



Military Child and Adolescent Center of Excellence

Understanding Army Children and Families

Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Consultant for the Army Surgeon General

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Military Youth Culture

- Military youth live the concept of service and sacrifice every bit as much as their military parent
- However, the military youth's service and sacrifice is often experienced very differently from the way it is experienced by their military family member
- The military youth's service and sacrifice is a compulsory condition of a voluntary decision made by their military family member
- The Army has developed an Army Family Covenant

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Army Medicine Strategy

Mission
 - Promote, Sustain and Enhance Soldier Health
 - Train, Prepare and Deploy a Health Care Workforce that Supports Full Spectrum Operations
 - Deliver Leading Edge Health Services to Our Warriors and Military Family to Optimize Outcomes

Vision
 America's Premier Medical Team Saving Lives and Fortifying Healthy and Resilient People

Strategic Themes

<p>CS 1.0: Ensure Health and Physical Readiness of Soldiers and Active Soldiers</p> <p>CS 2.0: Enhance Care and Treatment of Injured, Ill, and Suffering Warriors</p> <p>CS 3.0: Improve Family and Personal Wellness</p> <p>CS 4.0: Accelerate Readiness and Medical Force</p> <p>CS 5.0: Improve Patient and Consumer Satisfaction</p> <p>CS 6.0: Ensure Health, Resilience, and Readiness</p>	<p>CS 7.0: Ensure Health and Physical Readiness of Soldiers and Active Soldiers</p> <p>CS 8.0: Enhance Care and Treatment of Injured, Ill, and Suffering Warriors</p> <p>CS 9.0: Improve Family and Personal Wellness</p> <p>CS 10.0: Accelerate Readiness and Medical Force</p> <p>CS 11.0: Improve Patient and Consumer Satisfaction</p> <p>CS 12.0: Ensure Health, Resilience, and Readiness</p>
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Support of The Army Family Covenant

CS 1.0: Ensure Health and Physical Readiness of Soldiers and Active Soldiers

CS 2.0: Enhance Care and Treatment of Injured, Ill, and Suffering Warriors

CS 3.0: Improve Family and Personal Wellness

CS 4.0: Accelerate Readiness and Medical Force

CS 5.0: Improve Patient and Consumer Satisfaction

CS 6.0: Ensure Health, Resilience, and Readiness

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Military Child/Adolescent Culture

- Will more likely face a frequently changing environment - moves, deployments and parental absence
- Expected to take on more advanced family roles when family members are away as a teenager and as a preschool and school aged child will face the anxiety related to a changing environment
- May live in environment where parent is absent
- Faces the uncertainty related to the AD servicemember facing danger, possible death or injury, either physical or mental injury

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Military Family Challenges

Deployment
 treatment across now with multiple years chronic
 modify family roles/function
 temporary to now chronic accommodation
 reunion adjustment reassembly
 military community maintained initially
 probable sense of growth and accomplishment but overwhelmed over time

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Impact of Parental Deployment on Children

- Overall resiliency is the norm in non-wartime and with single deployments
- Heightened distress including both internalizing & externalizing reactions, typically transient
- Developmental differences in reactions. Increased risk: male gender, younger age, prior mental health problems, and caretaker/family distress
- Rise in child maltreatment during deployments and related to separation/reunion
- Rise in mental health referrals for school age children during deployment and for adolescents during and following reunion
- Preschool children demonstrate more aggressive behavior during parental deployments

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Military Culture

Views of Family

- Difficulties with routine due to moves, deployments etc
- Life seen as a series of starting over from scratch with move to new assignments
- Seen as making sacrifices related to moves every 2,3 years as well as deployments

Challenges

- Constantly adapting to changes; PCS, deployments, new schools, friends and jobs
- Difficulty in negotiating new school expectations, new support for day care etc
- Often distant from extended family feeling isolated
- Jobs for spouses difficult with being uprooted

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Military Culture

Positives

- Family and Children have greater variety of exposure to the world
- Experience of being more knowledgeable and worldly due to exposure to different places
- Increased adaptability with Children learning how to make friends quickly, fit in, get along with others

- Military culture, traditions and support is seen as positive for the most part
- See selves as competent, strong and resilient
- Enjoys benefits of being in the military; health care coverage, commissary and post exchange
- Shared vision and goals

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Available Resources

- Army Community Services
- Army Substance Abuse Program
- Military Child and Adolescent Center of Excellence
- Military Family Life Consultants
- Madigan PCMs
- Social Work
- Family Advocacy
- Chaplain
- FAME
- Child Guidance Clinic
- Family Readiness Groups
- Military One Source
- TRICARE
- Teen Center
- On-Post Sports
- Stomp
- Gym

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Survey Data of Army Families

Top 5 most common problems during spouse's most recent deployment were:

- Loneliness (90%)
- Safety of spouse during deployment (84%)
- Feelings of anxiety or depression (83%)
- Difficulty sleeping (79%)
- Household repairs, yard work, or car maintenance (75%)

Top 5 most common additional expenses during spouse's most recent deployment were:

- Increased phone bills due to more calls to family/friends and/or deployed spouse (56%)
- Child care (47%)
- Other (35%)
- Reduction in my earnings since I was unable to work as much (31%)
- Loss of my job (19%)

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Family Survey Continued

45% indicated their spouse's most recent deployment had no effect on their job, and 22% reported a negative effect

Top 5 most common member's emotional/behavioral changes after deployment were:

- Appreciated family and friends more (43%)
- Appreciated life more (38%)
- Got angry faster (29%)
- Had trouble sleeping (28%)
- Was more emotionally distant (25%)

37% of spouses reported their readjustment was easy following deployment;
28% reported difficult

