

Prevention and Early Intervention: Military Programming Final Report

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services

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Methodology

SUMA Social Marketing Inc. (SUMA) conducted qualitative research on behalf of the Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) programs of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS). The research was specific to initiatives of PEI's military programs.

Please note that the data gathered for this project is qualitative in nature, meaning that it addresses open-ended questions designed to explore matters of "how, why, and what," rather than "how many." Therefore, findings should be considered strongly directional rather than statistically definitive, as those of a quantitative survey might be.

Trained moderators led all focus groups. The sessions were audio-taped, and the recordings were transcribed verbatim.

During focus groups, researchers do not take exact counts of how many participants respond in a certain way on each line of inquiry, but rather foster a conversation through which participants can speak candidly. Then, as the transcripts of all focus groups are analyzed, trends emerge and qualifiers such as "few" and "most" are assigned to help the reader understand the prominence of each trend. The matrix presented below is used to qualify trends in the research.

- Few = under half
- Half = half (50%)
- Many = over half
- Most = 8 or 9 out of 10
- All = everyone (100%)

Military Research

SUMA conducted qualitative research with military personnel; spouses of military personnel; and stakeholders working either directly with military personnel or programs interfacing with military personnel. The objectives of the military research were as follows.

- Identify needs that are common to military families and could be addressed through parenting or child abuse prevention programs
- Identify components of successful parenting or child abuse prevention programs



SUMA worked in collaboration with DFPS to identify three communities as key research sites for military research. The collaboration resulted in the choice of the following sites.

- Killeen
- El Paso
- San Antonio

The research included the following components.

- Background research
- Stakeholder interviews ($N = 10$)
- Focus groups with spouses/partners/caregivers of active duty members ($N = 8$)
- Focus groups with active duty members ($N = 4$)
- Focus groups with spouses/partners/caregivers of reservists or veterans ($N = 5$)
- Focus groups with veterans ($N = 8$)

Focus groups were conducted with the following audiences.

- Spouses of active duty military personnel who were deployed in the past two years and had children 5 years old or younger
- Active duty military personnel with young children
- Spouses and primary child caretakers of military reservists or veterans
- Military reservists or veterans who have children

Table 1 reflects the focus group participant breakdown by geographic location and audience.

Table 1: Focus Group Participants, by City ($N = 25$)

City	Population	Quantity
Killeen	Spouses of Active Duty	8
El Paso	Active Duty	4
San Antonio	Spouses/Partners/ Caregivers of Reservists/Veterans	5
San Antonio	Reservists and Veterans	8
Total		25



SUMA conducted in-depth interviews with 10 stakeholders. DFPS provided initial contacts to SUMA, and participating stakeholders recommended additional contacts. Interviewees represented experts knowledgeable about prevention programming with the military.

Table 2 lists the participating stakeholders' names and their associated organizations.

Table 2: Military Stakeholders

Name	Organization
Noelita Lugo	Texas Attorney General's Office
Cynthia Osborne	University of Texas - LBJ School of Public Affairs - Center of Health and Social Policy and Child and Research Partnership
Lisa Tomaka	Child Crisis Center of El Paso
Paul Furukawa	Army Social Worker - Retired
Katy Dondanville	University of Texas Health Science Center - STRONG STAR program
Richard Singleton	STARRY - A Children At Heart Ministry
Angela Bulls	STARRY - A Children At Heart Ministry
Mary Campise	Department of Defense - Office of Family Readiness
Ellen DeVoe	Boston University School of Social Work
Ted Hughes	Texas Department of State Health Services - Mental Health Program for Veterans



Military Programming Formative Research

Military Stakeholder Research

SUMA conducted research with 10 military stakeholders. The stakeholders were either identified by DFPS or referred by other participating stakeholders. The objectives of the research were as follows.

- Provide background context to researchers
- Learn about current military child abuse and prevention programs, barriers to accessing these programs, and perceptions of these programs
- Inform the focus group research

The military stakeholders interviewed for this project were knowledgeable and provided insights into current programming and research relevant to child abuse prevention for military families. Below is a list of pertinent concepts shared by the stakeholders.

- There is a perceived stigma associated with seeking support. This is considered the largest barrier in seeking help. Families are concerned that seeking support may be perceived as a weakness and may negatively impact the military family member's career.
- Support for military families is needed. Military families have several unique stressors that impact family life. Some programs are seeing higher levels of violence toward children within military families due to the stress of repeated deployments.
- Families need logistical support during deployment.
- Support services should include pre-deployment, deployment, and post-deployment components.
- Some military personnel face complex legal issues that need to be addressed.
- Future programming must take into account the needs of the families for whom the programs are intended, such as child care, food, parking, driving distance, and timing.
- Program personnel should be experienced with the military and, when possible, be veterans themselves.

Stakeholders mentioned the following promising or best practices that support military families.

- THRIVE (Talk, Listen, Connect): a Sesame Street initiative that helps children cope with deployment
- Parenting2Go: An app created by the Department of Defense that has several pertinent modules related to parenting



In addition to the relevant concepts shared above, a few stakeholders expressed misgivings about creating a new program rather than working within the programs that currently exist.

The information shared by stakeholders was largely echoed in the focus group findings and should therefore be strongly considered in the creation of child abuse and prevention programs for the military population in Texas.



Military Programming Focus Group Research Findings

On behalf of the Texas DFPS' PEI program, SUMA conducted focus groups with the following objectives.

Identify needs that are common to military families and could be addressed through parenting or child abuse prevention programs

Identify components of successful parenting or child abuse prevention programs

Focus groups were conducted with the following audiences.

- Spouses of active duty military personnel, who were deployed in the past two years and had children 5 years old or younger
- Active duty military personnel with young children
- Spouses and primary child caretakers of military reservists or veterans
- Military reservists or veterans who have children

Table 1: Participants in Military Focus Groups (N = 25)

City	Population	Quantity
Killeen	Spouses of Active Duty	8
El Paso	Active Duty	4
San Antonio	Spouses/Partners/ Caregivers of Reservists/Veterans	5
San Antonio	Reservists and Veterans	8



The following lines of inquiry were included in the focus groups.

- **Perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes: raising a family in the military**
 - How it feels to raise a family in the military
 - Challenges and benefits unique to military families
 - How to talk to children about being in a military family

- **Military lifecycle: challenges and needs**
 - Pre-deployment needs
 - Needs during deployment
 - Post-deployment needs

- **Experience with existing programs**
 - Perceptions of levels of support
 - On-base spouse support
 - Military OneSource
 - Mandatory programming
 - Resources for children

- **Barriers to getting support**
 - Perceived stigmas
 - Cultural barriers
 - Moving
 - Accessing programs

- **Program design and delivery**
 - Ideal program content
 - Potential program design and delivery



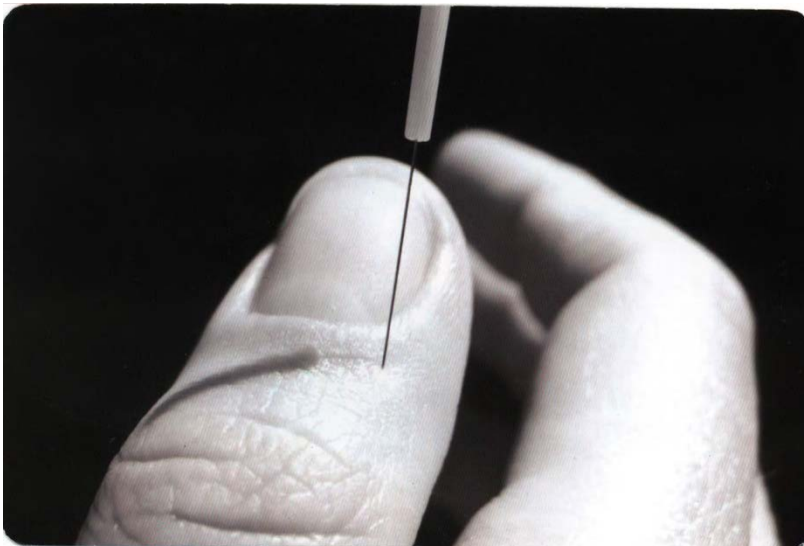
Key Findings

At a high level, findings were mostly consistent across all focus groups. However, there were different nuances based on each population. Active duty members sometimes perceived support levels differently than spouses. Families on one base may see programs differently than families on another base or than those who live off base. These perceptions are reflected throughout the report.

