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Today's Army Spouse Survey

How Army Families Address Life's Challenges



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Preface

This report documents research and analysis conducted as part of a project entitled *Assessing the Needs of Army Families: Spouse Perspectives*, sponsored by the Assistant Chief of Staff for Installation Management, U.S. Army. The purpose of the project was to identify the challenges that Army families face, and the resources they need to address those challenges, directly from the perspective of spouses, including how spouses prioritize those needs and how the Army can best address the most-pressing unmet needs, whether through Army support services or through fostering partnerships with communities and other non-Army organizations.

This research was conducted within RAND Arroyo Center's Personnel, Training, and Health Program. RAND Arroyo Center, part of the RAND Corporation, is a federally funded research and development center (FFRDC) sponsored by the United States Army.

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Summary

U.S. Army families face not only challenges affecting all families but also those related to military service; the latter challenges may create new problems or exacerbate existing problems. The Army has recognized these unique challenges and implemented programs and services to help Army families and Army spouses, in particular. Although surveys often ask Army family members program-centric questions about their satisfaction with services, the surveys do not address the problems and associated needs that led individuals to seek out the programs in the first place or whether the programs or some other resources helped them resolve their problems.

In this study, we used a model of help-seeking and problem resolution (previously applied by RAND Arroyo Center among soldiers) to examine the match between the resources available and challenges faced by Army spouses. This model was put forward as an alternative approach to understanding program use through the lens of the problem-solving process shown in Figure S.1.

We applied the model using a survey completed by more than 8,500 Army spouses. In the survey, these spouses received a list of **specific challenges, or issues, experienced within nine problem domains:**

1. **military practices and culture** (e.g., adjusting to military language, organization, or culture or getting your spouse's chain of command to take you seriously)
2. **work-life balance** (e.g., finding time for sleep, a healthy diet, and physical exercise or work not being challenging or not using skills or education)
3. **household management** (e.g., finding suitable housing or encountering poor housing quality)
4. **financial or legal problems** (e.g., experiencing trouble servicing debt or paying bills or finding a job that pays enough or offers enough hours)
5. **health care system problems** (e.g., finding a physician who takes TRICARE)
6. **relationship problems** (e.g., reuniting or reconnecting after a deployment)
7. **child well-being** (e.g., finding affordable or quality military childcare)
8. **own well-being** (e.g., feeling stressed, overwhelmed, or tired)
9. **soldier's well-being** (same issues as *own well-being*, but with the soldier as the frame of reference).

Figure S.1
Survey Flow from Specific Challenges to Problem Resolution



Respondents could choose between 8 and 14 specific issues that they had experienced in the past year within each problem domain, for a total of up to 96 listed specific issues. If respondents chose issues from more than two domains, they were asked to prioritize which two **top problem domains** contained “the most significant problems” they faced in the past 12 months.

For their top two problems, respondents were asked to indicate what types of help—if any—they needed to deal with the specific problems in that domain; needs included, for example, social or emotional support, general or specific information, or an advocate. If respondents chose more than two needs for a problem, they were asked to prioritize two types of needs for the problem.

Then, for the top two needs identified by respondents, we asked them to indicate which **resources**, if any, they had used or tried to use to meet the need. Resources could be from the military (e.g., the spouse’s chain of command, such as squad leaders, noncommissioned officers, or officers, or the Army Family Readiness Group [FRG]) or not (e.g., other military spouses the respondents know in person or internet resources, such as WebMD, Google, Craigslist, Wikipedia, or Yahoo). All participants were also asked more-general questions about their perceptions of, and barriers to using, military resources.

Finally, respondents were asked about three specific **outcomes**—perceived stress, general attitudes toward the Army, and support for the soldier spouse remaining in the Army.

In the analysis of the results in terms of the problem-solving process, respondents were separated out by various characteristics: their employment status, whether or not the families had dependent children, housing location (distance from the military installation where their soldiers are posted and urbanicity), and their soldiers’ service characteristics (pay grade and whether they were deployed in the past year).

Key Findings Across Problem-Solving Process

Table S.1 highlights the key findings across the problem-solving process. The table presents general findings and those analyzed by the selected characteristics noted above. The main report contains more detail on these findings.

Table S.1
Findings, by Problem-Solving Process Areas

Question, by Problem-Solving Process Area	Findings
What problems did Army spouses have?	• Five percent of Army spouses indicated that they had no issues and hence no problems in the past year. • Of those spouses who did have issues, feeling stressed, overwhelmed, or tired or the soldier feeling that way were the most frequently selected issues from among the 96 presented, followed by feelings of loneliness or boredom. • Spouses most frequently chose <i>work-life balance</i>, <i>military practices and culture</i>, and <i>own well-being</i> as their top problem domains. • <i>Relationship problems</i> was rated as the most severe among those who chose this problem as a top two problem domain. • <i>Military practices and culture</i> had lower severity ratings, although it was chosen as a top two problem by one-quarter of respondents. • Spouses who were unemployed and looking for work were more likely to prioritize problems in the <i>financial or legal problems</i> domain, while those who were unemployed and not looking for work were more likely to prioritize problems with <i>own well-being</i>. • Spouses who were employed full time were more likely to prioritize problems in the <i>work-life balance</i> domain. • Spouses of junior enlisted soldiers were more likely to prioritize <i>financial or legal problems</i>. • Spouses of both junior enlisted and junior officers were more likely to prioritize problems with <i>military practices and culture</i>.
What types of help did spouses need to address their problems?	• Among spouses with reported problems, 18 percent indicated that they had no needs for any of their problems. • Of those who did have needs for help, the most frequently prioritized type of help was emotional or social support, with about one-third of spouses reporting this need. • Activities, professional counseling, general information, and advice were only somewhat less frequently prioritized. • The most frequent need for <i>work-life balance</i> was activities; the most frequently prioritized needs for <i>military practices and culture</i> problems were general or specific information; and the most frequent choice for <i>own well-being</i> problems was emotional or social support, although some also chose activities or counseling. • Those who had dependent children were more likely to indicate that they needed a helping hand but <i>less</i> likely than those without dependent children to indicate a need for either general or specific information or advice. • Junior enlisted spouses were more likely to indicate a need for general information, particularly for problems with <i>military practices and culture</i>, and were much more likely to indicate a need for a helping hand.

Table S.1—Continued

Question, by Problem-Solving Process Area	Findings
What types of resources, if any, did spouses use to try to meet their needs?	• Among Army spouses who reported having problems and needs, 90 percent reported using one or more resources for help with their needs, suggesting that they are willing to seek help to resolve their problems. • The most commonly reported reason for not using resources to help with needs was that respondents did not know whom to contact for help, suggesting that potentially solvable problems could be persisting because of a lack of awareness of programs and services and how to access them. • The most commonly used military resources were a military-covered medical provider, followed by military internet resources or official Army social media; only 15 percent of spouses contacted an FRG. • The most commonly contacted types of nonmilitary resource were spouses' personal networks outside the military and other military spouses they knew in person. • Among the most frequently used resources for help with each of the problem domains were spouses' social networks and nonmilitary internet resources. • Spouses of junior officers in particular were more likely to have used resources to help meet their needs. • Spouses reported reaching out to more than four resources per problem, with spouses of junior officers using almost five resources per problem. • Spouses who lived farther from an installation tended to use fewer resources and fewer military resources, in particular.
How well, and easily, were their needs met?	• If spouses used resources to help with their needs, most had their needs met, but 32 percent indicated having unmet needs even after using resources. • The two problem domains with higher rates of unmet needs were <i>military practices and culture</i> and <i>health care system problems</i>. • The two domains with lowest rates of unmet needs were <i>own well-being</i> and <i>household management</i>. • Overall, spouses tended to rate military resources as meeting their needs "all right" or well or very well. • Spouses who were unemployed and looking for work were less satisfied with both military and nonmilitary resources. • Spouses who lived farther away from the military installation where their soldiers were posted were less satisfied with military resources than spouses who lived closer to post. • Generally, the farther spouses lived from post, the less comfortable they were using military resources, the less they knew whom to contact when military resources were not meeting their needs, and the less easy they found it to find out about military resources. • Spouses of junior enlisted soldiers were also significantly less comfortable using military resources and navigating the system. • When spouses were asked what modes of contact would be best in terms of outreach, our findings suggest that postcards or other informative mailings may be viable, with about 60 percent of spouses selecting this method; other preferred avenues included Facebook (selected by 54 percent) and email (selected by about 45 percent).

Table S.1—Continued

Question, by Problem-Solving Process Area	Findings
How are problems, needs, and resource use related to stress and attitudes about the Army?	• Spouses who lived farther from post experienced higher levels of stress and less positive attitudes toward the military and support for their soldiers staying in the military. • Spouses with dependent children had significantly more-positive general attitudes toward the military and specific attitudes toward staying in the military than those without children. • Spouses of junior enlisted soldiers reported significantly higher levels of stress than spouses from any other pay grade group and had less positive general attitudes toward the military and less favorable attitudes toward their soldiers staying in the military than any of the other pay grade groups. • For each outcome—perceived stress, general attitudes toward the military, and support for their soldiers staying in the military—those who had their needs unmet had the most stress and the least-positive attitudes, suggesting that although not having a problem in the first place is best, a problem solved is a far better outcome than a need that goes unmet. • Spouses with needs who did not reach out to resources and those who reached out to resources and had their needs met were not statistically different. Exploration of spouses’ reasons why they did not seek resources revealed that spouses who solved their problems on their own experienced less stress and had more-positive general attitudes toward the military than spouses who used resources and had their needs met. • In contrast, spouses who had difficulty finding resources because they did not know whom to turn to for help experienced more stress and less positive attitudes toward the military than those who used resources and had their needs met.

Implications of Study Findings and Recommendations

Given the findings described in Table S.1, several broader implications emerged. We present the following recommendations to the Army.

Consider ways to boost the effectiveness of Army FRGs and increase participation in FRGs, especially by spouses of junior enlisted soldiers and those who live far from their soldiers’ military posts. Army FRGs are intended to provide support for spouses, particularly during deployments, but our results suggest that these groups are not well used for obtaining help with problems. Given the poor use, the lack of awareness, and poor reputation of FRGs, boosting the role of FRGs in the lives of more-vulnerable Army spouses will likely require a complete rethinking or reboot of FRGs as a family support resource.

Explore outreach to spouses through systematic collection or provision of email addresses for spouses. To tackle the general lack of program awareness, preferred modes of outreach are short mail communications (such as postcards) or emails directly to spouses—relatively unexplored avenues for reaching spouses and informing them of programs, activities, or services that could benefit them. Collecting email addresses for spouses or providing those addresses through the Army would facilitate low-cost email communication with spouses and allow for targeted outreach for installation-specific events or resources (e.g., FRG meetings).

Consider implementing a “no wrong door” policy to help spouses find the resources they need. Even when spouses know about resources, they have difficulty accessing and navigating the Army system. Results of the soldier survey in 2014 suggested that the Army implement a “no wrong door” policy for soldiers seeking resources—that is, any program or service that a soldier goes to for help should be able to offer direction to the best resource to address the problem, even if the resource is in another program office. A similar policy for spouses, particularly through Child and Youth Services (CYS) or the military health care system, might prove beneficial for helping spouses find the resources they need.

Encourage spouses to use helplines as a tool for negotiating resources (e.g., Military OneSource). Because spouses have difficulty accessing Army resources in the first place, encouraging spouses to use helplines to assist them in finding the best resources for their needs would serve as the “best” door for making Army services work better for spouses. The helplines could be through existing resources (e.g., the Military OneSource helpline) or a new Army-specific helpline, but they should be staffed with operators who can help spouses find the resources they need and help them remediate problems when resources fail to provide them with the help they were seeking.

