the training of professionals to better identify military spouses who have difficulties managing roles and responsibilities during deployment

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METHODS

- Participants who attended one of ten YRRP weekend trainings held 30 days post-deployment in a Midwestern state were included in this study.
- This study examined five domains that included education benefits, employment, health (e.g., health care, physical and mental health, alcohol use), family or relationship concerns, and legal issues.
- Data were analyzed to assess differences between Service members and family members in the preferences for resources provided.

PARTICIPANTS

- The sample consisted of National Guard Service members (N = 683) and family members (N = 411), including significant others (90%), parents (6%), adult children (1%), and other relatives (3%).
- Ages of Service members and family members were 35 years or older (42%, 46%), 27-35 years (30%, 31%), and 19-26 years (28%, 23%).
- Service members were primarily male (86%), and the majority of family members were female (92%).
- A majority (90% Service members; 92% family members) were White, while 10% of Service members and 8% of family members were non-White.

LIMITATIONS

- Data were collected at post-deployment; without a pretest or comparison to a control group, there is no clear evidence of the direction of effects of the YRRP.
- Services such as financial literacy were not assessed, thus limiting other influential factors that may be contributing to how Service members and their families perceive the support of the YRRP.
- The sample was derived only from National Guard members and their families in a Midwestern state, which limits the generalizability of the study findings to other military branches throughout the U.S.

AVENUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research could:

- Collect and assess data from multiple time points in the deployment cycle, including pre-deployment
- Assess how the inclusion of trainings on financial literacy, family and relationship support, and employment issues may boost YRRP participation and usefulness
- Derive a sample of military families from multiple branches

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