Perceptions, Beliefs, and Attitudes: Raising a Family in the Military

In an icebreaker discussion at the beginning of each focus group, the moderator laid out a deck of Visual Explorer cards depicting images of a wide variety of people, places, and situations. Participants were asked to browse through the cards and select the one image that best illustrated their feelings about raising a family in the military.

This warm-up exercise led to an atmosphere of intimacy, shared experience, and open discussion, setting the tone for the entire focus group session. Participants shared moving stories about their lives, experiences with deployment and coming back to their families, and their children. Different photos were selected in each group, but a few common themes emerged. Active duty participants and veterans chose photos that illustrated the pain of being separated from their children during deployment, the difficulty of integrating into their families, and trying to make the most of the time they have with their children.



My picture's of a needle going through a thumb. It represents the pain of always missing everything that happens in your children's lives.

— San Antonio



The picture I picked was ... a little kid with sand running between their fingers. And, I picked it because I guess it could represent time and that you don't always have time for them, and it's just time running through their fingers that you're not always there.

— El Paso



It's a dad helping his daughter learn how to ride a bike. Yeah, for me, it was kind of about the time in between, because it's not just deployments, but [also] going to the field and always being gone, so when you are home, just making the best of that time.

— San Antonio



When I was deployed and everything and coming back from deployment, it kind of reminded me of the fact that I had been gone so long and how my boys and everything grew up so fast. I kind of look at it that way, like a scattered puzzle and me putting back the pieces of what I missed.

— San Antonio



Military spouses chose images that depicted family life as isolated and solitary. They also used the images to talk about the following challenges: bearing the burden of child rearing and family life during deployment; working through their own emotions while a spouse is deployed; staying connected to a spouse during deployment; and connecting to a spouse in the difficult reintegration period after a deployment.



I picked the thunderstorm, only because when it's bad, it's serious, because I'm not the confrontation kind of person.

— Killeen



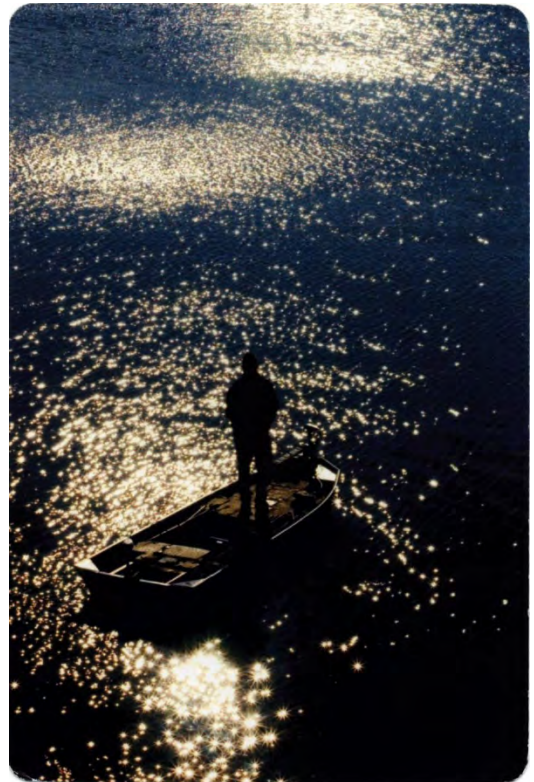


I picked the picture of a donkey pulling a little carriage in the middle of the desert, because that's how it feels. ... [My daughter is] 4 years old. My husband has been deployed, since she's been alive, twice.

— San Antonio

I picked a picture of a man standing in a boat in the water by himself, because that's how it is – by myself. I'm Superman, Superwoman, Batman, Spiderman, all of them.

— Killeen



After the icebreaker discussion, participants were asked what challenges they face when child rearing or as a military family. The moderator then listed the challenges on a flip chart. The responses, which ranged from practical to emotional, included:

- Learning to drive and navigate a new city on your own
- Financial challenges
- Managing a household during deployment
- Staying connected during deployment
- Finding help with childcare during deployment
- Finding appropriate schools in a new area
- Talking with children about a parent's deployment
- Managing discipline both during and after deployment
- Reintegrating the family after deployment
- Dealing with PTSD
- Dealing with uncertainty

Veteran and active duty participants acknowledged the challenges faced by their spouses at home. They clearly stated that their spouses often shoulder the majority of the work of raising a family and maintaining the household, even when a military member is not deployed.

You have one spouse who is in the military, who is gone, like he said, up to 16, 17 hours out of the day, and you have another spouse who is constantly dealing with the children, but at the same time, they have to manage the household. They have to get appointments done, they have to make sure the kids get all their stuff done.

– El Paso

Active duty, you don't really have a set schedule during the week. You never know when you might be put on a certain detail, or you might get called into work at any moment of the day. Someone can call you in. You can be trying to have some family time, but then again you have to be called in, so you have to stop everything that you're doing and rush back there.

– El Paso

Participants were also asked what their non-military friends and family did not understand about military life. Their responses indicated a general perception that these friends and family members often lacked empathy about the stress they face—and seemed to think that the military family had more choices about their situation than they actually do.

A lot of people who have never been in the military ... they don't understand the stress that the spouse is going through. Any day, they can get a phone call or a message, but they don't understand. They'll tell the spouses he'll be all right, he's doing okay, but the spouse knows that there could be stuff going on, and she won't even be notified until sometime later. It's just the stress factor that they don't quite understand.

– El Paso



People don't understand. They think like you – a lot of people I find [think], oh well, you chose to do that. No, yeah, my husband volunteered and I voluntarily married my husband, but we didn't choose the difficulties that we're enduring.

– San Antonio Spouse

Despite the challenges, many of the active duty participants and their spouses showed pride about being in the military and identified many benefits unique to a military family. When asked what would change if they were not in the military, many spoke of losing these benefits.

They also described a supportive culture and military camaraderie. While on active duty, members of a given unit watch out for each other, and a structure of watching out for one another also exists for spouses who are at home during deployment.

We lived on base and we had our community and we had our friends and, so, if you need milk, somebody's either at the store or they'll come sit with your kids so you can go to the store.

– San Antonio Spouse

Just being in the Army is a like a big family. You can talk to higher-ups or your lower enlisted and have a common – how can I say it? ... common experience and have a growth of a bond, if you wish. Once you do deploy and everything like that, you will know for a fact your family will be okay because your next door neighbor will help and support her while you're gone. The wives can get together and take care of things with each other.

– El Paso

Many participants found helping children deal with the emotions of deployment to be difficult. Participants stated that the children have trouble understanding why a parent is gone as well as living with the uncertainty of when they will return. It is most often the spouse who remains behind and explains why the other parent is gone. The spouse also manages emotions that might not even manifest until the service member has returned.

My youngest, I had a lot of struggles, like your daughter. My husband was only gone for four months. When he came back, [my son] would not let him out of his sight. My husband would get up to go to the bathroom. "Where's Daddy? Where's Daddy? Where did he go?" It was bad for months.