Consider building systematic “customer” feedback into ongoing program evaluation and monitoring systems. Results show that, even when spouses used resources to help them with their problems, many still experienced unmet needs. To help program staff understand how well their programs are meeting the needs of spouses, and to ensure continuous improvement of Army programs, we recommend the systematic collection and integration of customer experience feedback into ongoing program evaluation and monitoring systems. However, this feedback should be systematically solicited rather than relying on automated comment systems. Information about groups that are particularly vulnerable to not having their needs met successfully may help providers solicit feedback from spouses (and other users) who may be facing particular challenges engaging the system. This feedback will help program staff understand the problems spouses are having accessing and using resources and how to better improve program functioning for Army families.

Consider targeting vulnerable groups of spouses for outreach, perhaps through existing well-used resources. Spouses of junior enlisted soldiers and spouses who live farther from their soldiers' military posts indicated that they needed more information about resources to help them with their problems but also felt less comfortable using military resources. These groups also had higher rates of unmet needs, and both groups are clear targets for outreach efforts. In contrast, spouses with dependent children seem to fare better in terms of reporting lower general and specific information needs, fewer unmet needs, and greater comfort with resource navigation. It is possible that parents' use of military resources, such as CYS, presents an opportunity to bring them into the fold and communicate relevant navigational information. Based on this finding, one potentially fruitful avenue would be to provide such information through resources that spouses may already use, such as the military health care system.

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Abbreviations

ACS	Army Community Service
AER	Army Emergency Relief
Army MWR	U.S. Army Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation
CI	confidence internal
CONUS	continental United States
CYS	Child and Youth Services
DoD	U.S. Department of Defense
FRG	Family Readiness Group
IPV	intimate partner violence
MyCAA	My Career Advancement Account
NCO	noncommissioned officer
PCS	permanent change of station
WIC	Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children

Introduction

U.S. Army families face a number of challenges coping with the stresses and strains of military life. For example, deployments separate soldiers from their families, permanent change of station (PCS) moves require families to relocate to new locations every few years, and there is a necessary risk of harm to soldiers who serve in combat zones or take on other risky assignments or training. Furthermore, each of these aspects of Army life can create new problems (e.g., spouses having to find a new job with each PCS move) or exacerbate existing problems (e.g., deployment separations for couples who have relationship problems). Although soldiers may see these stressors as part of their duties, if they are married, soldiers' spouses also have to cope with the challenges of Army life. The Army and U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) have recognized that military families face unique challenges and, as a result, have implemented programs and services to help Army families.

Most previous research on spouses' use of programs has focused on specific problems and the existing programs designed to address them. However, such program-focused research raises several questions: Out of the broad array of challenges, what are the most-common pressing problems that most spouses face? What needs do spouses have to address those problems? What programs or services are available to meet those needs, and can spouses successfully and efficiently navigate the military system to connect with those resources? Once connected to those resources, are the resources perceived as being effective in meeting spouses' needs? What is the impact of unmet needs on spouse well-being and connection to the Army? This report addresses these questions using a representative survey of Army spouses of soldiers stationed in the continental United States (CONUS).

Background

Overview of Past Research on Army Spouse Needs

Most research on military spouses and families examines the consequences of unique facets of military life on spousal and family well-being, including financial, psychological, and relationship outcomes. Facets of military life that have received particular

attention are PCS moves and soldier deployments, especially deployments to combat zones.

On average, military families experience a PCS move every two years, and these moves have been associated with negative attitudes toward the military (Government Accountability Office, 2001), as well as lower satisfaction with Army life among spouses (Burrell et al., 2006). A recent review of the literature found evidence that PCS moves are associated with lower spousal and service member retention intentions, lower wages for military spouses, and greater unemployment or underemployment, compared with similar civilian spouses (Tong et al., 2018). An analysis of data tracking military families over time revealed that financial stress on a spouse increased immediately prior to a PCS move (Tong et al., 2018). Furthermore, a recent study found a causal relationship between PCS moves and decreased military spouse earnings, even two years after the move (Burke and Miller, 2017). Frequent moves can also disrupt a child's schooling and lead to stress when acclimating to new schools (Clever and Segal, 2013). Thus, although PCS moves are part of Army life and can have positive impacts on Army families (e.g., increased resilience; Clever and Segal, 2013), frequent moves can also lead to challenges in spousal employment, spousal earnings, and child adjustment that may have an impact on soldier retention.

Soldier deployments—for training, exercises, and combat tours—are another regular part of Army life for families. Research has generally found that deployment is associated with more family disruption and reduced relationship satisfaction. Recent research that explored the trajectory of family relations over a deployment showed that disruption of the family system and family conflict increase prior to the deployment, settle into a steady pattern—and can even improve—during the deployment, and then increase again immediately after deployment, particularly if the service member experienced psychological trauma and stress during the deployment (Knobloch and Theiss, 2018; Meadows et al., 2016). Perhaps not surprisingly, increased rates of deployment are associated with more problems for military children (Clever and Segal, 2013), with younger children more likely to experience peer and emotional conduct problems and teens more likely to experience adjustment problems over the course of a deployment (Jaycox et al., 2016). In contrast, combat deployments can have positive effects on families, including lower financial stress for spouses, possibly because the soldier receives increased combat or hazard duty pay during deployments to combat zones (Meadows et al., 2016).

Deployments are also associated with changes in relationship satisfaction among military couples, and some studies have found that deployment is related to increased rates of divorce among military couples (Negrusa and Negrusa, 2014; Negrusa, Negrusa, and Hosek, 2014; however, see Karney and Crown, 2007). Although relationship stability could be considered the “ultimate outcome” for marital relationships, relationship satisfaction is a key indicator of marital health and is associated with spouse physical and mental health (Whisman, 2001), as well as with the health

of the family's children (Robles et al., 2014). Spouses who are more satisfied with their marriages also exhibit greater resilience recovering from stressful experiences (Cranford, 2004) and illnesses (Kiecolt-Glaser et al., 1993). During the most-active years of deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan, marital satisfaction among military couples declined significantly (Riviere et al., 2012). Relationship satisfaction among Army couples has been found to decline significantly following a soldier's first deployment but to remain steady (and lower) with multiple deployments (Karney and Trail, 2017). Declines in marital satisfaction associated with deployments are more extreme when the service member experienced trauma during the deployment (Karney et al., 2016; for meta-analyses, see Lambert et al., 2012; Taft et al., 2011).

Other research has investigated negative marital conditions among military couples, including intimate partner violence (IPV). Rates of IPV are greater among military couples than civilian couples (Clark and Messer, 2006). However, this might be because the demographic characteristics that are risk factors for IPV are also typical of the military population—younger couples who tend to have lower household income, and almost half of the population has children (out of which almost 75 percent are under age 12). Within the military population, exposure to military violence also serves as a risk factor for IPV (Karney et al., 2016; Lewis, Lamson, and Leseuer, 2012). Marital conflict and aggression are associated with greater rates of spouse distress (Arriaga and Schkeryantz, 2015), less effective parenting (Sturge-Apple, Davies, and Cummings, 2006), and higher rates of divorce (Rogge and Bradbury, 1999).

There is an array of programs and services to help Army spouses and their families cope with the challenges of military life. These include military programs that provide help with financial problems; with difficulty in finding employment, childcare, health care; and with counseling to help families cope with such issues as deployments, family conflict, marital problems, and more-serious psychological issues (Flynn, 2014; Leipold, 2014; Lorge, 2007; Sims et al., 2013). However, research suggests that military spouses experience barriers to accessing some of these services—notably, psychological services (Lewy, Oliver, and McFarland, 2014)—but no previous research study has examined spousal access and use of different types of services to cope with a broad array of problems.

Summary of Method and Findings of the 2014 Survey of Soldier Needs

Soldiers and their families experience challenges as a consequence of soldiers' employment. Although some theoretical perspectives of stress at work focus closely on particular types of employment-related stressors and strain (e.g., the demands-control model proposed by Karasek [1979], or the role stress model popularized by Kahn and colleagues [Kahn et al., 1964; see Griffin and Clarke, 2011]), others are more widely used and applicable. In their review, Griffin and Clarke (2011) note that these include the transactional model of Lazarus and colleagues (see, e.g., Folkman et al., 1986), which conceptualizes stress as a process that involves interactions with the person and the

environment, including resources available to address perceived challenges, and the conservation of resources model of Hobfoll (see, e.g., Hobfoll, 2011), in which the stress process involves a mismatch between challenges faced and resources available to solve the challenge, which ultimately results in burnout as the key outcome (Cooper, Dewe, and O'Driscoll, 2001). A broader approach to stress is appropriate when considering the conjunction of the family and the military, both of which are "greedy" institutions that make strong demands on time, energy, and commitment (Segal, 1986).

This broader perspective on stress and coping has been applied to understand the match between Army programs and the needs of soldiers and their families. To assess this match, RAND Corporation researchers designed a broad-ranging survey that considered the installation environment, the demographics of the population, the problems encountered, the types of help needed as a result of those problems, the resources soldiers and their families draw on to deal with the problems, the barriers to using both military and civilian resources to meet needs, the effectiveness of the resources used, and attitudes toward military service. That survey, administered from September 2014 to January 2015 to a representative sample of more than 7,000 active duty soldiers stationed CONUS, and the report that followed (Sims et al., 2017) took an Army-wide view of how its members used the resources provided to them and whether there were gaps between the perceived needs of soldiers and their families for dealing with problems and the resources available to help with those problems.

A follow-on study (Sims et al., 2018) investigated issues of local context, examining whether and how installations were associated with outcomes of interest. This reanalysis of the survey data from soldiers was supplemented by focus groups at four locations, which included both soldiers and spouses. The survey findings suggested that Army programs generally meet the needs of soldiers and their families. However, findings also suggested room for improvement, in that some soldiers encountered barriers to using resources and did not have their needs met, even after reaching out to available programs and support providers. In addition, although there were differences between installations where soldiers were posted, many aspects of the problems themselves and how they were solved had striking commonalities across installations.

Overall, these studies suggested that resources providing one-on-one, personalized help should be given priority and that it is possible that emphasizing trust between soldiers and their leaders could help fulfill this need. Various recommendations were offered to help the Army manage the tension between fostering resilience and helping its soldiers solve problems early, including providing information to noncommissioned officers (NCOs) early and often regarding what resources might be available to help. Other proposed solutions were prioritizing requirements to enable time for leaders to develop trust with their soldiers, strengthening the "no wrong door" policy at Army Community Service (ACS), and broadening the policy to help soldiers and families navigate resources.

Objective and Approach

The objective of this study was to conduct a survey of Army spouses and use it to identify the full spectrum of challenges that soldiers' families face, along with the implications of how the management of those challenges unfolds. This consisted of gaining understanding of what problems are considered most important by spouses, the types of help they need to address the problems, their experiences with resources they contact for assistance, and ultimately whether their needs were met. This effort supplements the earlier survey of soldiers but gains first-hand information on the issues faced by their families rather than asking soldiers to supply that information. Further, it is consistent with the Army's continuing emphasis on the family: As noted in *The Army Vision* (U.S. Army, 2018), leadership is committed to ensuring that soldiers and their families "enjoy the professional opportunities and quality of life they deserve." The data we collected will support the Army's consideration of what programs and resources are most essential and how best to support soldiers and their families.

