

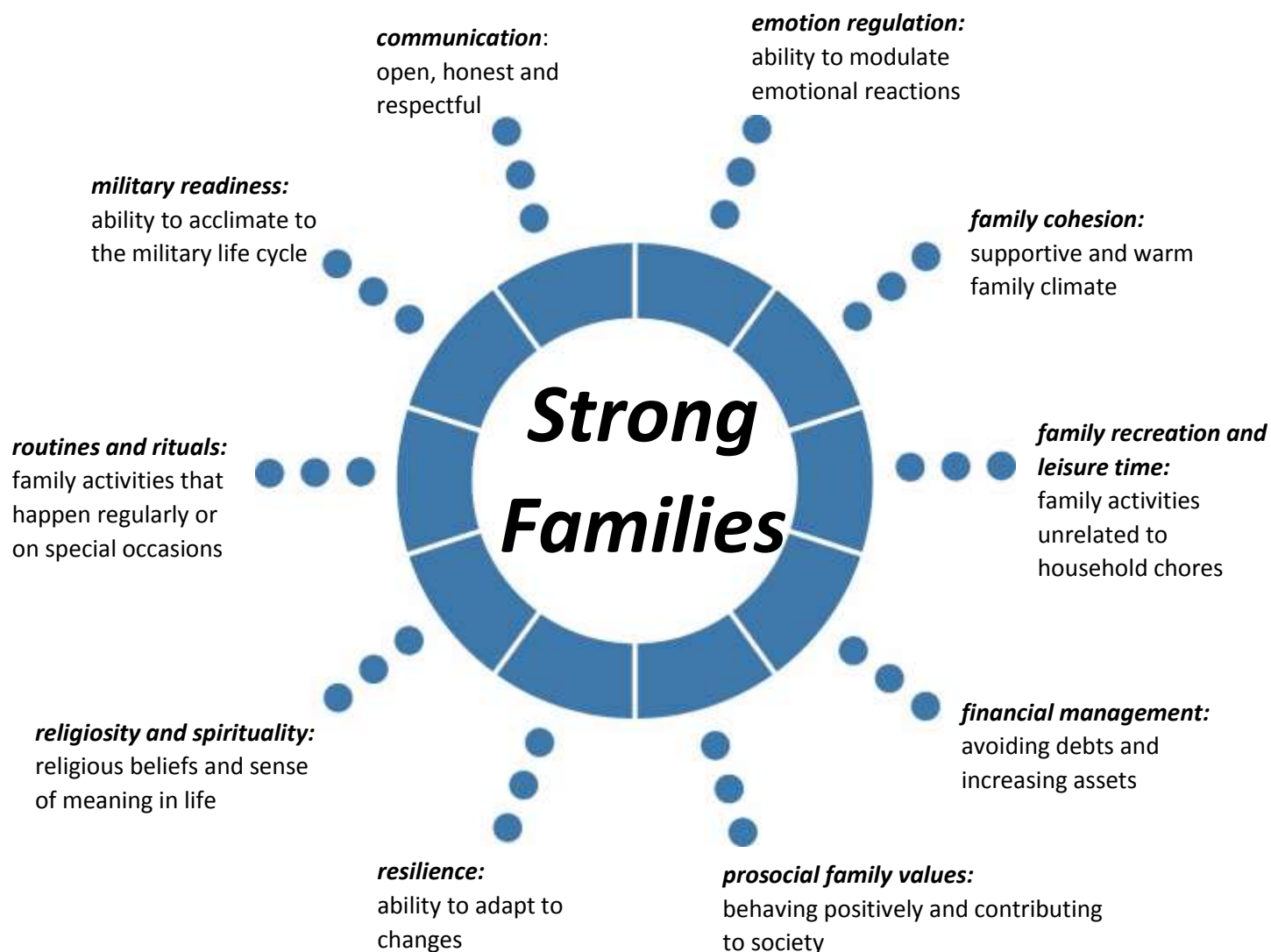


Supporting the Healthy Development of Strong Families

Families are among the most basic and enduring components of modern society. Each family may encounter a variety of stressors; some are big like the birth of a child, or loss of a job while others are small like balancing the checkbook. Strong families are able to navigate these challenges more effectively than others.

Components of Strong Families

There are ten components that have been suggested to be key elements of strong families. Nine components apply to all families in general. The tenth component is specific only to military families.



Knowing the Facts for Military Families



To help strengthen families it will require mindfulness of the diversity that American families represent, including unique strengths and challenges sometimes encountered by specific family constellations.


Barriers to Change

Strong families are not spontaneously created; changes are regularly required to better themselves. However, even strong families face obstacles and barriers to change. These obstacles may happen at the individual level (e.g., internalized gender norms, cultural values) or structural level (e.g., lack of knowledge regarding available services, financial constraints).

Implications and Recommendations

Professionals working with families have the responsibilities to support family success and help families make positive changes. Research on building, developing, and sustaining strong families has important implications for policy and programs in general and within the military context. Implications include being able to:

- Understand the uniqueness of each family
 - **Be mindful of** the diversity of modern families including culture, sexual orientation, and family composition.
 - **Design** programs and policies that can leverage each family's unique strengths, and account for specific difficulties that may obstruct change.
- Develop programs and policies
 - **Engage** in a comprehensive review process that gathers information about the current state of the families within their purview and the relevant programs, practices and policies that affect those families.
 - **Implement** a strategic planning process to identify the strengths and the opportunities for development and growth of families within the particular environmental context.
 - **Use** assessments, evaluations, policies and protocols, as well as resource allocations, to accomplish the prioritized goals and objectives.
- Use formal and informal networks
 - **Provide** clear guidance on accessing formal network support resources, and minimize organizational or agency obstacles.
 - **Promote** use of informal support networks such as friends, extended family members, and neighbors.



To read the full Research Report
on this subject visit:
<https://reachmilitaryfamilies.umn.edu/research/document/10757>

