



The 2017 Military Family Lifestyle Survey
Strengthening Military Readiness:
The role of military families in 21st century defense

About Blue Star Families



COMMUNITIES



About the annual Military Family Lifestyle Survey



- Conducted since **2009**
- Conducted in collaboration with the Institute for Veterans and Military Families (IVMF) at Syracuse
- A **snapshot** of the state of military families, offering crucial insight to inform national leaders, local communities, and philanthropic actors
- Opportunity to increase **dialogue** between the military community and broader American society, minimizing the civilian-military divide and supporting the health and sustainability of the All-Volunteer Force

The Military Family Lifestyle Survey's response rate makes it the **largest** and **most comprehensive** survey of active duty service members, veterans, and their families

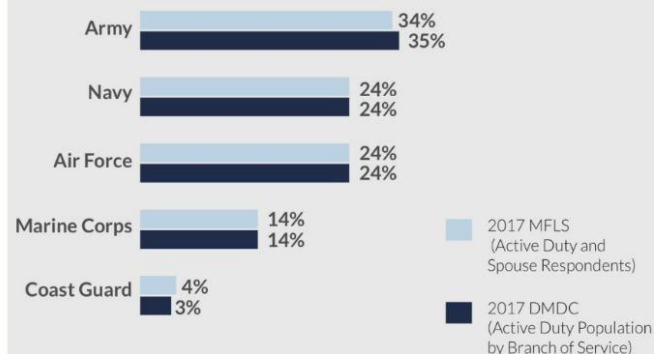
2017 Military Family Lifestyle Survey

Demographics

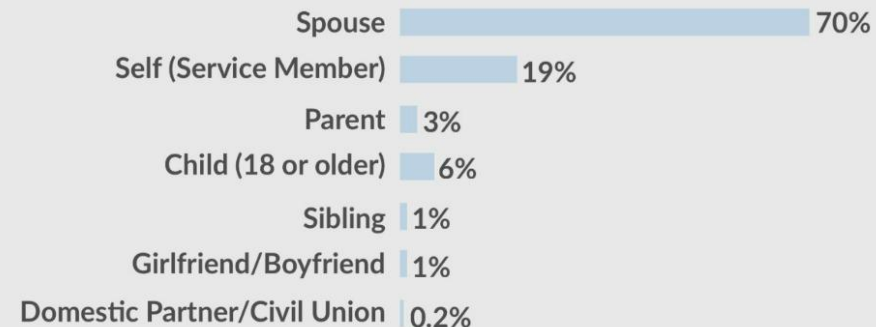


7,891
RESPONDENTS
INCLUDING
MILITARY SPOUSES
SERVICE MEMBERS
& VETERANS

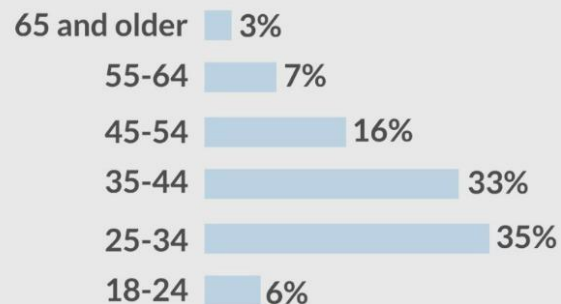
BRANCH OF SERVICE



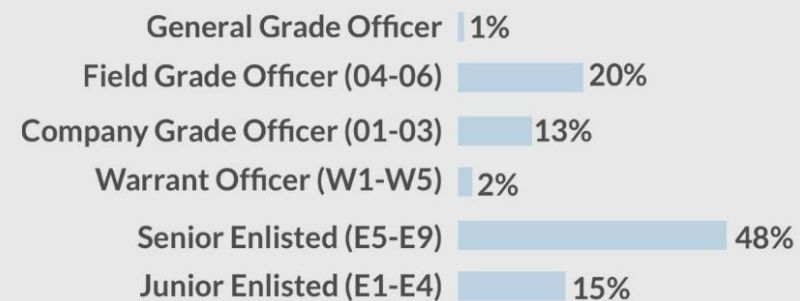
PRIMARY RELATIONSHIP TO SERVICE



AGE OF RESPONDENTS



SERVICE MEMBER'S RANK



Military Families are a Structural Component of the Force

Strong military family support requires a comprehensive understanding of the diversity of today's military families