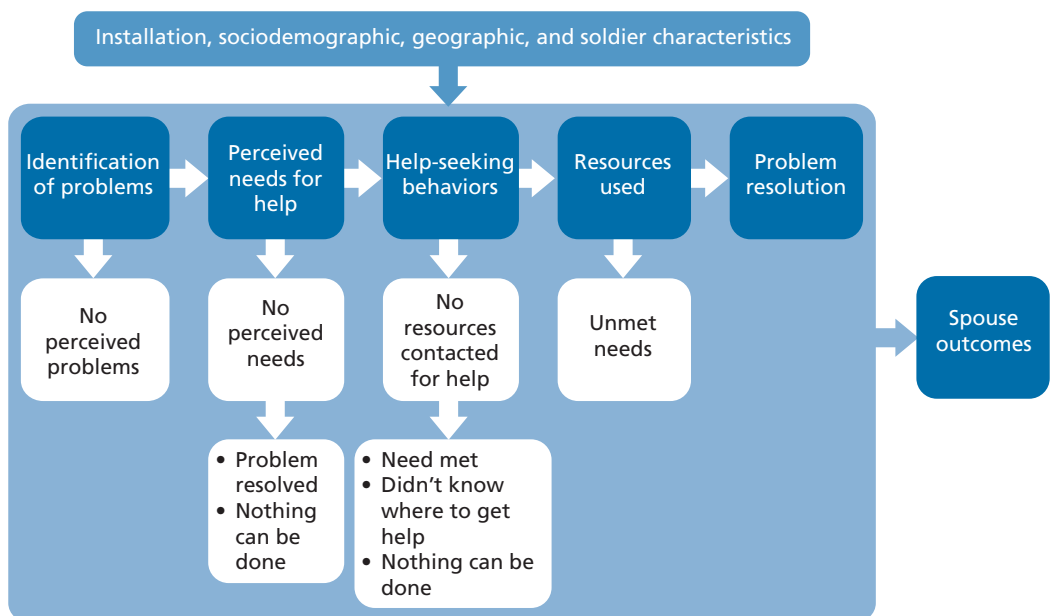
In this study, we used a model of help-seeking and problem resolution (previously applied among soldiers as described above) to examine the match between the resources available and challenges faced by Army spouses. Our model of the help-seeking and problem-resolution process is based on the initial work of Miller and colleagues (2011) that was adapted for the RAND soldier needs survey (Sims et al., 2017). This model was put forward as an alternative approach to understanding program use through the lens of a problem-solving process. Although surveys often ask Army family members program-centric questions about their satisfaction with services, the surveys do not address the problem and associated needs that led individuals to seek out the programs in the first place or whether the programs or some other resources helped them resolve their problems (Sims et al., 2017).

In the current adaptation of the model, shown in Figure 1.1, the primary focus is on the experiences of spouses and their problem-solving process, not strictly on program use. This adheres to some well-supported conceptualizations of stress, including the transactional model of Lazarus and colleagues (see Folkman et al., 1986), which posits that a stressor is not solely objective but rather an interaction of individuals with their environment. Experiences are interpreted through a lens in which a determination is made about whether the experience is important—that is, the individual has a stake in the event, it represents a problem, and there is a discrepancy between the current situation and the desired state (Cooper, Dewe, and O'Driscoll, 2001; Perrewé and Zellars, 1999). The second interpretive lens is one in which the individual considers what options might be available to address the problem (Cooper, Dewe, and O'Driscoll, 2001). After these appraisals are made, the individual executes one or more coping behaviors, ranging from coping that serves mainly to mitigate the negative emotional consequences of stress (emotion-focused coping), to coping that manages the meaning of the stressful situation (meaning-focused coping), to coping that

involves actively engaging in activities to resolve the problem (problem-focused coping; Folkman and Moskowitz, 2004). This process can be applied to both family situations and individuals.

In this way, the model is also informed by family stress process models (Hill, Boulding, and Dunigan, 1949; McCubbin and Patterson, 1983). These models specify that problems are stressors that make demands on a couple's resources and that the resources available to the couple combined with the couple's interpretation of the problem determine the couple's response to the problem. Some problems are interpreted as solvable without relying on outside resources (e.g., the "problem resolved" path under "no perceived needs" in Figure 1.1). Other problems are seen as generating needs, but spouses do not know where to go for help and thus do not use outside resources available to them, including financial, emotional, and social resources. Once external resources are sought (e.g., programs, services, social support), these resources can be seen as helping resolve the problem (i.e., they met the need for which they were sought) or as not meeting the spouse's needs (i.e., the spouse still has unmet needs). In addition, problem-solving takes place within a particular context, and spouses bring their own experiences and expectations to the process (Pearlin, 1989), which potentially affects each step of the process and could have an impact on spouses' ability to resolve their problems. Finally, the extent to which spouses have problems, need resources, and have their problems resolved by those resources will have implications for important spousal outcomes. The placement of this problem-solving process in the

Figure 1.1
Model of the Help-Seeking and Problem-Resolution Process for Army Spouses



framework of stress research suggests that outcomes may come in three general types: psychological, physiological, and behavioral (Griffin and Clarke, 2011; see also Sonnentag and Frese, 2003). Relevant psychological outcomes include perceived stress and more-general attitudes toward the military, and such outcomes as support for retention could be considered as a psychological outcome or as a proxy for a behavioral one (retention) of potentially great importance to the Army (Sims et al., 2013; Suits, 2018).

Organization of the Report

In Chapter Two, we describe the survey instrument: the range of problems included in the survey, the needs assessed by the survey, and the array of programs that the Army currently has in place to support soldiers and their families. We also discuss how the survey was adapted from the soldier version used by Sims and colleagues (2017) to measure the experiences of spouses, as well as changes to the survey that reflect lessons learned from the soldier survey about how Army families go about solving their problems. In Chapter Three, we detail the results of our analysis of spouses' problems and needs associated with their most-pressing problems, and Chapter Four details the results of our analysis of spouses' use of resources to meet their needs. In Chapter Five, we provide a detailed analysis of spouses who used programs or services to address their needs but whose needs were not met. This chapter includes an analysis of how these unmet needs are related to important spousal outcomes, including perceived stress, attitudes toward the military, and support for their soldiers' continuation in the Army. Finally, in Chapter Six, we offer conclusions and recommendations for the Army about the needs and service utilization of spouses and their families and discuss concrete ways in which the results of this individual needs assessment might be used in program planning. Appendix A contains the survey instrument, and Appendixes B and C contain analysis of data not included in the body of the report.

Survey Content and Method

This chapter focuses on how the survey was designed, administered, and analyzed. The complete survey is included in Appendix A.

Survey Instrument

The survey instrument mirrored the one used for soldiers (Sims et al., 2017), with a few critical changes to account for the different experiences of Army spouses. For example, perceptions of organizational support, which assesses employee perceptions of the extent to which the employer cares about employee well-being, is not as directly relevant to spouses as it was to soldiers. Thus, we included other attitude-related measures that were more appropriate, such as a brief measure of perceived stress. Given the importance of spouse employment in the literature, we also modified the survey to assess spouses' employment, as well as issues and resources that might be relevant to that employment status. We also made some modifications to the survey for general improvement purposes, such as asking spouses directly whether they considered the problems they faced to be solved.

We present a brief overview of the Today's Army Spouse Survey here. Readers interested in the development of the Today's Soldier Survey, which served as a template for the current survey instrument, should refer to Sims et al. (2017) for more information. In line with earlier investigations of soldiers, the Today's Army Spouse Survey essentially paralleled the coping process for dealing with problems: Respondents were asked about problems they have faced, needs for help stemming from these problems, resources they have contacted for help, and the quality of their experience using resources. The diagram that follows illustrates this question flow:

Problems → Needs → Use of resources → Outcomes

Problems

Respondents received a list of nine problem domains, each with between 8 and 14 specific issues that they could indicate they had experienced in the past year, for a total of up to 96 listed specific issues. The problem domains (with examples of specific issues) appear here. The diversity of the problem areas presented in the survey is intended to reflect the wide range of challenges that arise for Army families. The following examples highlight some of the issues intended to be relevant for spouses in particular, as well as those that are core to the conceptual problem domain:

1. **military practices and culture** (e.g., adjusting to military language, organization, or culture or getting your spouse's chain of command to take you seriously)
2. **work-life balance** (e.g., finding time for sleep, a healthy diet, and physical exercise or work not being challenging or not using skills or education)
3. **household management** (e.g., finding suitable housing or encountering poor housing quality)
4. **financial or legal problems** (e.g., experiencing trouble servicing debt or paying bills or finding a job that pays enough or offers enough hours)
5. **health care system problems** (e.g., finding a physician who takes TRICARE)
6. **relationship problems** (e.g., reuniting or reconnecting after a deployment)
7. **child well-being** (e.g., finding affordable or quality military childcare)
8. **own well-being** (e.g., feeling stressed, overwhelmed, or tired)
9. **soldier's well-being** (same issues as *own well-being*, but with the soldier as the frame of reference).

Only respondents who indicated that they had dependent children were asked about the problem domain of *child well-being*.

After each problem domain, respondents were given the opportunity to indicate additional issues they felt were not included in the listing (note that these write-ins were directly linked to problem domains by respondents) or asked to confirm whether they had experienced none of the offered issues. Respondents also had a final opportunity to volunteer information about any issues they experienced that they felt did not fit in the provided domains. If they had endorsed no issues, they were asked explicitly to confirm that, over the past year, they had experienced no problems. If respondents chose issues from more than two domains, they were asked to prioritize which two domains contained the most-significant problems they faced in the past 12 months. Additional questions on the survey assessing problem-solving were asked about these top two problems.

After volunteering information about these top two problems, respondents were asked to answer a series of four questions about the perceived severity of each of their top problems, something that is new to the current survey. The series included a question about how severe the problem was at its worst, as well as related aspects, such as

the extent to which the problem made the respondent feel stressed or anxious. Anchors differed based on the questions asked, but all answers were on a 1–5 scale. We then averaged the items after determining that reliability was acceptable (Cronbach's alpha = 0.89).¹

Needs

For respondents' top two problems, they were asked to indicate what types of help, if any, were needed to deal with the specific problems in that domain. The list of types of help was the same for all problem domains and offered the following options, unchanged from the soldier survey:

- General information: for example, about rules or policies, or about what is available and how to access it
- Specific information: for example, about training or deployment schedules or how spouses can reach deployed troops
- An advocate: someone to try to get help for you
- Advice or education: people with experience to recommend the best solution for someone in your situation
- Emotional or social support
- Professional counseling
- A helping hand: loans, donations, or services to help out with some of your responsibilities
- Activities: for fitness, recreation, stress relief, or family bonding
- Other needs that do not fit into the categories above (please specify).

If respondents listed more than two types of help needed for any problem, including an "other" need that did not fit the listed categories, they were asked to choose the top two types of needs for the problem. The goal of this approach was to generate a sense of whether the types of help typically offered by programs and services reflected the types of help spouses typically desired, independent of specific resources for assistance. If respondents indicated that they had no needs for a given problem, they were asked why they had no needs. Response options were: "we already solved the problem by ourselves," "we are currently solving the problem by ourselves," "the problem went away on its own," "I expect the problem to go away on its own," "there's nothing anyone can do to help solve the problem," and "other." This process of asking about problems and needs enabled us to consider problem-solving from different perspectives: from the perspective of the type of top problem, from the perspective of the type of top need, and at the level of the problem-need pairing. That is, we could examine the combination of the type of problem and the need that went with it. For example,

¹ Cronbach's alpha is a measure of the average association between ratings of different items (i.e., the interitem reliability). Alphas above 0.80 are considered to indicate that the items are highly reliable.

one problem-need pairing might be someone whose prioritized problem was health care and the prioritized need for that problem was general information.

Use of Resources and Unmet Needs

For each of the respondents' needs, we asked them to indicate which resources, if any, they had "used or tried to use to meet [the] need." The list of resources was the same for all problem domains and needs, and it included the following options for Army and nonmilitary contacts, with modifications made to ensure that resources relevant to Army spouses were included (for example, employment and education programs administered by DoD for military spouses).