– Killeen Spouse

My daughter would wake up with nightmares yelling, "Daddy! Daddy," like that. It was just a nightmare.

– Killeen Spouse



In addition to the camaraderie, participants listed other benefits of being a military family. Many of these were financial, such as health insurance coverage for the family, housing, the GI Bill, and discounts on food and family activities. Some of the families had children who have disabilities or special healthcare needs; participants stated that being a military family gave them easier access to necessary services. There were also cultural benefits: the ability to travel, live in different countries, and meet people from different cultures.

I've come across a lot of people who've said, well, I've never left San Antonio. Me and my family, on the other hand, can say we've been to Japan. We've been to Germany. We've been to Korea. We've been to Ireland.

– San Antonio Veteran

You get all your medical stuff paid for while you're in, especially [for] your family.

– El Paso

My eldest daughter is special needs. Because we're in the military we've been able to tap into various different services for her. I think a lot of the services that we're currently using for her, if we weren't in the military, they wouldn't be available to us.

– Killeen

The Military Lifecycle: Challenges and Needs

The moderator facilitated an activity in which participants were asked to document their family needs and challenges in three phases of military life: pre-deployment, deployment, and post-deployment. They were provided with a worksheet and were first asked to write down the challenges specific to each of these military lifecycle phases. Answers ranged from the practical to the philosophical – from car maintenance to the deep emotional challenges of dealing with PTSD and alcoholism.

All worksheets can be seen in Appendix C.



Figure 1: Sample of a Spouse's Worksheet

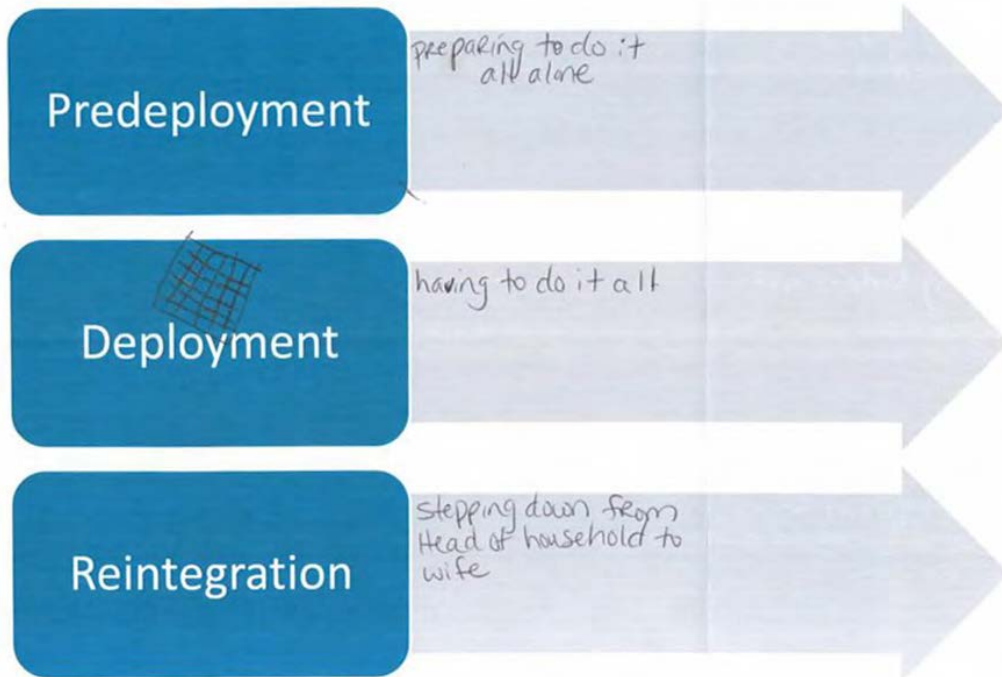
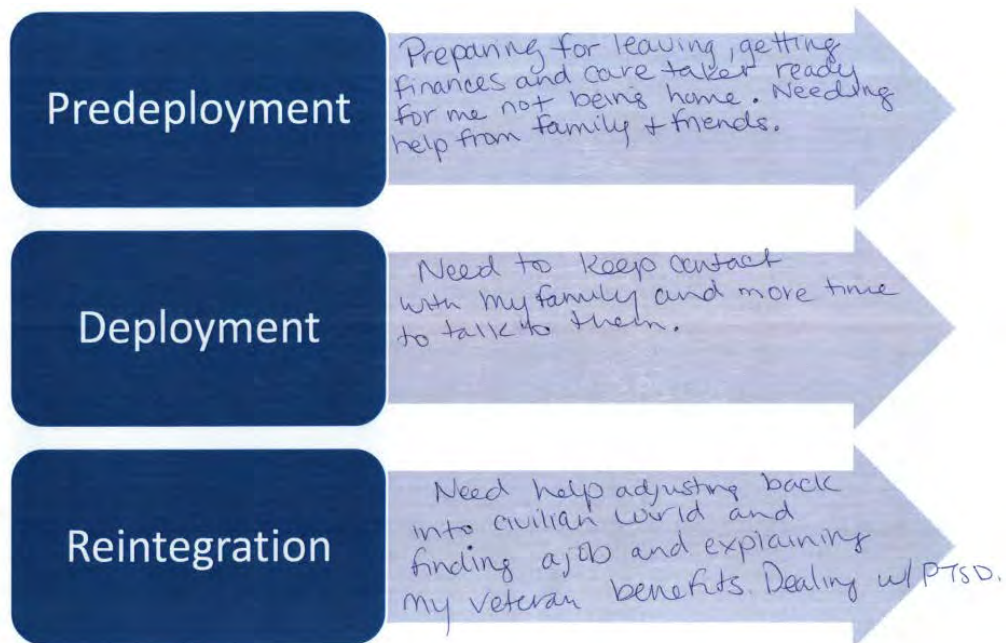


Figure 2: Sample of a Veteran's Worksheet



Pre-deployment

Participant responses to pre-deployment could be broken down into two categories: emotional preparation (particularly for their children) and practical considerations.

When discussing emotional preparation, participants across all groups identified the challenge of getting children ready for a parent's deployment.

Explaining to the kids what's going to happen in the next few months while Daddy is gone.

– Killeen

Mentally preparing your children for the fact that you're going to be gone. When I left, one of the questions – my son, because he was already 10 – he was like, "Are you going to die?" I was like, "No." It was a little thing because you never know, but I was like, "No, I'm not going to die, I'll be fine."

– San Antonio Veteran

Participants also focused on the steps that service members are taking themselves to prepare for deployment. Spouses and service members both spoke about the difficulty of the service member becoming emotionally detached before they even leave.

I would say being involved in children's activities right before you're ready to go, because you're feeling disconnected. You're starting to kind of disconnect yourself from the activities that are going on because you know you're not going to be there, and then it's emotional when you leave. I know that my kids didn't really understand, but I was crying, and they didn't understand.

– El Paso

They start preparing for bachelor mode, and it's like, no, dude, you're still here. You can still take out the trash. You can still do all these things. You're not gone yet.

– San Antonio Spouse

Spouses, active duty members, and veterans all identified a variety of practical considerations and challenges that would affect a spouse's ability to manage family life on their own. These included setting up wills and other legal documents, financial planning, and setting up a support system.

Power of attorney and legal, such as if something happens to you, God forbid, what happens next? The will and things like that. Who will take care of the children if something were to happen to you and, God forbid, the spouse.

– El Paso



Making sure we take care of all the financial stuff so that they don't have to be stressed out about it.