TOP ISSUES	Active Duty Spouses	Active Duty Members	Veterans
Time away from family	46%	47%	27%
Military spouse employment	43%	28%	15%
Military pay & benefits	40%	42%	42%
Military child education	39%	32%	19%
Impact of deployment on children	36%	33%	20%
Military family quality of life	34%	34%	18%
Change in retirement benefits	25%	25%	30%
Veteran employment	12%	17%	42%
PTSD/combat stress/TBI	14%	11%	34%
Service member & veteran suicide	11%	9%	30%

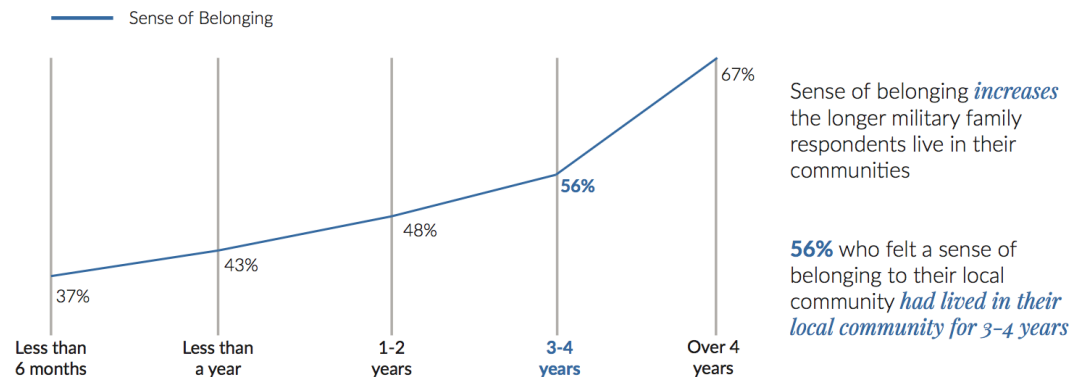
Civilian Community Integration Challenges & Opportunities

Department of Defense reports 60% of service members live off installation, of which 70% are married

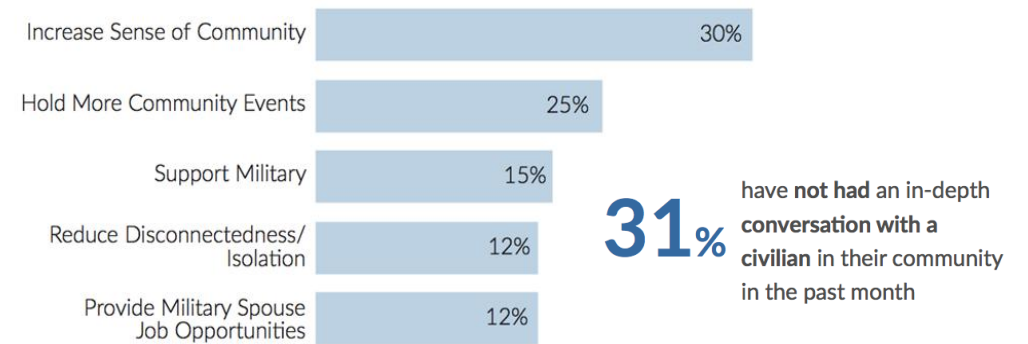
SENSE OF BELONGING TO THE LOCAL CIVILIAN COMMUNITY



SENSE OF BELONGING INCREASES WITH LENGTH OF TIME RESIDING IN COMMUNITY



TOP 5 SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING CIVILIAN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



53% want greater opportunities to meet people, make friends, or expand professional networks in civilian community

“There is a developed disconnection from other people, both military and civilian. By the time you settle into a new location and begin meeting people you have little time to develop friendships before starting to think about the next move”

- Navy

Spouse

Operational Tempo & Mental Healthcare

WELLNESS

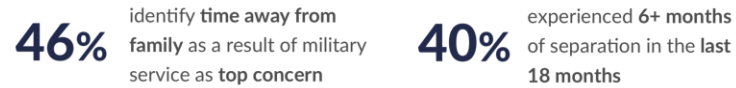
OPTEMPO is stressful for healthy work/family life



"During your time associated with the military, what were the biggest stressors in your military family? Please select up to 5 top stressors."

