

Putting Research to Work for Military Families



Focus:
Multiple
Branches

Finding Resilience: The Mediation Effect of Sense of Community on the Psychological Well-being of Military Spouses

Wang, M., Nyutu, P., Tran, K., & Spears, A. (2015). Finding resilience: The mediation effect of sense of community on the psychological well-being of military spouses. *Journal of Mental Health Counseling*, 37(2), 164-174.
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SUMMARY: Military lifestyle can be challenging for military spouses. The study explored factors that were related to the psychological well-being of military spouses, and also examined how a sense of community may play a role in military spouses' well-being. Results showed that the psychological well-being of military spouses was linked to a sense of community, which was in turn associated with social support and affect.

KEY FINDINGS:

- Social support and positive affect were associated with an increased sense of community, which was related to better psychological well-being in military spouses.
- Friendship support had a more important role for military spouses than support from family members.
- A sense of military community was important for military spouses' well-being.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMS:

Programs could:

- Offer support groups for military spouses that promote healthy coping and family well-being
- Build stronger military communities by organizing events such as parent group meetings and fitness classes
- Increase military spouses' participation in community activities by offering more individually tailored help

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICIES:

Policies could:

- Raise awareness of the importance of military communities for the well-being of military families
- Continue to offer support programs to military spouses so that they may experience more positive affect and more social interactions
- Recommend professional development courses for professionals who work with military families about the roles of lack of social support and negative affect on military spouses' well-being

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METHODS

- Participants were recruited through a social media website and they completed online surveys.
- Each participant's psychological well-being, perceived social support, sense of community, and affect were assessed through questionnaires.
- Data were analyzed to examine the associations between affect, social support, and psychological well-being, and also to examine how a sense of community may influence the associations.

PARTICIPANTS

- The sample included 207 female spouses of Active Duty Service members (mean age = 32.20 years, SD = 7.13).
- The female spouses were predominately White (73%), followed by Black (10%), Latino (7%), Asian American (3%), Native American (2%), and Others (5%).
- The military branches that the participants' husbands served in were Army (77%), Navy (10%), Air Force (9%), and Marines (4%).

LIMITATIONS

- The sample only included female military spouses, so the results may be hard to generalize to male military spouses.
- Some variables that may potentially affect the relationship between sense of community, affect and psychological well-being (e.g., duration of connection with the current community, and length of spousal relationship) were not included in the study.
- The data were collected anonymously online, therefore the results might not represent the true status of the participants (e.g., some of the participants might not actually be military wives).

AVENUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research could:

- Recruit both male and female military spouses to complete the survey
- Examine the effects of other important variables (e.g., duration of connection with the current community) so that the results are more comprehensive
- Collect longitudinal data to determine the direction of the association between affect, sense of community, and psychological well-being

ASSESSING RESEARCH THAT WORKS



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