– Killeen

We need help as far as – well, setting up things for [our families], maybe counseling, setting up if they need something, their car breaks down, stuff like that. Things that – just kind of resources, something that they can use for help, guidelines, so when we leave, we don't just leave them dry.

– San Antonio Veteran

Deployment

During deployment, participants identified the challenge of staying connected. Time zones, the stress of deployment, and often the secrecy from being unable to say exactly where they are can make regular phone calls and contact with the family difficult. Both spouses and service members also spoke of a difficulty in not wanting to be too honest about challenges they might face, for fear of creating more stress and worry for the person on the other end.

Not telling them when stuff happens, so they don't get stressed out because they're already going through all that stuff over there.

– Killeen

I think there's kind of a mutual pressure to lie and say that everything's going all right. So, if you call home, she says everything's great. The kids say everything's great, and you tell them everything's fine.

– San Antonio Veteran

In most groups, money issues were identified as a concern during deployment. However, there were subtle differences in the groups. Active duty members and veterans often mentioned the challenge of setting up finances, so that a spouse who might not have been in charge of the bills before knows what and how to pay. It might also be difficult having both spouses access the same accounts and stay in their budget when they have lapses in communication.

I'd go to a PX [Post Exchange] in Fallujah, and her check would bounce back here. And you couldn't even talk about it for a few weeks.

– San Antonio Veteran



Spouses of reservists identified a very different financial challenge. Often, reservists leave another job behind and only receive partial pay when they are deployed. This puts an additional financial burden on the families.

Like with my husband being Reserves now, we get a certain amount of money, and he's able to work part-times on the weekends, so then we have extra money. And then, that money compared to the military, it's totally different. I'm not getting the same, so when he does go on deployments, we're actually making way less than what we normally do.

– San Antonio Spouse

Spouses also talked about the difficulty of managing the family on their own. Practical difficulties ranged from learning to drive to just getting their children where they need to be. Some spouses gave birth or managed a newborn baby on their own. They also spoke about the challenges of getting time to themselves and having the energy to manage the family.

... Like lack of extra hands. I don't have him to pick up the kid at a certain time. I have to pick them up both morning and night. Doctor's appointments, I have to figure out sports schedules. Loneliness, being without my husband. A strict schedule, like yeah, I could go out with the girls, but I've got this boy, this age and this boy, this age, and this kid wants to go over here, and that kid wants to go over there, and I can't get them both to the same babysitter.

– San Antonio Spouse

For me, it would be missing my lifestyle. I don't get to be me.

– Killeen

These practical difficulties put extra pressure on the deployed service members, who know they cannot help the spouse manage day-to-day life.

They get to resent you because they're dealing [with] everything about the kids.

– San Antonio Veteran

Not being able to help in any way. Can't do anything because you're not there.

– El Paso

Post-deployment

All participants spoke about the difficulty of reintegrating the service member into the family after deployment. While the service member was away, the spouses had set up a daily routine, running every part of the household. In addition, children have grown during a parent's deployment and may not even recognize him or her upon return.



It is often difficult for the service member to know how they fit into the “new normal” post-deployment, even though they desired to be “king of their domain.”

You go on deployment, you come back. The mom has been doing everything. Everything. The routine is there. Then you have to break into that.

— El Paso

With my first one, I left as soon as I had her ... so when I came back, she didn't know who I was. She didn't — she wanted to be with my sister.

— San Antonio Veteran

Military participants often had difficulty switching from the role of soldier back to the roles of father and husband when they returned from a deployment. They spoke about how, during deployment, they always had to be hyperaware of their surroundings in order to survive. Coming home, they said it was difficult to turn off that awareness and shift to life with a spouse and children.

I come back, and it's like this room is quiet, and I'm just like — because my brain is so — it's been hyped up for 18 months. It's been hyped up and hypersensitive. I'm hypervigilant.

— San Antonio Veteran

You go from being platoon sergeant, tough guy, be out there deploying, doing what you have to do, come back and then you have to sing songs to your kids and walk in the store and do stuff. It's really hard to transition from that sometimes.

— San Antonio Veteran

This adjustment is further complicated because many participants experienced PTSD and/or were abusing alcohol as they transitioned back into everyday life. Many needed time and space to process what they'd been through. This made it difficult for many of them to connect with their children and know how to discipline them.

Another thing that was hard for me coming back was that I had rough tours, and so I came back and I started drinking heavily all the time.

— San Antonio Veteran

Participants stated that the difficulty with this adjustment puts extra stress on the spouse and children who are trying to reconnect with the service member. Many stated that the life changes and stress experienced by a service member during deployment could change them in ways that make it difficult to welcome them back into the family.

He's been home for two years, and I feel like he's changed ... I literally walked him to the psychiatrist one time, and I threw him in there and I told him, "You're not leaving until you talk to somebody, or I'm leaving you."

— Killeen Spouse



Overall, service members and their families did want to find ways to surmount these barriers and connect with each other. Service members expressed regret over how much they missed and wanted more time to connect with their children.

Since I have young boys, me being deployed, you miss a lot. You miss their first steps, their first word. You've got to learn what is their favorite food.

– El Paso

You don't ever get used to being away from your kids and your family.

– San Antonio Veteran

I would say my wife was the opposite. She took it like, oh, you get to be away from the kids. I'm like, I wish I could be with the kids.

– El Paso

When participants were asked how they meet these needs, they spoke of many existing programs they might or might not access. These programs are described in the next section.

Experiences with Existing Programs

Participants were asked which military support programs they knew about and had accessed and their experiences with them. Many could identify programs directly offered by the military, such as family support groups, childcare, or financial support that provides discounts for activities, such as trips to Sea World. They were less familiar with state government or non-profit support programs.

Perceptions of available military programs and assistance varied vastly for different levels of military involvement and in different locations. Active duty members and spouses said they had a great deal of support from the military.

They give us everything we need, except for your spouse.

– Killeen

We were lucky to live on one of the biggest bases in the country, and so there was everything. Everything from mommy fit groups to, like, coffees with the unit and the other spouses.

– San Antonio Spouse



However, spouses of reservists described a lower level of support. While they did have people they could call for help, they said that their families lost money when the reservist was deployed, had to turn to state or government services for backup, and did not have help from the military to access those services.

When [we needed food stamps] one of his friends referred me over to all that, and they – pretty much by the time I got there – they pretty much had already been told what the whole situation was, so I didn't have an issue with getting to the food bank. There's a diaper bank where they give you diapers and wipes, a lot of stuff like that. To me, that was a lot of help.

– San Antonio Spouse

Veterans' spouses said they got virtually no support from Veterans Affairs (VA) once their family was no longer part of the military. For many spouses, this was a difficult transition, as they had relied on the camaraderie and some of the available services.

Once you're out of the service, they're done with you. You don't exist.

– San Antonio Spouse

Veterans themselves stated that they did get some benefits from the VA, but it is not always easy to understand what those benefits are. They also may have to travel an unreasonable distance to reach locations where benefits are offered. This makes it harder for them to access what they might be entitled to receive.

There's no handbook that says, hey, you're out now. This is what you can go do. So if there was something like that, that can kind of direct us and let us know what our [benefit] options are.

– San Antonio Veteran

If I want to do stuff at the VA ... it's like a 30-minute drive. So people would be like, "Oh yeah, you can go to the VA and do this and do that." I'm like, "But it's way hell on the other side of town."

– San Antonio Veteran

Participants discussed several specific programs they had accessed, including the following.



Military OneSource

Many participants had used Military OneSource, a website and phone service designed as a one-stop shop to connect service members and their families to needed resources. Active duty members said they regularly called Military OneSource to get connected to many different services, including for their children, housing, education, and much more.

It's like the military's form of Google.