	Active Duty Members	Military Spouses	Veterans	Veteran Spouses
Deployments	47%	53%	40%	46%
Financial Issues/Stress	38%	46%	45%	55%
Relocation Stress	44%	45%	25%	24%
Separation	39%	44%	39%	39%
Isolation from Family and Friends	31%	40%	26%	23%
Job Stress	35%	17%	22%	11%

TIME AWAY FROM FAMILY IS TOP CONCERN



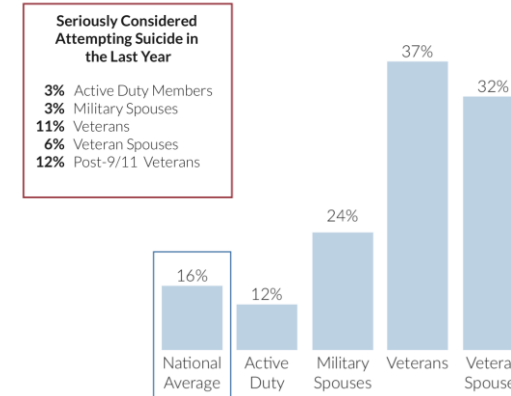
Top Reason for leaving the military among those who plan to exit service in next 2 years:*

CONCERNS ABOUT IMPACT OF MILITARY SERVICE ON FAMILY

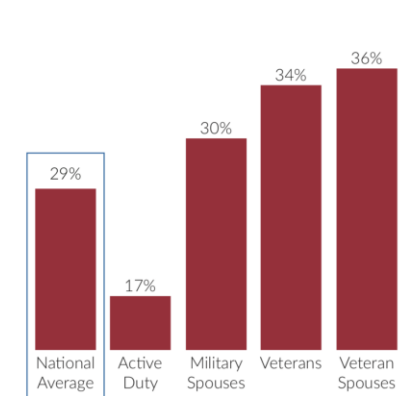
*other than military retirement

DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY DIAGNOSES AMONG RESPONDENTS

Depression Rates of Military Family Respondents



Anxiety Rates of Military Family Respondents



ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION

13% of service members reported alcohol consumption equating to binge drinking in the past 30 days; 17% among those who indicated an anxiety diagnosis

TREATMENT

53% of military families with a depression diagnosis and 50% with an anxiety diagnosis received counseling in past year; 13% of military families reported their child received counseling in the past year