Army Contacts

- [Soldier] spouse's chain of command (squad leaders, NCOs/officers)
- Army Family Readiness Group (FRG)
- [U.S. Army Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation (Army MWR)] (for example, recreation or sports services such as intramural sports, libraries, or post gymnasium)
- Army Community Service (ACS) (for example, financial services, relocation assistance, and family services)
- Military employment resources (for example, getting a federal job through spouse preference, using Military Spouse Employment Partnership Career Center)
- Military education loans or grants, such as MyCAA [My Career Advancement Account]
- Military internet resources or official Army social media (such as Army or DoD web pages, Army OneSource, installation Twitter accounts, official Facebook groups)
- Military mental health care provider
- Military-covered medical provider (such as a doctor, nurse, or dentist; on-post or off-post covered by TRICARE)
- Child and Youth Services [CYS] (for example, on-post childcare or youth sports)
- Chaplain or members of military religious or spiritual group
- Relief or aid society (Army Emergency Relief [AER])
- Other military contacts (please specify).

Nonmilitary Contacts

- Government or community resources for family services (for example, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families [TANF], Women, Infants, Children [WIC], Public Library, Head Start, community center)
- Private clubs, organizations, or recreation or fitness centers
- Private off-post childcare
- Religious or spiritual group or leader

- Private mental health care provider, not referred by the military
- Private medical provider (such as a private doctor, nurse, or dentist) not referred by the military
- Internet resources (such as WebMD, Google, Craigslist, Wikipedia, Yahoo)
- Unofficial social media military networks where other service members and/or spouses share questions, comments, stories and advice
- Other military spouses you know in person (not only online)
- Personal networks outside the military (friends, family)
- Your civilian employer
- Other nonmilitary contacts (please specify).

As with problems and needs, if respondents felt as if they reached out to a resource that did not appear on the list of military or nonmilitary contacts, they had the opportunity to select “other” and write in the resource they used. If the respondents indicated that they had reached out to no resources, they were asked why. Response options were “we already met this need by ourselves,” “we are currently meeting this need by ourselves,” “the problem was fixed another way,” “there’s nothing anyone can do to help solve the problem,” “I didn’t want to ask for help,” “I didn’t know who to contact for help,” and “other.”

Of those who did contact resources for help with a need, participants rated how well each resource helped them meet their need. Ratings were made on a scale from 1 (“not at all”) to 5 (“very well”). Finally, participants were directly asked whether they had actually received the help they needed by responding “yes,” “no,” or indicating that they were not sure. Looking across problem-need pairs, we considered spouses to have an unmet need if they said they were “not sure” one or more needs were met or “no,” one or more needs were not met.

This direct question about unmet needs is new to the Today’s Army Spouse Survey and removes the necessity of making inferences about what needs went unmet, something that was required in the soldier survey (Sims et al., 2017). In the soldier survey, we inferred unmet needs using participants’ ratings of how well a resource met their needs, on a scale from “not at all” to “very well.” Specifically, if any resource used was rated as meeting a need “well” or “very well,” then the need was coded as having been met by one or more resources. In other words, the need was considered to be unmet if no resources used to help with the need were rated as meeting it “well” or “very well.” This method for inferring unmet needs means that soldiers who contacted several resources for help but were satisfied with only one of those resources were considered to have had their need met. We considered this method of inference about unmet needs relatively conservative in the sense that if at least one resource for each problem-need pairing met the need well or very well, the need was met—that is, the soldier might have experienced a relatively unsatisfying problem-solving process but in the end found something for every problem-need pairing that met the need at least “well.” However, the direct question on the spouse survey removes the necessity of this inference.

In the spouse survey, because we have both a direct query about unmet needs and the items we used to infer unmet needs in the soldier survey as described above, we were able to consider how the operationalization of unmet needs affects the prevalence of unmet needs, as perceived by survey respondents.

General Perceptions About Military Resources

After completing the detailed information about problems, needs, and help seeking and outcome, all participants—even those who did not use military resources—were asked more general questions about available military resources.

First, they were asked a series of four questions assessing perceived knowledge of and comfort with military resources:

1. “It is easy to find out about military resources for soldiers and their families.”
2. “When I have a problem finding the right military resource for my needs, I know who to contact to find help.”
3. “If military resources are not meeting my needs, I know who to contact.”
4. “I am comfortable using military resources available to me.”

Respondents rated their agreement with each statement on a five-point scale, from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree,” or indicated that they had “not tried to find out about military resources.” These items were new in the spouse survey and designed to directly assess spouses’ general familiarity with the military resource environment. Additional questions carried over from the soldier survey addressed respondents’ perceptions of specific resources. For each military resource, they were asked the extent to which each of the following statements reflected their current evaluation of the resource:

- “[resource] not applicable for my needs”
- “[resource] has not been relevant to my needs”
- “know little about them”
- “convenient location or access”
- “might hurt my [or my spouse’s] reputation to use them”
- “not welcoming/unfriendly”
- “wait list or response time too long”
- “[resource has a] good reputation.”

Finally, spouses were asked what method of contact about resources was preferred and were presented with an array of options. They could check all that applied to them.

Attitudes and Perceptions: Stress and Satisfaction

The Today’s Soldier Survey included a variety of items assessing relevant outcomes such as retention intentions, perceived organizational support, and other attitudes toward

the Army. These measures were substantially revised for the purposes of better assessing the unique situation of Army spouses and included an assessment of perceived stress to complement the assessment of problems, needs, and resource use.

Perceived Stress Scale

Overall perceived stress was measured with the four-item version of the Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen and Williamson, 1988). This is an abbreviated version of a ten-item scale that has been used in several national surveys and has shown relationships with a variety of relevant health-related outcomes, as summarized in Cohen and Janicki-Deverts (2012). Items ask participants to state how often during the past month they have felt a certain way—for example, “that you were unable to control the important things in your life.” Scores ranged from 0 (never) to 4 (very often). As these items were designed to be used as a composite, we computed the average score on the scale. Reliability was acceptable (Cronbach’s $\alpha = 0.75$).

Attitudes Toward the Military

As with the soldier survey, we wanted to include questions surrounding attitudes about military service (e.g., satisfaction with military way of life) that are common in surveys of military personnel (see, for example, Defense Manpower Data Center, 2012a, 2012b) and of military spouses (see, for example, Office of People Analytics, 2018) and that we had included in our soldier survey in particular. Pittman, Kerpelman, and McFadyen (2004) considered fit of a family to the demands of Army life to be a useful outcome predicted by satisfaction with services, perceived unit culture, and coping; earlier work by Orthner and Bowen (1990) suggested that adaptation would prove beneficial in the sense that it would facilitate service members’ continued commitment to their service. Direct investigations of Orthner and Bowen’s (1990) model are not common in the literature (Sims et al., 2013). However, in the military context, work-family conflict may be considered a barrier to family adaptation to the military and subsequent satisfaction with the military way of life. This framing corresponds with the broad literature on work-family conflict. Recent meta-analysis suggests that, as posited by Orthner and Bowen, work-family conflict—particularly the conflict of work demands on family life—is related to lower commitment and higher turnover (Amstad et al., 2011; note that the included studies primarily examined employees’ own perceptions). In addition, research suggests that military spouses’ support of their service members’ careers is associated with increased service member retention intentions (Bowen, 1986; Heilmann, Bell, and McDonald, 2009; Rosen and Durand, 1995) and with actual service member retention (Huffman, Casper, and Payne, 2014).

To better capture the spouses’ general attitudes toward and adaptation to the military, we modified our measure to include some new items, such as: “How do you feel about your spouse being in the military?” (in contrast to the soldier survey asking, “How does your spouse feel about your being in the military?”). We also included items tapping satisfaction “with the military way of life” and with “the support and concern

the Army has for your family,” and we included two items assessing how much of a problem Army demands are, as well as two items assessing adjustment to the Army. There were nine such attitudinal items in total. Although these items were drawn from different sources, the items were thematically similar; taken together, they are similar to the construct of external adaptation to the Army (Pittman, Kerpelman, and McFadyen, 2004); therefore, we examined them to determine whether they composed a suitable scale. Cronbach's alpha for nine items was 0.87.² Because the items were on different scales, we transformed each item to have a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1 (i.e., created a z-score) prior to calculating the average score among items.

Spouse Support to Remain in the Army

Retention is clearly a key outcome when studying the intersection of the family with the military (Sims et al., 2013) and a key outcome in the general context of stress in the workplace (Griffin and Clarke, 2011; Sonnentag and Frese, 2003). Thus, as with the soldier survey, we also included a measure of support to remain in the Army: We asked spouses to report how much they favor their soldiers staying or leaving the military, rated from 1 (“I strongly favor leaving”) to 5 (“I strongly favor staying”). Meta-analyses have found that retention intentions—and, more broadly, measures of commitment and support to remain with an organization—are some of the most powerful predictors available of actual retention behavior among employees generally (Griffeth, Hom, and Gaertner, 2001; Hom and Griffeth, 1995). Particularly relevant to this study, spousal support of retention has also been demonstrated as a key factor affecting actual military retention (e.g., Burnam et al., 1992; Campbell, Luchman, and Kuhn, 2017; Huffman, Casper, and Payne, 2014; Segal and Harris, 1993). Indeed, some work even suggests that family attitudes toward retention can have more impact than service members' own attitudes (Heilmann, Bell, and McDonald, 2009; Rosen and Moghadam, 1988).

Other Questions Pertaining to Demographics and Experiences

The final section of the survey asks questions relating to the deployment experiences of the spouses (i.e., whether their soldiers had been deployed, for how long, and more generally about preparation for future deployments). We asked some questions about their soldiers' service characteristics (pay grade, tenure in the active duty, and whether they were serving at the time of marriage). We also queried them on demographic

² Factor analysis can be used to determine the underlying structure of a group of items: In this instance, we used it to determine whether, together, these items composed one underlying factor. A principal axis factor analysis with varimax rotation revealed three factors; however, two of them appeared to be related to item stem phrasing (“how much of a problem is . . .” and “how well have you/your family adjusted to the demands . . .”) rather than substantive content differences, and examination of the scree plot suggested one factor. A confirmatory factor analysis for one factor had reasonable fit as well, although modifications were necessary to allow a few error terms to covary (indexes of fit that we examined included root mean square error of approximation [0.07] and comparative fit index [0.98]).

information (their citizenship status, English as a second language, race/ethnicity, and gender). Finally, because employment has been found to be important to both spouse and family well-being (Brunello et al., 2016; Heckman, Humphries, and Veramendi, 2016), we asked spouses about their current employment status.

Open-Ended Responses

We also allowed participants a variety of options to contribute content to the survey when they felt that the options provided were not sufficient. Some of these options included write-ins for any issues they experienced that they felt did not fit in any of the provided problem domains, needs they felt did not fit the listed categories, and the resources they used that did not match the listed resources.

Respondents could also indicate problems that they did not consider to be captured within a provided problem domain, and they could nominate these other problem domains as one of their two most significant problems. Similarly, respondents had the opportunity to use an open-ended text box to describe a need that did not fit into the listed categories of needs, and spouses could nominate these other needs as one of their two most significant needs for a given problem domain. Finally, respondents had the opportunity to use one open-ended text box to describe another military contact that did not fit into the listed military resources provided on the survey and another open-ended text box to describe another nonmilitary contact that did not fit into the listed nonmilitary resources.

In each of these cases, researchers read through the written responses and coded them according to the following rules: (1) Write-in responses that generally fit an existing category were recoded as that category rather than “other” (e.g., an “other” write-in issue concerning problems contacting a soldier’s commander was recoded as a problem with *military practices and culture*). (2) If a common theme emerged that was different from the original items, the response was coded as a new problem, need, or resource. (3) If a response theme did not fit an existing category and few other respondents shared a similar theme, then the response was left coded as “other.” Specific information on the coding of write-ins for top problems, needs, and resources appears in the respective section of the results, below.