– Killeen

Reservists and veterans found it less helpful because they were referred to the VA, rather than being directly connected to services. The VA offers health care, job training, and mental health services for veterans but does not provide as much for families (as previously stated).

You find that when you're not on-base and you're not an active duty wife, you don't get the knowledge of all the resources.

– San Antonio Spouse

On-Base Spouse Support Programs

Many bases offer programs designed to support spouses of active duty members during deployment. Participants said that each base and command unit handles these programs differently, whether they are run by a commander's wife or paid staff. Groups might provide parenting support, communication channels to inform spouses about anything that might arise during deployment, and phone trees (where different spouses check up on each other). And, there are regular social meetings where spouses can connect and support each other.

When you become a key volunteer ... you get this ginormous binder. So if you call me and, say, you can't pay for food and you need help and whatever, because you're supposed to call once a month and check up on each other. "Let me flip to my page. These are all the resources that I can give you, and then you can go look for help."

– San Antonio Spouse

However, many spouses are reluctant to use these programs because they perceive the support groups as gossipy. They do not feel safe in these groups, partly because of the stigma that might be associated with not having one's house or family under control.

I don't do the [on-base] mommy groups, because they're kind of mean. They can be really clique-y.

– San Antonio Spouse



That's the one thing about the [on-base support group]: that they have a lot of gossip. If you were hanging out with someone, [the other spouses would ask,] "Oh, what are them two doing?"

—San Antonio Veteran

Mandatory Pre- and Post-deployment Classes

Many participants stated that there are mandatory family readiness classes to prepare military members and their families for deployment. They also talked about mandatory classes for service members upon returning from deployment, which explore common themes like PTSD, child abuse prevention, and alcoholism. These classes are intended to connect service members and their families to resources that address these common problems.

However, participants stated that the classes are often boring. Many families may simply choose not to attend them or not pay attention when they do attend. Many service members also found that they were not ready to process the information from these classes so soon after returning from deployment.

In pre-deployment, they do this thing where we all get together and it's a Ready Reserves-something-something, to get them prepared to deploy. And it's supposed to do that. It doesn't. It's boring as hell.

—San Antonio Spouse

They have the reintegration. They do that readiness where they're supposed to come back a month later, they do it. And half of them don't even want to go to it because they're like, we just got back. We don't want to sit for eight hours and look at PowerPoints and stuff. And so, a lot of them didn't – we didn't go.

—San Antonio Veteran

Resources for Children

Participants stated that there are many on-base services to help families with children. They identified on-base childcare and babysitting services. They also talked about the Texas Workforce Commission offering financial assistance for off-base childcare.

The good thing about being affiliated with the Army is that you have various different programs that you can use. There's a program called NACCRRRA [National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies] ... They will subsidize your childcare depending on – it's actually needs-tested, so basically based on your financial income and the size of the family.

—Killeen

However, participants exhibited a reluctance to use some of these services if they were new to town and did not have prior experience or know the people who were offering them.



They did not want to put their children at risk of abuse, and they needed more than simple word-of-mouth in order to build trust.

I don't do those babysitting services and all that stuff because I don't know those people.
– Killeen

Spouses were using apps, videos, and other tools to talk to their children about deployment. Some spouses directly identified a “family care kit” they were given before deployment and the Sesame Street military deployment toolkit as useful resources for speaking to young children about deployment.

That book [in the pre-deployment kit] is actually quite good because it actually talks about behaviors that you can expect to see from your child, a type of – yeah, you know what I'm talking about? It has everything for the children. It comes in a little shoebox, and it has a little bear, and it has glasses and a hat.

– Killeen

There's the Elmo videos to, like, [show] your kid before they leave, while they're gone and when they come back. And, if they never come back, there's another video also.

– San Antonio Spouse

Perceived Stigmas, Confidentiality, and Barriers to Support

Although participants were aware of support programs and said they would welcome help, it became evident from all of the groups that there are many barriers to using these programs. These barriers were pervasive: similar barriers were identified in every one of the groups and affected all parts of life, ranging from getting mental health assistance to getting help with day-to-day household chores.

In every group, participants brought up the perception that there is a stigma attached to getting mental health assistance for military personnel and their families. This stigma is a long-standing part of military culture, according to their discussions.

They said this often gets in the way of getting help, even when it's needed, because there is also a lack of confidentiality in the military. Many of them said a single doctor's visit would be noted in their personnel file. They were concerned that even if a current command leader was sympathetic, future leaders may read their personnel file and be reluctant to offer career advancement.

Honestly, I think there's still a stigma based around actually going to real behavior health or going to mental health for real medical issues. It stays in your medical file. Anything that actually stays a part of your record for going to get, there's a huge stigma still on that in the army, I think.

– El Paso Active Duty



Who in their right mind is going to promote someone that has a mental health issue or who is unstable in their actions? Whether you're in the army or not, there's a type of stigma attached to mental health issues.

– Killeen Spouse

This stigma extends to the family. Many of the spouses spoke about the need to appear as though they have everything in their lives under control, because they didn't want their spouse's military career advancement to be jeopardized.

It's almost like you don't want to do or say anything that could either get your spouse in trouble – not get him in trouble, but kind of have people looking at him with a side eye, like you can't take care of your house and home, or you don't have your family in line.

– Killeen Spouse

Military families must move frequently, which sometimes creates barriers to getting help from other military families. Because it takes time to build trust, it can be harder for spouses to build the relationships needed to get community support. Spouses in Killeen also said that because everyone is from different places, it can be hard to read different cultural signals and know whether to trust someone. Participants in all groups discussed the difficulty of taking time to build relationships with people who may be able to help with part-time childcare or other parts of daily life.

I was new to the duty station when I deployed, so it wasn't like [my wife] knew anybody. It wasn't like she had that support system if her car broke down or anything. She was on her own.

– San Antonio Veteran

There's so many different, diverse cultural barriers. You're coming in contact with people who are not from where you're from, and sometimes you get treated different.

– Killeen Spouse

Participants also spoke of a strong “do it yourself” culture within the military and military families. They perceived a social stigma to getting support with children or household chores. Many spouses indicated that they place pressure on themselves to be as strong as their partner who is serving in the military. Also, many of the families come from backgrounds where having household help is not the norm, so it may be perceived as laziness or weakness by the spouses themselves or by their peers.

“Dependa's” a derogatory word that you call a woman who's a spouse of the military.... Like I want all of these free perks, but I'm not about to cook. I'm not about to clean. I'm not about to raise the kids. I'm just going to – usually it's depicted like Jabba the Hut on the couch eating Oreos watching TV.

– San Antonio Spouse



I think a lot of it is linked to the social demographic group that the majority of us come from. ... You get on with it, because that's the way I've seen things done. Sometimes you see services, but there's an unfamiliarity so you're reluctant to tap into it, because it's as if you're indirectly trained or – that's the sort of thing we don't do. We don't go and get help for that."

– Killeen Spouse

This culture of wanting to be independent was also identified as a factor that prevents many service members from getting help with parenting or PTSD treatment. Participants talked about the concept "Army Strong" – that service members should be strong and available to do their work whenever they are called to service. Both spouses and service members stated that, many times, service members did not want to admit that they might be having a problem with PTSD or alcohol; it was only the spouse or commander's urging that helped them get some kind of assistance.

I don't think I ever personally – like I really saw somebody seek help just because they thought it would be a good idea. Usually something kind of brought them to the point where it was commander referred like they made them go or there was, like, an intervention on their family's part or something.

