

Putting Research to Work for Military Families



Focus:
Multiple
Branches

Strength at Home Couples Program to Prevent Military Partner Violence: A Randomized Controlled Trial

Taft, C. T., Creech, S. K., Gallagher, M. W., Macdonald, A., Murphy, C. M., & Monson, C. M. (2016). Strength at Home Couples program to prevent military partner violence: A randomized controlled trial *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 84(11), 935-945. doi:10.1037/ccp0000129

SUMMARY: A randomized clinical trial of Strength at Home Couples (SAH-C), a cognitive-behavioral trauma informed intimate partner violence (IPV) preventive intervention for married or partnered military Service members or Veterans was conducted. Participants included male Service members or Veterans and their female partners. Participants were randomly placed in either the SAH-C program or the Supportive Prevention (SP) program. Overall, findings demonstrated that the SAH-C program was more effective in reducing the acts of physical and psychological IPV compared to the SP program.

KEY FINDINGS:

- Service members or Veterans in the SAH-C program and their female partners engaged in fewer acts of reported physical and psychological IPV compared to participants in the SP program.
- Lower relative risk of physical violence for both members of the dyad was found for those in the SAH-C program and at follow-up assessments.
- Findings suggest there were no differences between groups on relationship satisfaction.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMS:

Programs could:

- Continue providing training opportunities for professionals working with Service members and their families to learn more about IPV and its effects on the individual as well as their family
- Engage Service members and their intimate partners in classes that aim to increase communication and decrease physical or verbal aggression
- Disseminate information regarding possible warning signs of intimate partner violence to professionals working with Service members and their families

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICIES:

Policies could:

- Promote the development of structured workshops for Service members and their partners on healthy relationships
- Encourage awareness among military professionals working with Service members and their partners on the importance of developing programming for IPV prevention
- Recommend collaboration between DoD programs and local community organizations to support treatment programs for Service members who are IPV offenders and victims

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METHODS

- Participants were recruited via flyers in Veterans Affairs (VA) hospitals and presentations at military events in two major metropolitan areas in Northeastern United States.
- Assessments were completed onsite or through an online survey method at four time points: prior to initiating intervention, immediately following intervention, at six months, and 12 months post-intervention.
- Statistical analyses were conducted to determine what, if any, differences there were between the Strength at Home Couples program and the supportive prevention program.

PARTICIPANTS

- Sixty-nine out of 97 interested couples met the inclusion criteria and agreed to participate.
- The majority of couples were married (81%) and White (86%).
- Fifty-eight percent of participants were in the National Guard, 7% Active Duty, 7% Reserves, and 28% Veterans.

LIMITATIONS

- The sample size was small, limiting examination of factors that may have influenced the intervention or outcome; therefore, findings should be interpreted with caution.
- This study focused only on the male Service member in a heterosexual relationship; therefore, results are not generalizable to female Service members or other types of relationships
- The SAH-C program was delivered under heavy supervision from the intervention developers; therefore, it is unknown what level or type of training is necessary to achieve similar outcomes.

AVENUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research could:

- Investigate the short and long term effects of the SAH-C program on both male and female Service members, Veterans, and their partners
- Explore the level and type of professional training for staff needed to achieve similar results of the SAH-C program
- Evaluate the efficacy of the SAH-C program on different types of relationships (e.g., romantic, family)

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