Sampling of Participants

Participants were sampled in December 2017 from Army personnel files of married soldiers stationed CONUS. The sample was selected to be representative of Army spouses along several dimensions: the presence of dependent children, housing location (on versus off post), geographic location of the soldier’s post (urban, midsize city, rural), and the soldier’s pay grade. A random sample of spouses was selected within each of these strata to match the overall proportion of the population of Army spouses stationed CONUS. Housing location was determined by a geographic information

systems (GIS) analysis matching home mailing addresses with GIS data locating U.S. military installations. Out of 75,000 spouses sampled, 94 percent were successfully assigned as on or off post based on their mailing addresses, and the additional 6 percent were assigned based on their residential zip codes. (Only three addresses were not successfully assigned using this procedure.) Assignment of geographic location of the soldier's post was based on GIS and other data,³ and assignment was performed using the same methods detailed in Sims et al. (2017). Soldier pay grade groups were E1–E4 (junior enlisted), E5–E9 (senior enlisted), O1–O3 (junior officer), and O4 and above (senior officer). Warrant officers were excluded from the survey because of the small size of this population (3 percent of the Army active component as of September 2012; Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy, 2013). The total final sample was composed of 75,000 spouses. Sampled spouses were invited to participate in the study in two waves: 50,000 were contacted in wave 1 of the survey administration (January 2018), and an additional 25,000 were contacted in wave 2 (March 2018).

Procedure for Administering the Survey

Sampled spouses were recruited for the online survey through postcards mailed to their home addresses (as recorded in Army personnel records). The initial postcard contained a brief solicitation for the survey, a link to the survey landing page online, and an individualized access code to take the survey. A reminder postcard was mailed to nonrespondents three weeks following the initial postcard. Both postcards emphasized the importance of spousal opinions for Army decisionmaking (i.e., “YOUR input is critical in identifying what services and resources YOU need . . .”) and advertised that spouses would receive a \$10 Amazon gift card as a thank-you for participating in the study. Marketing for the survey included an article in the *Army Times* (Jowers, 2018) and posts on social media by Army MWR, Association of the United States Army Family Readiness, and the Military Spouse Advisory Network. A public service announcement advertising the survey was recorded by the spouse of Sergeant Major of the Army (SMA) Dailey, Holly Dailey, and provided for broadcast at CONUS installations. Finally, we reached out to Facebook groups for Army spouses at sampled installations that had email addresses, asking them to tell their members about the survey and providing a link that supplied them with potential images to use for marketing the survey on social media.

When participants entered the website address into a web browser, they were taken to a landing page containing a brief introduction to the study, a link to the full study FAQ, and a form to enter the individualized access code. Once the code was

³ See Lachman, Resetar, and Camm (2016) for additional details.

entered, participants completed informed consent and screener questions before proceeding to the survey. The screener questions were used to confirm eligibility for the survey: that the respondent was age 18 or older and married to an active duty Army soldier.⁴ After completing the survey, participants entered their email addresses and were each emailed a \$10 Amazon gift card.

Response Rates and Number of Participants

A total of 8,636 spouses accessed the survey, and 114 screened out as ineligible, leaving 8,522 potential respondents. Of those, 247 did not respond to the list of problems or report that they did not have a problem, which was the criterion for being considered a “respondent” to the survey. This left 8,275 total survey respondents. Of the 75,000 spouses sampled for the survey, a match with U.S. Postal Service address records revealed 491 undeliverable addresses. Thus, 74,509 spouses were mailed postcards inviting them to participate in the survey,⁵ for a response rate of 11.1 percent. Decreasing response rates are a general problem for surveys, including military surveys (Morrall, Gore, and Schell, 2015), and, as described above, we undertook several efforts to mitigate low response rates, including the offer of a gift card for participation. Moreover, our respondents closely mirrored our population on key demographic characteristics, although spouses of officers were somewhat overrepresented in comparison to spouses of junior enlisted, and spouses with children were likewise somewhat overrepresented. The small differences between respondents and the population of spouses suggest that concerns of response bias are limited. As described in the next section, we weighted the data to account for the small demographic differences between respondents and the population.

Weighting Procedure

To make population-level inferences about Army spouses, we calculated survey nonresponse weights for each respondent. We used the same four stratification variables as composed the sampling procedure to calculate nonresponse weights: the presence of

⁴ We initially screened out spouses who were in the military themselves (active, guard, or reserve) but relaxed this requirement after receiving several complaints from dual military spouses, including in services other than Army. Before relaxing this requirement, 196 potential respondents had screened out of the survey because of this restriction. These individuals were mailed a personalized letter alerting them to the change in eligibility and asking them, if interested, to log in and try again with the provided access code. Of those contacted, 96 reengaged with the survey. Ultimately, a total of 320 spouses who were themselves serving in active duty and 114 spouses who were in the guard or reserves completed the survey.

⁵ Note that a substantial number of postcards were returned to the survey vendor as undeliverable. We did not exclude these spouses from the response-rate calculation.

dependent children, housing location (on versus off post), geographic location of soldier's post (urban, midsize city, rural), and soldier's pay grade (junior enlisted, senior enlisted, junior officer, or senior officer). Based on these four variables, there are 48 unique strata ($3 \times 2 \times 2 \times 4 = 48$). We calculated nonresponse probabilities within each stratum by dividing the total number of respondents by the total number of spouses sampled in that stratum. Nonresponse weights were then calculated by taking the reciprocal of the nonresponse probabilities. Thus, respondents were weighted to be representative of the sample along the four sampling strata, which means that the weights allow for inferences about the population of Army spouses (as characterized by the sampling strata variables). All analyses were weighted to be representative of the population of CONUS Army spouses.

Respondent Characteristics

Respondent demographic characteristics are shown in Table 2.1. The vast majority of respondents were female, about 80 percent were non-Hispanic white, and 72 percent had dependent children under age 18. Age, education, and employment status varied, although most respondents were under age 35 (69 percent) and most had an associate's degree or more education (60 percent). Around 43 percent were unemployed and not looking for work.

Table 2.1
Weighted Sample Description

Attribute	Percentage
Female	94
Age	
18 to 24	17
25 to 29	28
30 to 34	24
35 to 39	16
40 and over	15
Race and ethnicity	
Hispanic	18
Non-Hispanic white	78
Black	15
American Indian or Alaska native	3
Asian	8
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	2

Table 2.1—Continued

Attribute	Percentage
Education	
Less than high school diploma	2
High school diploma or equivalent	11
Some college or trade school	27
Associate's degree or certificate	18
Bachelor's degree or equivalent	28
Graduate degree	14
Employment	
Employed full time	28
Employed part time	14
Unemployed, looking for work	15
Unemployed, not looking for work	43
Has dependent children	72
Housing location relative to soldier's military post	
On post	31
Less than 5 miles away	9
5–10 miles away	21
11–20 miles away	22
21–40 miles away	9
More than 40 miles away	8
Urbanicity	
Midsized city	45
Rural	20
Urban	35
Soldier's pay grade	
Junior enlisted (E1–E4)	27
Senior enlisted (E5–E9)	55
Junior officer (O1–O3)	10
Senior officer (O4 or higher)	8
Soldier deployed in past year	34

NOTES: $N = 8,275$. Respondents could choose more than one race/ethnicity, so the total does not add to 100.

Analysis Plan and Interpretation of Findings

The analytical approach used in this report was largely descriptive. We structured the analysis to describe the most-pressing problems and needs of Army spouses, the resources used to address those problems and needs, and whether those needs were met. The analysis focuses on three main questions:

1. What were the most common responses within each of these steps in the problem-solving process?
2. Were there differences in responses among important subgroups of Army spouses by their own or their soldiers' sociodemographic characteristics (e.g., differences by employment status or their soldier's pay grade)?
3. Are differences in problem-solving experiences (e.g., having unmet needs) related to important indicators of spousal well-being and satisfaction with the Army, including favoring the soldier's staying in the Army?

Analyses of the first question involved describing the most frequent or highest rated responses to questions assessing each step of the problem-solving process (e.g., the most frequently cited problems and needs, resources most frequently used to address needs). For these analyses, throughout the report, we provide a narrative comparison to results from the 2014 soldier survey, restricting the soldier data to married soldiers only. This was done to ensure that both Army spouse and Army soldier survey data were composed of married respondents. However, given the difference in time when the two surveys were administered, the different methods used to recruit participants (email for soldiers and postcards for spouses), and some differences in the survey itself (detailed above), these comparisons are for descriptive purposes only. Married-soldier data from 2014 presented in this report could be very different from the data for married soldiers in 2018, and the 2014 married-soldier data should *not* be interpreted as equivalent to the data for 2018 married soldiers.

Analyses addressing the second question involved multiple regression modeling to determine whether there were statistically significant differences among spouses in each subgroup and which groups significantly differed from each other. We conducted logistic regression analysis of binary variables and linear regression analysis of continuous variables. All analyses were conducted using the SAS survey analysis procedures and were weighted to be representative of the population of Army spouses stationed CONUS (SAS, undated). The subgroups included in each regression model are displayed in Table 2.2. Except where noted, each regression included variables to test for significant differences among group members for all of the subgroups listed in Table 2.2. Thus, all subgroup results control for the other spouse characteristics included in Table 2.2. Given the relatively fine gradations in category differences, housing location was included as a continuous variable, meaning our general set of tests indicated whether or not increasing distance from post was influential for a given

Table 2.2
Sociodemographic Subgroups: Characteristics of Army Spouses and Their Soldiers Included in Regression Models

Subgroup	Subgroup Categories
Employment status	Unemployed, not looking for work
	Unemployed, looking for work
	Employed full time
	Employed part time
Presence of dependent children	Does not have dependent children
	Has dependent children
Housing location relative to soldier’s military post	On post
	Less than 5 miles away
	5–10 miles away
	11–20 miles away
	21–40 miles away
	More than 40 miles away
Urbanicity of installation	Midsized city
	Rural
	Urban
Soldier’s pay grade	Junior enlisted (E1–E4)
	Senior enlisted (E5–E9)
	Junior officer (O1–O3)
	Senior officer (O4 or higher)
Soldier deployed in past year	Did not deploy in past year
	Deployed in past year

NOTE: Housing location was included in regression models as a continuous rather than categorical variable.

outcome. However, to clearly convey the results when the overall trend is statistically significant, we also report results by different distances to post.

In consideration of the number of tests conducted throughout the report and in an effort to reduce type I errors in the subgroup analyses,⁶ we used an alpha criterion

⁶ Type I errors are “false positives”—indicating the presence of an effect when, in reality, none is present. In the current context, an example might be a finding that pay grade is related to choice of a particular problem type

of $p < 0.01$ for all significance tests. Subgroups with more than two categories (e.g., employment status) were entered as blocks and tested for significant differences among subgroup members at $p < 0.01$. Significant main effects for group differences were followed up with tests of differences between specific groups (e.g., between spouses employed full time and those unemployed and looking for work) using the same $p < 0.01$ criterion for significance.

One issue that is not addressed by a more stringent p -value criterion is the issue of practical significance. Practical significance takes a step beyond a finding of statistical significance to ask whether the statistically significant effect matters in the real world. For example, as shown in Chapter Three, we found that 26 percent of spouses of junior enlisted soldiers selected *financial and legal problems* as one of their top problems, compared with 19 percent of spouses of senior enlisted and about 10 percent of spouses of officers. Consideration of whether this finding is of practical significance would require consideration of the severity of the outcome itself, as well as general frequency of selection of this problem as a top problem (19 percent) and the size of the effect itself. In this example, a 7 percentage point difference between spouses of junior and senior enlisted soldiers, out of a base rate of 19 percent, may be considered large, and selection of this particular top problem may be relevant for soldiers' security clearance status (and, hence, continued eligibility for particular Army jobs). Thus, the Army may consider the finding to be of both statistical and practical significance. However, a finding that spouses who were unemployed and not looking for work were more likely to indicate that they faced no problems in the past year might not be considered as practically significant. The overall frequency of having no problems was low among Army spouses (5 percent), and the difference was not large (among spouses who were unemployed and not looking for work, 6 percent indicated that they had no problems). Finally, although having no problems is a positive situation, the Army may consider other outcomes, such as facilitating successful problem solutions for the many who are experiencing problems, to be more relevant. Since consideration of practical significance is dependent on the size of the effect and the relevance of the outcome, we present the percentage point differences of statistically significant effects so that a policy audience may make that determination. For our main analyses controlling for various demographic subgroups using multiple regression modeling, we also present, in Chapters Three and Four, tables showing risk ratios relative to the reference group for significant differences. Risk ratios can be interpreted as the percentage that the group is more or less likely to experience the problem relative to the reference group and help demonstrate the strength of the differences.