– San Antonio Veteran

Participants also spoke about their difficulties of staying close to or getting emotional support from friends or family not connected to the military. They stated that they have little to no control over their weekly work schedule and the timing of training exercises or deployment dates, and their non-military family may not understand this or see it as a choice. This might cause offense when missing weddings or birthday parties, for example. Many participants discussed how their non-military families or friends do not understand other common stressors in the military lifestyle, like the fear that a spouse who remains at home has during deployment. As a result, many expressed a reluctance to seek help from non-military friends and family because they do not want to be judged or misunderstood.

You're just trying to explain the life's not very flexible, so when you can't come home for certain things, even if it's just – you can't just get leave because you want it. So you miss weddings or family events, and they think you just didn't care.

– El Paso

Time is a barrier to getting support. Participants indicated that they get support most often because the spouse finds a program and either accesses it or forces the military member to access it. However, because the spouse is often running every part of the family's daily life, they may have trouble taking the time to find and apply for services.

Yeah, you're talking about well, daycare and me having time. Well, who's going to take the time to go apply for that daycare?

– San Antonio Spouse



Program Design and Delivery

Participants were asked what they would like to see if a new program was developed to offer them support, both from a content perspective and the perspective of where, when and how it should be delivered. This section includes participants' viewpoints on ideal program content, design, and delivery.

Ideal Program Content

When asked about ideal programmatic content, some participants requested very tactical support, and others were more focused on counseling services. These requests could be broken down into the three phases of military life: pre-deployment, deployment, and post-deployment.

Pre-deployment

In the pre-deployment phase, participants stated that service members often begin to disconnect emotionally from their families; at the same time, they are trying to figure out how to help their children and spouse be emotionally prepared for their separation.

Participants requested programs that can help both the parent awaiting deployment and the parent remaining home stay emotionally connected to each other, and know how to talk to children and prepare them for the emotional challenges of deployment. Participants were familiar with many programs in place to help younger children but sought more programs that could help an older child or teenager.

I think it would be beneficial [to have a program for] a teenager ... They're already dealing with all the teenage stuff. And then, they have this extra stress. I think my only problem would be the time to make to do that [program].

– San Antonio Spouse

[There are programs for] that 4-year-old level. That's good, but then when you're getting older, I don't know if anything like that exists.

– Killeen



Deployment

Many spouses and service members wanted to set up systems that would give tactical help for spouses to manage daily life and finances during deployment. This might include childcare, help dealing with emergencies (e.g. a car breaking down or housing issues), and help finding food, if needed. Not knowing how to get this tactical help is often a major stress point for both the families at home and the service member.

I was new to the duty station when I deployed, so there wasn't like [my wife] knew anybody. It wasn't like she had that support system if her car broke down or anything. She was on her own. As a matter of fact, they ended up – they stole the rims off my car, a bunch of parts from the engine and some other things, and I had no way of dealing with that being deployed.

–San Antonio Veteran

The bills are under his name. How am I going to get those paid?

–San Antonio Spouse

Many participants also wanted training to help children understand and manage the trauma of parental deployment while the parents were deployed. Just as in the pre-deployment phase, participants wanted help knowing how to assist their child to deal with the trauma of deployment separation, and to prepare their child for what they might face when the parent returns.

It's just having to explain to her that he's gone, when she was so attached to him and he just disappears out of nowhere. It was a struggle.

–Killeen

Post-Deployment

As stated above, participants identified re-establishing routines and family relationships post-deployment as a very significant issue for their families. Many participants wanted programs that would help returning service members reconnect with family life. They wanted help with their marriages, knowing how to parent their children, and dealing with the challenges of PTSD.

I think there should be marriage and family counseling when you get back.

–San Antonio Veteran

[We] did classes of just talking to your spouse and the five languages of love and how to talk to your kids and all that. That was great. It helped us, and I think they should do that for people who come back from deployment.

–San Antonio Veteran



Similarly, there was a demand for programs that would help service members make the mental shift from deployment mode to post-deployment family mode. Service members and veterans responded well to the idea of a six-week class that would discuss parenting in depth after deployment. They felt that a day-long mandatory training gave them an overview of what they might face when they come home, but not the tools and support to manage it.

Sometimes, right away, they throw you into doing stuff, but you're still – you barely just got back. It should be a little bit longer. Time for your family to just relax, ease into the life.

– San Antonio Veteran

Something that has some techniques, like you're having a frustrated time with your kid and you're just getting back and you're wanting to know how can I talk to him, how can I get through to them without losing my cool. Something to look at and be like OK, let's try this. Maybe if that doesn't work, try something else.

– El Paso

Program Design and Delivery

When discussing program design and delivery, participants identified the barriers previously listed in this report (stigma, time, location, and interesting or relevant content) as very important to them if they were to access the program. In addition, they discussed difficulties in learning about programs.

For example, many get information about new programs in the mandatory pre-deployment or deployment seminars. But because the programs are so long, and the service member and family have their minds occupied by deployment, they may not remember the information or access it.

Participants had many ideas for how to promote programs so that they would use them and get more benefit out of them.

When talking about both existing and potential programs, participants stated preferences for three types of groups: couples, women-only, and men-only. Participants preferred these because they desired having a peer group where they could feel open with each other and not worry about outside gossip.

Have groups for caregivers, have groups for active duty and groups for couples. I think, honestly, you should have all three offered.

– El Paso



[I'd like a group] *like what we're doing pretty much [right now], counseling, getting together.*

– San Antonio Spouse

Because many participants are so short on time, they would like to combine a parenting class with an activity that could be fun or have a tangible incentive, like a door prize. For spouses, the fun incentive might be a massage or movie that has a social component but also gives them time on their own without children. Having onsite childcare during the class was a critical point.

While they're doing it, if they can provide some free childcare so you don't have to find a sitter.

– Killeen

For my wife, I think that honestly if she saw something that said – something providing childcare and also providing something for your kid, like an activity for the children. That would be the line-shaker right there. Done. She would do it just for the kids.

– El Paso

Most active duty and veteran participants were fathers. Out of 12 participants, only two were women. These fathers were more interested in having activities they could do with their children after the class, like bowling, basketball, or games. They often have less time with their children during the week, so they want activities that can bring them together and possibly feed their interest in more competitive, sports-oriented activities. The fathers said the best way to get them to go to a class would be to convince their wife that they should attend.

[I'd want] *something to involve the kids with the parents – any activity, as long as the kids are actually interacting with the parents and the parents could use that technique.*

– El Paso

If you won my wife over, you've won me over. I can't really say what I would look for. I would honestly look for the help, because I love to learn.

– El Paso

Size is a key point in designing these classes. Many of the spouses of active duty members already have access to social support groups, which may even include parenting information. But, they stated that if there is a larger group, they worry about gossip and are less likely to go.

[Limit it to] *10 to 15 people. I think with the bigger groups too, that's when you get the clique-iness really bad.*

– Killeen



Participants with spouses who were still active duty members or in the Reserves suggested making programs mandatory. They cited two reasons for this. First, if everyone is required to go to a parenting class or family therapy, there's no stigma for those who attend. Second, a mandatory program shows that the military is placing more importance on parenting, children, and family connection, which also makes these topics more important for military families. Additionally, they strongly desired that all programs stay confidential.

If the commanding officer says, "Here's a great program, we heard about it, we're encouraging everyone to go," or is it making it mandatory that breaks down the stigma; everybody just has to do it?

– Killeen

Reservists and veterans requested programs that were offered off base, away from the VA hospital or offices, and closer to their homes. Active duty members also stated that they might be interested in off-base programs, because they might be more confidential and, therefore, fewer stigmas are attached to attending them.

Have off-base resources, too, because us that don't live on base, they have all those services and resources on base, but we don't live on base. So, we don't see the flyers and the people talking about all that stuff going on.

– San Antonio Spouse

Maybe you should have an option to seek help either on base or off base.

