

# Putting Research to Work for Military Families



**Focus:**  
Multiple  
Branches

## Effectiveness of a Multimedia Outreach Kit for Families of Wounded Veterans

Walker, D. I., Cardin, J. -F., Chawla, N., Topp, D., Burton, T., & MacDermid Wadsworth, S. (2014). Effectiveness of a multimedia outreach kit for families of wounded veterans. *Disability and Health Journal*, 7 (2), 216-225.  
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**SUMMARY:** An evaluation of a Sesame Workshop multimedia kit called: Talk, Listen, Connect: Changes (TLC-II©) was conducted. The kit, included video and print materials, aimed to help caregivers (i.e., at-home partner, at-home relative or family member of a current or discharged military member) assist young children as they adjusted to their parent's injury. Group outcomes were compared four weeks following receipt of the kits.

### KEY FINDINGS:

- All materials were well used and highly rated by both test groups.
- All caregivers reported less social isolation, less child aggression, and significantly less disruptive home environments after kit use.
- Test group caregivers reported significantly greater reductions in depressive symptoms and significant increases in children's social competence over time in comparison to the control group.
- As a preventative intervention designed for families with an injured member, TLC-II© was particularly effective at improving coping.

### IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMS:

Programs could:

- Diversify the use of materials like the TLC-II©, integrating them into early intervention processes as part of a full continuum of care for children
- Provide tools that assist parents and promote their self-efficacy in caring for their child post-injury, while also providing engagement and information for children
- Continue dedicating multimedia outreach materials to caregivers and children that help them cope with a family member's life changing injury

### IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICIES:

Policies could:

- Extend policies that include support for injured parents' children and other family members
- Encourage awareness campaigns among military families and their support networks about the effects of injury on children and family members
- Continue to support organizations that focus on military families and their young children's development and well-being

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## METHODS

- Participants were recruited through flyers posted at or near Veterans Administration polytrauma centers, websites, and contacts made at military and Veteran events.
- Test group families received the TLC-II©kit, which included trauma-informed content specific to having a Service member parent return with a wound or injury. Control group families received the Healthy Habits for Life kit, which focused on habits for healthy living.
- Structured interviews of caregivers lasting 20-30 minutes were conducted.
- Comparisons of caregiver and child outcomes between the test and control groups were conducted using t-tests for continuous variables and chi-squared tests for categorical variables.

## PARTICIPANTS

- The final sample comprised 153 caregivers, 75 in the test group and 78 in the control group.
- Participants were caregivers of a child between the ages of 2 and 8 who did not have any special needs whose parent had suffered an injury during their most recent deployment.
- Almost all of the recruited caregivers (93%) were married, 63% were younger than 35, and most were either White or Hispanic.
- Eighty-three percent of the injured family members were on Active Duty with 63% in the Army and 27% in the Marine Corps and had been deployed between one and three times.

## LIMITATIONS

- The sample was drawn from one site; therefore, we cannot assume it was representative.
- Analysis did not account for children's demographics or perspective which could have effects on the outcomes (both short and long-term).
- While the study employed a randomized design, data were collected only twice, and only four weeks apart. It is difficult to know what the longer term outcomes may be.

## AVENUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research could:

- Include interviews with the injured parents' or other family members' perspectives on the child's outcomes after the parent's injury
- Collect data on child outcomes to see what long-term affects the program may have
- Examine program effects on injured parent-child relationships

## ASSESSING RESEARCH THAT WORKS



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