To answer our third major question, our analysis also included a predictive component to examine the relationship between problem-solving and important indicators

when it is not, in fact, related. As the number of statistical tests increases, the number of potential false-positive findings also increases. Setting a more stringent p -value criterion is one way to avoid this issue.

of spousal well-being and satisfaction with the Army. Based on the findings of the soldier needs survey (Sims et al., 2017), we expected that spouses who were able to access resources that met their needs would have higher levels of well-being and greater commitment to the Army, including favoring their soldiers' staying in the Army, compared with spouses who contacted resources but did not have their needs met (i.e., who had unmet needs). We expected spouses who had their needs met to be similar to spouses who experienced no problems, spouses who had problems but reported no needs, and spouses who had problems and needs but did not report needing resources to help. We expected spouses with unmet needs to have lower well-being and commitment to the military than all these groups.

Importantly, all these analyses were weighted to be representative of the population of Army spouses stationed CONUS. Although the experiences of Army spouses stationed abroad are important, this is the first attempt to deploy this unique type of survey to Army spouses. Thus, we decided to concentrate on understanding the experiences of spouses within CONUS, consistent with the soldier survey.

Caveats to Consider

The survey considered the past-year problems and types of help needed to deal with the most-pressing problems of Army families from the perspective of spouses, addressing a clear shortcoming of the results in the soldier survey. However, as in that survey, these data are self-reported. Self-reported problems and needs may differ from actual problems and needs. For problems, there could be sensitive issues that lead a respondent to be unwilling to share problems experienced. We attempted to alleviate this potential concern by phrasing problems generally and in a nonstigmatizing manner, but it is still possible that respondents were reluctant to report some of their challenges. There may also be differing perceptions of stressors (e.g., see Cooper, Dewe, and O'Driscoll, 2001). However, as can be seen in our results, it is unlikely that this concern was prevalent on a large scale: Respondents were quite willing to name a number of issues and problems they and their family faced in the past year.

We asked spouses to prioritize their most-pressing problems and thoroughly explored solution-seeking and outcomes for those problems only. So, when we examine whether or how well these problems were resolved, we cannot speak to the whole range of challenges Army spouses face over the course of a year. Nor can we address the challenges that spouses face that cut across the different domains specified in the survey (e.g., a soldier well-being problem that has associated financial and legal challenges). Moreover, our focus on the problems that spouses are facing means that we do not see what challenges *never arise* because resources are available and working well. Thus, the prevalence of problems in each domain reported in this report and the prevalence of associated needs and resources used should be interpreted within the context

of spouses' *top* problems, as they prioritize them, rather than the prevalence of these problems, needs, and use of resources among spouses in general.

With regard to consideration of needs, it is also possible that respondents' self-reported needs might differ from how an external observer, such as a helping professional, might characterize their needs. For example, it is possible that people do not understand what kinds of help would be most likely to alleviate their problems (e.g., people may think they need information when they really need professional counseling). However, it is plausible that spouses will seek the kind of help they think they need, so the resources they contact for help will reflect their help-seeking process and, ultimately, the success they have meeting their needs and resolving their problems.

This survey provides a cross-sectional analysis of an inherently longitudinal process: It asks spouses at a single point in time to reflect on problems they experienced in the past year and explores their subsequent process of problem-solving. Perceptions of such events may change over time, and people may have imperfect recall of events and experiences, particularly if the process occurred further in the past. Moreover, although we can assess unmet needs, we do not include assessment of how long the person has had the unmet need. It is likely that persistent unmet needs affect other outcomes more strongly.

Our analysis included examining differences among sociodemographic groups on various aspects of the problem-solving process (e.g., top problems, needs, resources used). These analyses were exploratory in nature, and we had no a priori hypotheses predicting differences between groups on specific variables. As noted, we used an alpha criterion of $p < 0.01$ for all significance tests, which does reduce the probability of finding a significant difference by chance alone, but it does not mean that all of the differences reported in the results are large. To examine the size of differences between groups, we include a measure of effect size in the tables displaying significant sociodemographic group differences. These effect sizes, along with a consideration of practical significance discussed above, should be used to interpret the size and importance of the statistically significant differences between groups.

The data from the Army spouses who responded to the survey were weighted to be representative of the population, but they could still be biased in ways that are not observable, although we did consider a number of potentially relevant characteristics both in choosing our sample and in the weighting itself in an attempt to cast a broad net. Our response rate was not high, which indicates that there might have been unknown factors influencing response to the survey. However, it should be noted that within the limitations of our budget and the available contact information (i.e., we relied on postal mail rather than being able to use the less expensive alternative of email), we made multiple attempts to contact spouses directly. We also purposefully deconflicted our survey administration period with another large-scale effort at surveying spouses, fielding several months after the Office of People Analytics survey of active duty spouses closed (see Office of People Analytics, 2018). (That fielding period

was in summer 2017.) However, it is still possible that its survey reduced response rates to our survey because of confusion about whether potential participants had completed the Today's Army Spouse Survey already. We also offered an incentive for participation to increase interest. Finally, we attempted to get the word out to spouses through several modalities, recruiting several spouse advocacy groups to help us reach spouses to tell them about the survey, as well as contacting spouse groups through media, such as Facebook, and providing images that could be used in marketing the survey.

Respondents' Problems and Needs

This chapter focuses on exploring the issues and problems faced by spouses in the past year and answering the following questions:

1. What were the most-common types of problems and needs spouses faced and prioritized?
2. Were there differences in responses among important subgroups characterized by spouses' own or their soldiers' sociodemographic characteristics (e.g., differences by employment status or the soldier's pay grade)?

We first provide details on the issues faced within problem domains; then, we discuss the problem domains themselves, followed by the needs engendered by the most-challenging problems spouses faced.

What Issues and Problem Domains Did Spouses Experience?

Issues Experienced by Respondents

Respondents were provided with a list of 96 issues within the nine problem domains discussed in Chapter Two and instructed to select *all* the issues they had experienced in the past year. Table 3.1 displays the issues that were most frequently chosen by spouses. Feeling stressed, overwhelmed, or tired within the *own well-being* problem domain was chosen by more than half of respondents. Similarly, almost half the respondents chose their soldiers' experience of feeling stressed, overwhelmed, or tired within the *soldier well-being* problem domain as well. The next-highest reported issue was loneliness or boredom, which was chosen by almost 39 percent of respondents. Importantly, in addition to a host of well-being and relationship issues, about 35 percent of respondents indicated that they have issues within *military practices and culture* with "figuring out how to use 'the system'—where to go, with whom to talk to get help or information." Out of all the issues potentially faced in a given year, these represent those most common among Army spouses.

Table 3.1
Most Frequently Reported Issues Across Problem Domains

Problem Domain	Issue	Percentage	95% CI
Own well-being	Feeling stressed, overwhelmed, or tired	55.9	54.8, 57.0
Soldier well-being	Feeling stressed, overwhelmed, or tired	49.5	48.4, 50.6
Own well-being	Loneliness or boredom	38.8	37.7, 39.8
Own well-being	Mood changes: feeling depressed, impatient, angry, aggressive, or anxious	36.3	35.2, 37.4
Relationship problems	Communication challenges (not enough communication or difficulty expressing feelings)	36.0	34.9, 37.1
Military practices and culture	Figuring out how to use "the system"—where to go, with whom to talk to get help or information	34.9	33.8, 36.0
Own well-being	Trouble sleeping	34.0	33.0, 35.1
Work-life balance	Finding time for sleep, a healthy diet, or physical exercise	33.1	32.0, 34.1
Health care system problems	Timeliness at a treatment facility (e.g., getting a timely appointment, waiting time for an appointment, hours or days open)	32.4	31.4, 33.5
Soldier well-being	Trouble sleeping	31.0	29.9, 32.0
Soldier well-being	Mood changes: feeling depressed, impatient, angry, aggressive, or anxious	29.3	28.3, 30.3
Relationship problems	Arguments	28.4	27.4, 29.4

NOTES: $N = 8,275$. CI = confidence interval. Percentages were weighted to be representative of the population. CIs help convey the uncertainty that is found in any estimate. For the 95 percent CIs that we report, if we measured the same variables in the same way from the same population, in 95 percent of those samples, our results would fall within the upper and lower bounds we report. For analyses with larger sample sizes, our estimates can be more precise, and our CIs may be quite narrow. If the CIs of two estimates do not overlap, those estimates are sufficiently different that, even taking into account the estimates' uncertainty, the groups can be considered significantly different on that variable at $p < 0.05$ or better.

Similar issues were also most frequently chosen by married soldiers in the 2014 survey (Sims et al., 2017): More than 40 percent of married soldiers indicated that feeling stressed, overwhelmed, or tired was an issue for their own well-being and for their spouses' well-being. Trouble sleeping was also a top issue for married soldiers in 2014, followed by poor communication with coworkers or superiors.

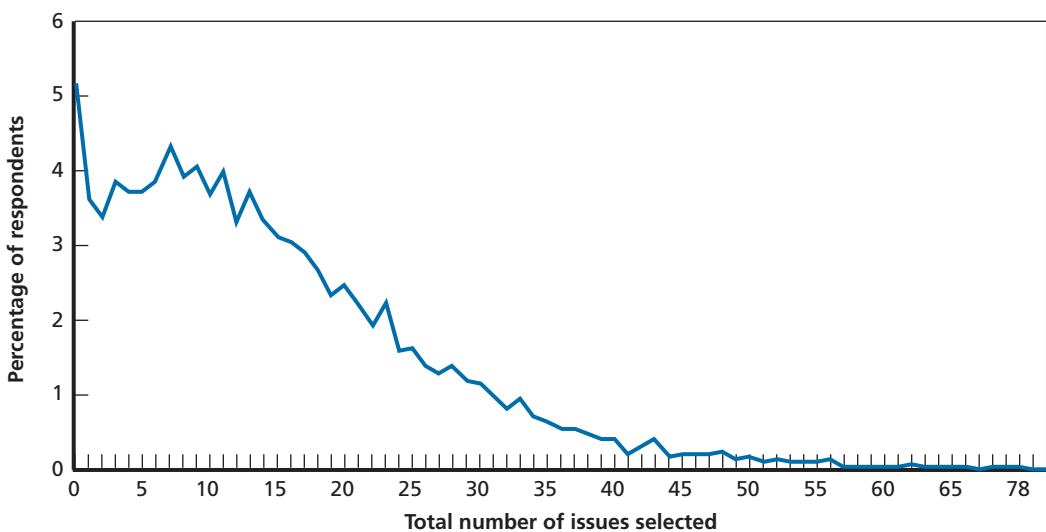
Number of Issues Selected

Figure 3.1 displays a graph of the total number of issues selected across all problem domains. About 5 percent of respondents indicated that they had no issues in any of the problem domains. On average, respondents selected almost 15 issues across all problem domains, indicating that the majority experienced at least some issues in the past year.