– El Paso

Participants had strong but opposing opinions about programs delivered through home visits. Participants' willingness to have someone in their homes corresponded with need and location. Spouses in Killeen, all of whom lived on base and had children under 5 years old, stated strongly that they did not want strangers coming into their homes.

[Home visiting] sounds invasive.

– Killeen

No one's coming into my home.

– Killeen



However, spouses in San Antonio, who were mostly living off base and would have to travel to reach services, wanted as many services in their own homes as they could get. One participant, in particular, had a child with special healthcare needs and said she would strongly welcome services that were delivered in her home.

[I want] people that would come to my home and we fill out the paperwork there because it's not as easy to leave the house to go do stuff.

—San Antonio Spouse

Recommendations for Promoting Programs

Participants made many recommendations for promoting programs. Recommendations differed based on whether the family was on active duty and either living on base or frequently involved in life on base – or whether the family was Reserve or veteran.

Recommendations for promoting programs included:

- Create social media groups for bases, particularly for spouses or wives.
- Place fliers or otherwise promote programs at schools that are on or adjacent to bases.
- Place fliers in pediatricians' offices around the state.
- Sponsor conferences or fairs that bring multiple service organizations together.
- Place fliers or information kiosks at grocery stores, on bases, or at locations with higher concentrations of veterans.

Veterans said it was important not just to promote programs on bases, as they were less likely to be near a base or access those programs or services. They wanted more access spread widely.

Go to civilian events. Go to H-E-B. Go to Walgreen's.

—San Antonio Spouse

I think programs need to know that families [who] need help won't always ask for it. So, there needs to be more outreach or maybe marketing or some type of fairs for people to go to so they can find it.

—San Antonio Veteran

As previously stated, many of the active duty participants were fathers. They recommended marketing programs for military fathers to their spouses, as they would be the primary organizer or driver for them to attend.

If you won my wife over, you've won me over.

—El Paso



Conclusion and Recommendations

A demand and need exist for programs that would help military, reservist, and veteran families deal with the emotional and practical challenges of deployment and reintegration. Active duty families who live on base may have access to more military resources to assist them than reservist and veteran families.

Families are very concerned about the stigma associated with mental health or behavioral services and they value confidentiality. Many of them are extremely busy and need to have programmatic content that is very appealing and offered in various locations and times in order to meet their schedule.

The strongest areas of need are helping children manage the emotional challenges of having a parent deployed, helping a spouse deal with the tactical challenges that arise during a deployment, and working with the entire family to manage the emotions and trauma that become apparent when a service member returns.

The findings suggest the following recommendations.

- Promote programs as parenting education and support rather than as child abuse prevention. Parents are more likely to attend a program if it has the positive message of parenting rather than if they sense the stigma of child abuse or a mental health issue.
- Make programs specific to military families so that they clearly address their unique challenges.
- Have all programs designed and/or delivered by someone who has been in a military family, so that participants know programs involve someone who has “walked the walk.”
- Create programs that connect reservist families to childcare and home support during deployment, since they do not have the same support as an active-duty family living on base.
- Offer multi-session family counseling programs for families of service members returning from duty.
- Consider promoting technology and apps that can help service members connect with their children, use positive discipline, and be gentler with them while dealing with post-deployment stress.



- Work with family readiness programs, base command, or reservist units to get military leadership to recommend programs to their units before, during, and after deployment.
- Offer financial management and budgeting classes for all military families.
- When promoting classes designed for military members, target promotional activities to their spouses and include children wherever possible.
- When designing classes for military spouses, create programs that include on-site childcare and offer a break/personal time.
- Programs must be delivered with flexible schedules, in a variety of locations, and with various delivery mechanisms in order to meet parents where they are.
- Ensure that relevant community agencies – such as the VA, local mental health authority, WIC, and Head Start – and the schools are aware of military support programs and promote them. Also, promote the agencies' services in these programs.



Appendix A: Focus Group Guides

2015 Military Focus Group Guide1



2015 Military Focus Group Guide

I. Introduction

- Moderator begins by introducing the concept, process, and purpose of the focus group.
- Lay ground rules for the discussion (no right or wrong answers, speak one at a time, etc.)
- Explain the purpose of the tape recording equipment
- Assure participants that their remarks are confidential in the sense that their names will never be attached to their statements. **Please honor that confidentiality.**
- Explain that all participants are either active duty military, reserve, veterans, or care givers and we are here to talk about family, family support, and needs they have around family.

II. Ice Breaker

Let's go around the group and introduce ourselves, tell us how many children you have and their ages. Also, tell us a little bit about yourself, your branch of service and how many years you have been in the service -- and what your favorite thing to do with your child/ren is.

III. General

- You will notice that there are pictures around the table. Please take a moment and select a picture that illustrates what it is like raising children while in the military. (Moderator: modify question for caregiver group). Let's go around the room and discuss. Moderator reflects back on what was said.
- Raising a family is full of challenges and rewards for everyone. What are some of the challenges you face? **Probe:** Child care, discipline?
- How are the challenges unique to military families? **Probe:** Active duty? Reserve and Veteran? Caregiver? -
- How would your life as a parent be different if you (or your partner/family member) were not in the military?

- What do your non-military friends not understand about your life in the military?
- What family benefits are unique to military families? **Probe:** Close community? Things on base?
- How do you talk to your children about being in the military? **Probe:** What do you tell them? What kinds of things would you like to discuss but are not sure how?

IV. Challenges and Needs

- *I'd like to spend some more time talking about challenges. I'm handing out a worksheet that lists specific lifecycle times in a military family. I'd like you to write in the space provided the challenges you faced and needs you have at these times- specific to raising children and a family. It can be anything from transportation to being lonely to babysitting. Then we will discuss as I list them on the flip chart.*
 - What are your parenting challenges and needs in predeployment?
 - What are your parenting challenges and needs in deployment?
 - What are your parenting challenges and needs in post deployment?
- *I believe when you were recruited you were asked to download an App called Parenting2Go. How many of you have this App? Had you heard of it before? Did you look at it before the group? I'd like to spend about 10 minutes and have you go through the App and then let's talk about what is interesting to you. Please start with the Parenting Coach*
- Which parenting challenge was interesting to you?
- What do you think of the prompts listed in that parenting challenge?
- How well do you think the prompts address concerns you have faced?
- Which of the other modules are interesting to you?
 - Switching Gears
 - Stop and Slow Down
 - Get support
 - Be Positive

- What information is missing?

V. Programs

- How do you meet the challenges we have been discussing?
- What family issues prompt you to seek assistance and support?
- Who do you get assistance and support from? Probe: Family, Civilian, Programs?
- What kinds of programs are offered by the military to support you and your family around parenting and parenting support??
- How easy or difficult is it to access these existing services? What makes it so?
- What resources and supports are missing that you would like to see? **Probe:** What about information on child development?
- How do you think is it perceived within the military when someone seeks support for family issues, such as parenting skills? (partner conflict? behavior problems?) When is it OK? When is it not?
- We've heard that sometimes reaching out for help can cause military members concern that their career advancement will be impacted. What do you think of this? How does this reflect your experience?
- What are other barriers to getting support? **Probe:** Confidentiality, transportation, lack of programming? Perception? Moderator uses a flip chart to write these as they are stated by group.
- What would need to happen to get you to access programs that offered these kinds of supports? Probe: What would make it appealing? What can it absolutely not have?
- *I would like you to go back to that paper you filled out and now add- what you needed and would have liked to meet those challenges.*

We are doing this research to help community agencies deliver programming that provides all kinds of parenting support for military families. I'd like to spend a few minutes and talk about the details of what a program would need to have. I'm going to list it on the flip chart. Let me know your requirements. For example, would the program

need to be in your home or somewhere else? Would it be with only military families or would it be with civilians too? Would it be with men and women or just single gender? Those kinds of things are what I am interested in.