Financial Readiness, Military Spouse Employment, Childcare, & Transition

FINANCIAL READINESS

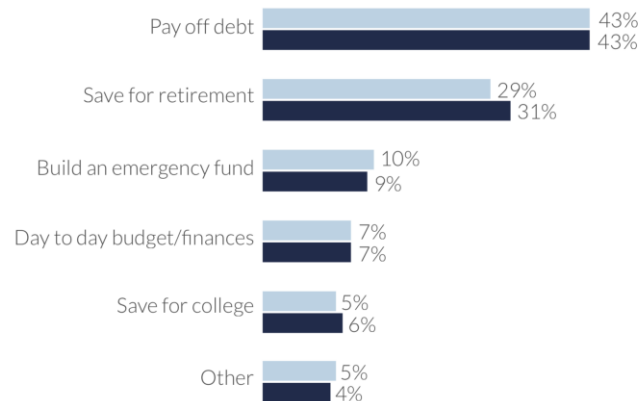


eligible for new blended retirement benefit say they don't understand it



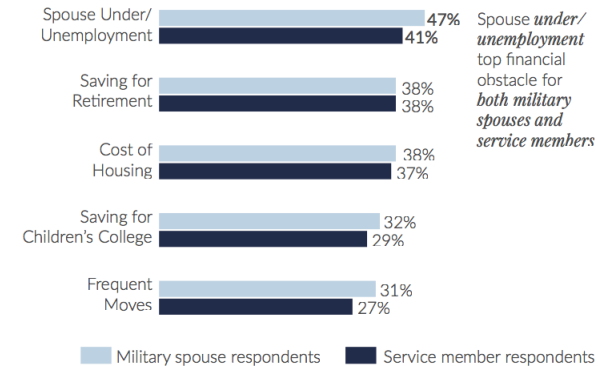
have less than \$5K in savings

PREFERRED METHOD OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT AMONG CAREGIVER RESPONDENTS



All Caregiving Spouses Active Duty Caregiving Spouses

TOP FINANCIAL OBSTACLES FOR MILITARY SPOUSES AND SERVICE MEMBERS

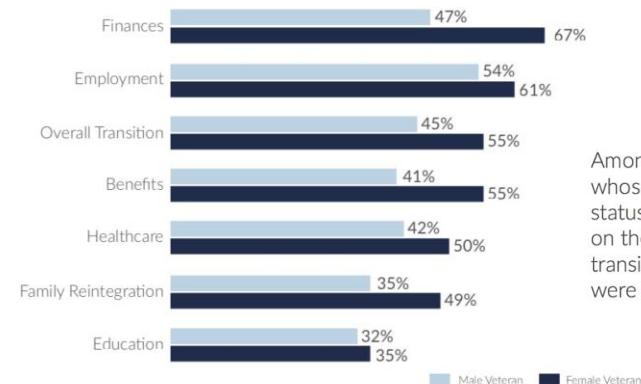


MILITARY CAREGIVER RESPONDENTS INDICATE HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT RATES

Military Caregiver Spouses		All Military Spouses	
Employed	42%	Employed	46%
Not in the Labor Force	28%	Not in the Labor Force	26%
Unemployed	30%	Unemployed	28%

Caregivers face additional employment challenges

VETERAN TRANSITION DIFFICULTY BY GENDER



Among veteran respondents whose spouse employment status made a *positive* impact on their experience of transition, **83%** of spouses were *employed full-time*

CHILDCARE

67% of military families cannot find childcare that meets their needs; availability and affordability issues were top obstacles after friends/family

52% of military spouses and **49%** of service members cite unavailability of childcare had negatively impacted their pursuit of employment or education

53% of military spouses who were not working but wanted to cite childcare as top reason for not working

Impact of Military Service on Children



IMPACT OF SERVICE ON MILITARY CHILDREN

33%

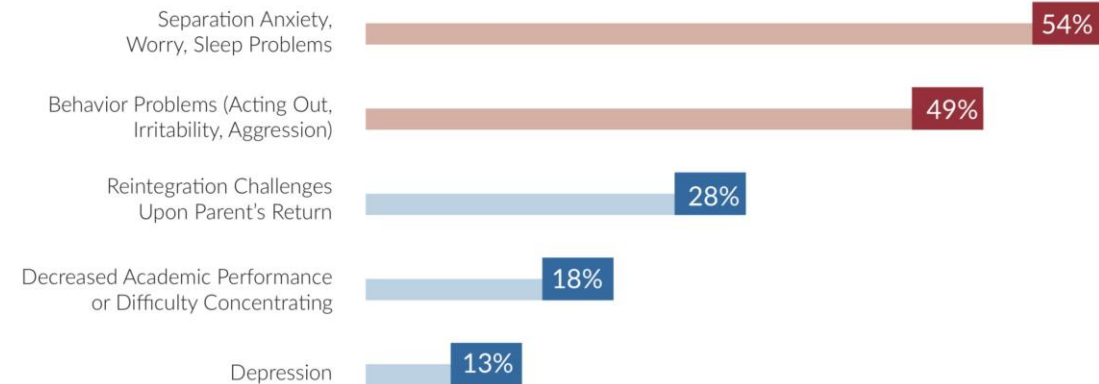
OF SERVICE MEMBERS
CITE "IMPACT OF
DEPLOYMENT ON
CHILDREN" AS A TOP
CONCERN

56%

FEEL DOD DOES NOT PROVIDE
ADEQUATE SUPPORT TO HELP
CHILDREN COPE WITH
UNIQUE MILITARY LIFE
CHALLENGES



TOP DEPLOYMENT CHALLENGES FOR CHILDREN



EDUCATION

39% of military spouses and **32%** of service members cite military child education as a top concern

33% of military spouses rate their children's school as "good" or "excellent" when asked about support for military life experiences such as deployment and frequent moves

55% of military spouses did not know whether their child's school adhered to the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children

23% of military spouses rate their children's school as "good" or "excellent" when asked about their military school liaison

Opportunities to support BSF & the 2018 Military Family Lifestyle Survey



- Join BSF as a member or as a Neighbor and receive updates about events and our 2018 Survey
- Connect and partner with BSF locally by reaching out to Crystal Gates
- Help shape the narrative by sharing the survey findings from [Bluestarfam.org/survey](https://bluestarfam.org/survey)
- Encourage and promote military families to take the 2018 survey (April 23-May 25, 2018)

Stay in touch!

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