Other Issues or Problems

Although we intended the problem domains and the issues listed within each domain to be holistic and capture the most-common types of problems, the list was not comprehensive. Thus, we allowed respondents to report additional information if they experienced a challenge they thought was not included. Respondents could self-categorize an issue into a given domain by listing it as a response to a prompt at the end of every domain listing that asked whether any other challenge relating to the given domain was faced. Respondents also could use an open-ended text box at the end of the problems section to describe any other type of problem they had experienced but not seen in the survey. Because these were not categorized in any way, we examined these text responses to see whether they fit within existing themes (i.e., problem domains) or represented a new theme. Two coders reviewed the responses, developed a set of guidelines about the types of responses to categorize within each problem domain, and identified a new theme (difficulty finding suitable employment) that warranted representation as a new problem domain. This new theme was sufficiently different thematically from

Figure 3.1
Number of Issues Selected Across Problem Domains



NOTES: $N = 8,275$. Percentages were weighted to be representative of the population.

other available options (including “finding a job that pays me enough or offers me enough hours”) in the sense that it encompassed finding work suited to the specific skill sets and skill levels that spouses possessed. One person then coded the full set of responses for those nominated as top problems so that these could be incorporated into the analyses in the report.¹ The addition of only the one substantive theme suggests that, in general, we were able to capture the breadth of challenges spouses faced.

What Were the Top Problem Domains Prioritized by Spouses?

After respondents selected issues within all the problem domains, those who indicated problems in more than two domains were asked to choose the two domains they thought contained “the most significant types of problems” they had dealt with in the past year. Although the number of issues reported within a problem domain measures the diversity of problems spouses face within each domain, the ranking of a domain indexes the most-important problem domains spouses faced in the past year.

As shown in Table 3.2, the most commonly selected problem domain was *work-life balance*: experiencing difficulty balancing the responsibilities of work—including childcare and educational demands—and home life. Around 31 percent of respondents chose this problem domain as one of their top two most important problems, and 26 percent chose problems with *military practices and culture* as a top two problem. *Own well-being*, *relationship problems*, and *health care system problems* were the next most frequently chosen top problems experienced in the past year.

Recall that, overall, 5 percent of Army spouses indicated that they experienced no issues and hence no problems in the past year. Although our focus is generally on how problems are managed, we did want to further explore what characteristics might influence whether spouses reported having no problems in the prior year. As with other subgroup analyses described in detail below, we included the following sociodemographic characteristics in a multiple regression model to explore their influence: employment status, presence of dependent children, housing location, urbanicity of installation, soldier's pay grade, and whether the soldier deployed in the past year. (See Table 2.2 for further details on these variables.) The percentage of spouses with no problems significantly differed by the spouse's employment status and by the soldier's pay grade. Among spouses who were unemployed and not looking for work, 6 percent

¹ Out of 864 “other problems” entries, 832 were categorized under one of the existing problem domains, and 32 were unable to be categorized because they were not clearly interpretable or did not describe a problem. Out of all entries, *military practices and culture* problems were the most frequent, with 29 percent (e.g., unpredictable schedules, lack of information for moving, problems with soldier's leadership), while 16 percent were categorized as difficulty finding suitable employment (e.g., difficulty finding a job in career field, not being able to advance professionally within time at a given location). In the remainder of the report, these successfully categorized “other problems” entries are treated as members of the problem domains in which they have been categorized.

Table 3.2
Percentage of Respondents Choosing Each Problem Domain as a Top-Two Problem

Problem Domain	Percentage	95% CI
Work-life balance	31.2	30.2, 32.3
Military practices and culture	26.1	25.1, 27.1
Own well-being	23.6	22.7, 24.6
Relationship problems	22.7	21.8, 23.7
Health care system problems	21.7	20.8, 22.7
Soldier's well-being	19.7	18.8, 20.6
Financial or legal problems	19.3	18.4, 20.2
Household management	14.1	13.3, 14.8
Child well-being	12.5	11.8, 13.2
No problems	5.0	4.5, 5.5
Trouble finding suitable employment ^a	1.5	1.3, 1.8
Other problems	0.2	0.1, 0.3

^a Problem was a common theme coded by researchers from write-in responses to the "other problems" response.

NOTES: $N = 8,275$. Percentages were weighted to be representative of the population. CIs help convey the uncertainty that is found in any estimate. For the 95 percent CIs that we report, if we measured the same variables in the same way from the same population, in 95 percent of those samples, our results would fall within the upper and lower bounds we report. For analyses with larger sample sizes, our estimates can be more precise, and our CIs may be quite narrow. If the CIs of two estimates do not overlap, those estimates are sufficiently different that, even taking into account the estimates' uncertainty, the groups can be considered significantly different on that variable at $p < 0.05$ or better.

indicated that they had no problems in the past year, which is significantly higher than spouses employed part time (3 percent) and spouses who were unemployed and looking for work (4 percent). Spouses employed full time did not significantly differ from the other groups (5 percent with no problems). Among pay grade groups, spouses of junior officers were less likely to indicate that they had no problems (3 percent) than were spouses of junior and senior enlisted soldiers (6 and 5 percent, respectively). Spouses of senior officers did not significantly differ from the other groups (4 percent).

Did Top Problem Type Differ by Subgroup Characteristics?

To answer the question of whether sociodemographic characteristics of the spouse or the soldier were related to the types of problems the respondent prioritized, we examined multiple regression models that included the characteristics listed above. (See Table 2.2 for further details on those variables.) Below, we focus on the statistically

Married soldiers in the 2014 survey reported the same two top problems, but *military practices and culture* was the most frequently chosen top problem for 2014 married soldiers, and *work-life balance* was the second most frequently chosen top problem. These were followed by *health care system problems*, *soldier's well-being*, and *own well-being*. *Relationship problems* was the seventh most frequently chosen top problem among 2014 married soldiers.

significant characteristics influencing the selection of a given problem domain as one of the two most important in the past year.

Characteristics of the Spouse and Family

We first examined differences in problem type by the spouse's employment status and presence of dependent children. As shown in Table 3.3, significant differences by spouse employment status emerged across most of the problem domains. Many of these significant differences were between spouses who were unemployed and looking for work and those who were unemployed and not looking for work. Compared with spouses who were unemployed and looking for work, spouses who were unemployed and *not* looking for work were more likely to choose *own well-being*, *household management*, and *health care system problems*, and they were less likely to choose *relationship problems* and *financial or legal problems*. In addition, those spouses who were employed part or full time were more likely to choose *household management* and less likely to choose *financial or legal problems* as a top two problem than spouses who were unemployed and looking. Finally, those who were employed full time were more likely to choose *work-life balance* as a top two problem than were spouses who were unemployed and looking for work.

For presence of dependent children, those spouses with dependent children were less likely to choose *military practices and culture*, *own well-being*, and *soldier's well-being* as a top two problem domain than were spouses without dependent children. Spouses with children were more likely to choose *household management* as a top problem than spouses without children. These differences remained significant after controlling for child age, spouse age, and the soldier's number of years of service.

Characteristics of the Household Location

The regression models also included characteristics of the spouse's household location: how far the spouse lived from the soldier's post and whether the installation is located in a midsize city, rural location, or urban location. As shown in Table 3.4, the farther spouses lived from post, the more likely they were to choose *relationship problems* as a top problem and the less likely they were to choose *work-life balance* and *household*

Table 3.3
Probability of Choosing Each Problem Domain as a Top Two Problem Relative to the Reference Group, by Spouse and Family Characteristics

Characteristic	Military Practices and Culture	Work-Life Balance	Own Well-Being	Household Management	Relationship Problems	Health Care System Problems	Financial or Legal Problems	Soldier's Well-Being	Child Well-Being
Spouse employment status									
Unemployed, looking for work ^a	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Unemployed, not looking for work			21% ↑	54% ↑	19% ↓	30% ↑	51% ↓		
Employed part-time				47% ↑			31% ↓		
Employed full time		29% ↑		48% ↑			41% ↓		
Presence of dependent children									
No dependent children ^a	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Has dependent children	25% ↓		24% ↓	27% ↑				21% ↓	

^a The reference groups for the analysis.

NOTES: $N = 8,275$. The percentages in the table represent risk ratios relative to the reference group for significant differences (blank cells indicate no significant difference). Risk ratios can be interpreted as the percentage that the group is more or less likely to experience the problem relative to the reference group, which is denoted by arrows up (more likely than the reference group) or down (less likely than the reference group).

Table 3.4

Probability of Choosing Each Problem Domain as a Top Two Problem Relative to the Reference Group, by Characteristics of the Household Location

Characteristic	Military Practices and Culture	Work-Life Balance	Own Well-Being	Household Management	Relationship Problems	Health Care System Problems	Financial or Legal Problems	Soldier's Well-Being	Child Well-Being
Distance from post (estimate of the effect)		5% ↓		9% ↓	11% ↑				
Urbanicity of installation									
Midsize ^a	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Rural									
Urban									

^a The reference group for the analysis.

NOTES: $N = 8,275$. The percentages in the table represent risk ratios relative to the reference group for significant differences (blank cells indicate no significant difference). Risk ratios can be interpreted as the percentage that the group is more or less likely to experience the problem relative to the reference group, which is denoted by arrows up (more likely than the reference group) or down (less likely than the reference group).

management. Post urbanicity was not significantly associated with choice of top problem domain.²

Characteristics of the Soldier

Finally, the regression models included characteristics associated with a spouse's soldier: the soldier's pay grade group and whether the soldier had been deployed in the past year. As shown in Table 3.5, there were several differences in top problem domain by soldier pay grade. Spouses of junior enlisted soldiers (E1–E4) were more likely to choose *military practices and culture* as a top problem than were spouses of senior enlisted soldiers or senior officers. Spouses of junior enlisted soldiers did not differ

² These differences held after controlling for separation from the soldier, with the exception of choosing *household management* as a top problem, suggesting that there is something about distance from the post itself in many cases, and the effects are not driven solely by spouses' distance from their soldiers.

Table 3.5
Probability of Choosing Each Problem Domain as a Top Two Problem Relative to the Reference Group, by Characteristics of the Soldier

Characteristic	Military Practices and Culture	Work-Life Balance	Own Well-Being	Household Management	Relationship Problems	Health Care System Problems	Financial or Legal Problems	Soldier's Well-Being	Child Well-Being
Pay grade									
E1–E4 ^a	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
E5–E9	19% ↓	14% ↑				44% ↑	27% ↓		54% ↑
O1–O3		47% ↑			34% ↓	54% ↑	54% ↓	20% ↓	49% ↑
O4+	31% ↓	39% ↑		45% ↑	41% ↓	47% ↑	60% ↓		103% ↑
Soldier deployed in the past year									
Not deployed ^a	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Deployed					23% ↑			13% ↓	

^a The reference groups for the analysis.

NOTES: $N = 8,275$. The percentages in the table represent risk ratios relative to the reference group for significant differences (blank cells indicate no significant difference). Risk ratios can be interpreted as the percentage that the group is more or less likely to experience the problem relative to the reference group, which is denoted by arrows up (more likely than the reference group) or down (less likely than the reference group).

from spouses of junior officers, perhaps reflecting a general problem adjusting to Army culture and practices among spouses of soldiers who are relatively new to Army life. Spouses of junior enlisted soldiers were more likely to choose *relationship problems* as a top two problem than those of junior or senior officers and did not significantly differ from spouses of senior enlisted soldiers. These differences held after controlling for years of marriage, suggesting that there is something about being a spouse of a junior enlisted soldier that is associated with increased incidence of important relationship problems other than just being newly married.

Spouses of junior enlisted soldiers were also more likely to choose *financial or legal problems* as a top two problem than were spouses in any other pay grade group. Just more than one-quarter of spouses of junior enlisted soldiers chose *financial or*

legal problems, making it the third most common problem domain among this group. Although not shown in Table 3.5, post hoc comparisons revealed that spouses of senior enlisted soldiers were significantly more likely to choose *financial or legal problems* as a top two problem (19 percent) than were spouses of junior or senior officers, who did not significantly differ from one another (11 and 10 percent, respectively). In addition, spouses of junior enlisted soldiers were more likely to choose *soldier's well-being* as a top problem than spouses of junior officers, and spouses of junior enlisted soldiers were less likely to choose *child well-being* as a top problem than spouses in any other pay grade group.