- *We've discussed a lot of things tonight. What is the one thing you want the state agencies who are working to create and build programming to support military families to know.*

You've been a great group, thank you for your time!

Appendix B: Military Worksheets

Military Lifecycle Phases Worksheets	1
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• El Paso Active Duty	9
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Predeployment

Getting prepared mentally

Needs

Deployment

Being alone, raising my son on my own, not having any free time

parental assistance with our 1st child

Reintegration

stress, still feeling alone

Counseling as soon as he came back from Iraq

Predeployment

- explaining that Daddy would be gone for a little while
- learning my way around before he left

Deployment

- taking care of bills & making sure that all important things were taken care of, so that my husband wouldn't be stressed

~~making sure that all important things were taken care of, so that my husband wouldn't be stressed~~

Reintegration

- allowing my husband to step back into his roll

Predeployment

preparing to do it
all alone

Deployment



having to do it all

Reintegration

stepping down from
Head of household to
wife

1a Season Olayande

Predeployment

Explanation to kid, prep. explain bill, saving monies,

Information

Deployment

- Questions / fear.
- money: senior building.
- worried

Free free child care hours. FRG Support

Reintegration

- Getting back to family life.

Predeployment

- communication
- schooling.
- planning
- adjustment

- explain to the kid
- more communicate
- counselling.
- preparation.
- share experiences.

Deployment

- organization
- assistance (how to respond as a mom & a dad)
- strong FRG
- strong relationships # family & military.
- family support.
- hobby.

Reintegration

- explanation.
- adjustment
-

- more counselling
- family vacation
- involvement.
- Time.
- share experiences

Predeployment

family care plan

Deployment

missing my life style
& my babies.

Reintegration

Pre-Deployment

Predeployment

- no friends / family support
- security → scared of being robbed.
- emotional support for child / caring for child.
- Handling expenses / bills alone.

* More detailed info about schools around the area.

Implement a program or website where families provide useful reviews on schools in the area. (Reliable sources)

Deployment

- loneliness
- worried about husband
- caring for

Reintegration

Predeployment

• Nervous about newborn
• Will he come back

Deployment

• stress, because husband not able to see son
• no free time

Being able to communicate easier

Reintegration

• husband getting use being back

Predeployment

- Financial plan for home
- Emotional experience preparing to leave
- Training leading up is extensive
- Preparing power of attorney and will ~~before~~ leaving
- being involved in children's activities.

Deployment

- being away and feeling disconnected from kids, communication with kids ~~of~~ and on.
- Birthdays and holidays.

Reintegration

- Getting back in the routine that the family has.
- Establishing being disciplinary.
- Handling pay changes

Chall/needs

Predeployment

Legal Actions
Finance (Loans, CC's)
~~Time~~ Stress, Build-up/Anticipation
Saying Goodbye

Deployment

Stress
Knowing what to say / what not to say
Communication (↗) about work
Missing home

Reintegration

(Stress) → work
New Routines
Relief
Expectations
- work, home

Predeployment

Deployment

Reintegration

- The discipline factor with kids
- Still working on the clock whether it be with family or work itself.
- Stresser's from both ends.
- Wanting to find time to relax.

Predeployment

Long work hours, stress, Family planning/Family Preparation,

Deployment

Family issues that you can't handle because you are not around. Lack of communication,

Reintegration

Refamiliarizing yourself, regrow your relationship

Predeployment

Preparing, explaining to kids + self,
life ins

Deployment

Preparing, emotions, Family,
Lonely, being a single parent, worried,
Stress

Reintegration

Welcoming home, Reuniting, Relief

Predeployment

Uncertain PLANS -Future
Housing
BALANCING Income
Schedules

Deployment

LACK of Extra HANDS
Loneliness
STRICT Schedule
Money issues

Reintegration

Stress
Anger
Frustrations
Chaos
Housing
SPACE (own personal space)

Predeployment

Time, reassurance

Deployment

Sleep, help with kids,
financial, car/home problems.

Reintegration

adjustment, drinking, Anger..

Predeployment

constant work ups - routine interrupted
detachment - needing reassurance
having baby - needing extra help ^{him} unavailable

Deployment

loneliness
help w/ kids esp. when sick
boredom

Reintegration

reassessing routine
needing some space
daddy's new personality/triggers

Predeployment

- finding support while pregnant
- handling all the family issues.
- ~~being~~ stress of him leaving.
- Anxiety

Deployment

- Taking care of household by yourself.
- being pregnant, then having baby alone; being single parent
- Anxiety over him being overseas.

Reintegration

- dealing with PTSD
- trying to bring family together
- Changes to everyday stuff
- finding employment

Predeployment

Reacting around family and making sure everything in the family was taking care. Putting on a happy face and ensuring family care plan was okay and good to go.

Deployment

Contact with family and being able to talk to them as much as I can. Calling from the USO and always making sure you are able to contact home, family support

Reintegration

Needing help.
learn and find classes that can help with integration

VETS
All ~~_____~~ Need ~~HELP~~ HELP Regardless of what they say

Predeployment

PREPERATION OF FAMILY For Deployment
FINANCIAL CLASS FOR SPOUSE TO PAY BILLS WHILE DEPLOYED
EXPLANATION TO SPOUSE ABOUT DEPLOYMENT Activites
WORRY OF ADULTERY

~~PDHA~~ PDHA

Deployment

Communication schedule
WORRY OF ADULTERY
FINANCIAL WORRIES

Reintegration

PTSD COPING
Dealing WITH HYPER sensitivity
WORRY OF ADULTERY

~~PHHA~~ PHA

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Predeployment

Explaining why you will have to leave for long period of time,

Deployment

Keeping in touch with family

Reintegration

Adjusting back to be a part of the family
marriage Reintegration counseling

Predeployment

Trying to explain why daddy was going to be gone so long
Preparing and explaining to our spouses what to do in worse case.
Will, power of attorney

Deployment

Communicating with family.
Trying to explain where daddy is.
Trust concerns from spouse.
Finances.

Reintegration

Trying to be daddy again.
Filling your role again with the spouse & kids.

Predeployment

- Challenge:- Constant training/evaluation
- Uncertainty (Planning)
 - Impending separation = elephant in the room
 - Over compensating (vacations, money, gifts, spoiling them)
 - Wanting to leave (guilt)
- Advantage - Chance to take vacation

Deployment

- Mutual Pressure to Lie "All good"
- Forgetting important dates
- Time Zones

Reintegration

- Transfer of Authority (Mom vs Dad)
 - Emotional Transition
 - Wanting to go back (guilt)
 - Over compensating
- Advantage - Chance to take vacation

Solutions:

Someone to say "IT'S NORMAL"

Predeployment

Leave time
Help setting up resources for our families.
Help with moving items.

Counseling, Help with being able to talk to children maybe a class. Services to help Sell

Deployment

Money Management
Help with home and vehicles left sitting behind. Groups and Better Communication for our spouse and children
Legal Help. Counseling for children

Reintegration

Counseling
Substance Abuse

Predeployment

Preparing for leaving, getting finances and care taker ready for me not being home. Needing help from family + friends.

Deployment

Need to keep contact with my family and more time to talk to them.

Reintegration

Need help adjusting back into civilian world and finding a job and explaining my veteran benefits. Dealing w/ PTSD.

Predeployment

Mentally preparing the child for you being gone.
Getting personal issues taken care of.

Counseling for spouses + children
Financial Advising

Deployment

Communicating regularly with family

Reintegration

Getting to know family again, reestablishing dynamics and routines.