Replicating past research on the relationship between deployments and relationship satisfaction (Karney and Trail, 2017; Riviere et al., 2012), spouses of soldiers who deployed in the past year were more likely to choose *relationship problems* as a top problem than those who did not experience a deployment in the past year. Finally, spouses of soldiers who deployed in the past year were less likely to choose *soldier's well-being* as a top problem.

How Severe Were Top Problems?

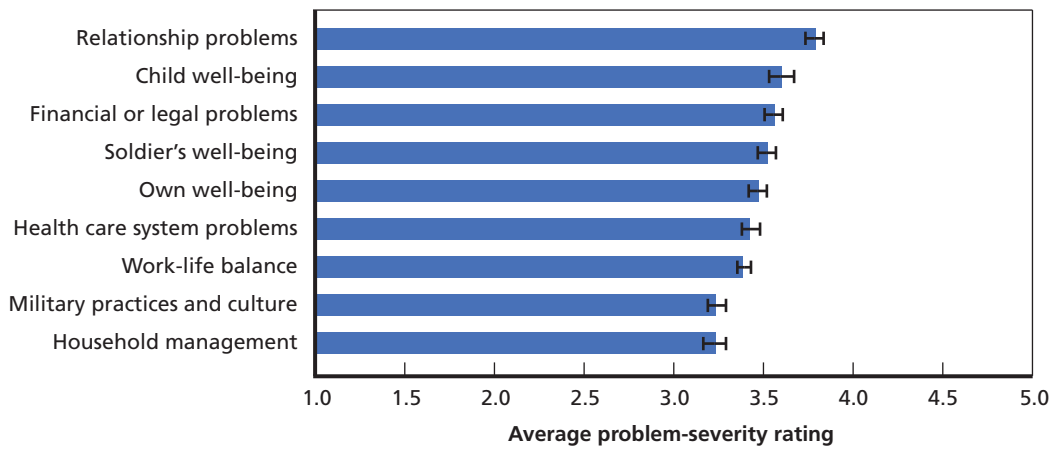
Although respondents chose the problem domains they felt were the “most significant” for them, not all problems have an equal impact on one’s life. An extreme example would be comparing multiple debilitating injuries from a car accident to having a long commute to work. Both are problems that people may have to deal with in their lives, and both can have a significant impact on day-to-day life. However, the former can more drastically change one’s life, make common activities more difficult, and have more-extreme consequences for physical and mental health than the latter, which would usually be more of an annoyance and daily hassle. Thus, we sought to quantify the extent of the perceived impact of spouses’ top problems on their daily lives by asking respondents to rate the severity of their top problems.

For each problem domain that spouses chose as one of their top problems, we asked respondents to rate the severity of the problem in the past year along three dimensions—interference with daily life, emotional impact, and problem severity “at its worst”—on a five-point scale, with higher numbers indicating greater problem severity. All three ratings were highly correlated with one another,³ so we averaged scores across items within each chosen top problem to form a composite indicator of overall problem severity.

As shown in Figure 3.2, *relationship problems* was rated as the most severe by spouses who chose this problem domain as one of their top problems (average rating = 3.8 on a scale from 1 to 5, with higher scores indicating more-severe problems), and

³ Cronbach’s alpha was 0.86 for ratings of the first problem chosen as a top problem and 0.89 for ratings of the second problem chosen as a top problem. Alphas above 0.80 are considered to indicate that the items are highly reliable.

Figure 3.2
Rated Severity of Problems, by Domain



NOTES: *Ns* ranged from 751 (*other*, not listed in figure) to 2,506 (*work-life balance*). Averages were weighted to be representative of the population. Error bars represent 95 percent CIs of the means. CIs help convey the uncertainty that is found in any estimate. For the 95 percent CIs that we report, if we measured the same variables in the same way from the same population, in 95 percent of those samples, our results would fall within the upper and lower bounds we report. For analyses with larger sample sizes, our estimates can be more precise, and our CIs may be quite narrow. If the CIs of two estimates do not overlap, those estimates are sufficiently different that, even taking into account the estimates' uncertainty, the groups can be considered significantly different on that variable at $p < 0.05$ or better.

this rating was significantly higher than ratings of other problem domains, as shown by nonoverlapping CIs. A cluster of problem domains had the next highest ratings for severity: *child well-being*, *financial or legal problems*, *soldier's well-being*, and *own well-being*. *Health care system problems* and *work-life balance* had slightly lower ratings for severity, while *household management* and *military practices and culture* had the lowest severity ratings (average ratings were 3.2 for both), significantly lower than for other problem domains.

Did Ratings of Problem Severity Differ by Sociodemographic Subgroup Characteristics?

Analyses revealed significant sociodemographic subgroup differences in problem severity by spouses' employment status, distance from soldiers' military post, and soldier's pay grade. Regardless of problem type, spouses who were unemployed and looking for work reported greater problem severity (mean = 3.6) than spouses who were employed full time (mean = 3.5) or who were unemployed and not looking for work (mean = 3.4). Spouses employed part time were not significantly different from the other groups (mean = 3.5). The significant trend for distance from post was that the farther spouses lived from post, the greater the reported severity of their problems. Finally, spouses of junior and senior enlisted soldiers reported greater problem severity (means = 3.5 for both) than spouses of junior or senior officers (means = 3.3 for both).

Summary of Findings Regarding Issues and Problems

When asked to indicate the issues they faced in the past year, Army spouses' most frequently chosen issues were their own feelings of being stressed, overwhelmed, or tired, followed by their soldier's feelings of being stressed, overwhelmed, or tired. Other common issues were feeling lonely or bored, and about 35 percent of spouses indicated that they had trouble navigating the system when they needed help. When asked to prioritize the most-significant problems they faced in the past year, the top problem domains chosen by spouses were *work-life balance*, *military practices and culture*, and *own well-being*, with about 30 percent of spouses having difficulty balancing work and home life, and around one-quarter having difficulty with some aspect of military culture.

Among sociodemographic subgroups, spouses who were unemployed and looking for work and spouses of junior enlisted soldiers were more likely to prioritize problems in the *financial or legal problems* domain. Spouses who were employed full time were more likely to prioritize problems in the *work-life balance* domain than spouses who were unemployed, and spouses of officers and those who lived closer to base were more likely to prioritize problems with *work-life balance*. These differences are perhaps not surprising and serve to confirm a narrative in which spouse employment is necessary for the financial stability of the family unit but brings with it the need to balance the demands of employment with home life.

In addition, the farther spouses lived from their soldiers' military post the more likely they were to prioritize *relationship problems*. The spouses' soldiers' pay grade and deployment status also influenced prioritization of *relationship problems*. Spouses whose soldiers had deployed in the past year were more likely to prioritize *relationship problems*, and spouses of junior enlisted soldiers were more likely to prioritize *relationship problems* than spouses of officers. Although *relationship problems* was not one of the most frequently chosen problem domains, on average, *relationship problems* was rated as the most severe among those who chose this problem as a top-two problem domain.

Finally, spouses of both junior enlisted and junior officers were more likely to prioritize problems with *military practices and culture*, perhaps reflecting a difficulty adjusting to Army life. Taken together, these results suggest that the pattern of significant problems experienced by spouses differs by their employment status, distance from post, and their soldiers' pay grade. As noted in Chapter Five, many of these problems will be resolved through use of military or nonmilitary resources, but it is worth considering additional resources or outreach strategies that serve to prevent these problems from occurring in the first place. These strategies should take into account the relative prevalence of problems among the different subgroups, particularly spouses who are unemployed and looking for work, live far from post, or who are married to junior enlisted soldiers.

What Were Respondents' Needs for Addressing Their Problems?

For each of the top two problem domains, respondents were prompted to select what types of help or support they needed most to address these problems. Respondents could choose as many needs as they wanted, but if they chose more than two needs for any one top problem, we asked them to choose the two they thought “were the greatest, most significant needs.” Table 3.6 shows the list of needs that respondents could choose from, including a write-in for “other” needs not listed,⁴ displayed in order of frequency chosen as a top need for one or both problems.

As shown in Table 3.6, emotional or social support was the most frequently reported need by spouses. Slightly less than one-third of spouses indicated that they needed emotional or social support to help them cope with their problems. Activities, professional counseling, general information, and advice or education were the next most frequently reported needs, with about 27 to 29 percent of spouses reporting one or more of these needs. Specific information and an advocate were less frequently reported needs, with just less than one-quarter of spouses reporting these needs, followed by a helping hand. Examination of the write-in responses for “other” needs revealed a theme of needing better service availability or quality from resources, which was written in by about 8 percent of respondents. Other themes of write-in responses not included in the list of needs on the survey were needing a change in military rules or policies (around 3 percent of respondents) and the perception that the outcome of the problem was outside the direct control of the respondent (around 1 percent of respondents). About 8 percent of respondents wrote in other needs that did not fit within any of these categories.

Were There Spouses with Problems but No Needs, and Why?

When asked to report their needs for each of their top problems, about 18 percent of respondents reported that they had no needs for any of their problems. To better understand why spouses would report that they or their soldiers or children had no need for help with the problems they had identified, we asked a follow-up question for respondents who indicated no needs for one or both of their problems ($N = 2,895$). Almost 65 percent of spouses who reported no needs responded that they had already

⁴ Needs written in as “other” needs were examined by a researcher and recoded. To represent these other needs in our analysis of top needs, we categorized these “other top need” entries based on the most relevant need category from the survey following a similar process to that undertaken for “other problems,” described earlier. Three new themes were identified in addition to extant categories (need for an outcome without indication of how it could be achieved, need for better service availability or quality, and need for a change in military rules or policies). Out of all 1,732 “other top need” entries, 660 were categorized under one of the need categories, and 120 were unable to be categorized because of not being clearly interpretable or not describing a need. The most-frequent codes were 34 percent as a need for better service availability or quality (e.g., quality of medical health services, housing), 15 percent as a need for a change in military rules or policies (e.g., more predictable work schedule, vacation time), and 11 percent as a need for a helping hand (e.g., time to move into a home).

Table 3.6
Most Frequently Reported Top Needs Among Those Who Indicated a Need

Need	Percentage	95% CI
Emotional or social support	32.8	31.7, 34.0
Activities	29.3	28.1, 30.4
Professional counseling	27.7	26.5, 28.8
General information	27.6	26.4, 28.7
Advice or education	27.2	26.1, 28.4
Specific information	23.3	22.3, 24.4
An advocate	22.2	21.2, 23.3
Helping hand	13.3	12.4, 14.2
Other	8.0	7.4, 8.7
Better service availability or quality ^a	8.0	7.3, 8.6
Change in military rules or policies ^a	3.3	2.9, 3.8
Outcome outside direct control ^a	1.4	1.1, 1.6

^a These were common themes coded by researchers from write-in responses to the "other" needs response.

NOTES: $N = 6,449$. Percentages weighted to be representative of the population. CIs help convey the uncertainty that is found in any estimate. For the 95 percent CIs that we report, if we measured the same variables in the same way from the same population, in 95 percent of those samples, our results would fall within the upper and lower bounds we report. For analyses with larger sample sizes, our estimates can be more precise, and the CIs may be quite narrow. If the CIs of two estimates do not overlap, those estimates are sufficiently different that, even taking into account the estimates' uncertainty, the groups are significantly different on that variable.

solved (32 percent) or were currently solving (32 percent) one or both of their problems by themselves. Just over 12 percent of spouses who reported no needs indicated that the problem went away on its own (6 percent) or that they expect it to go away on its own (6 percent), while 30 percent indicated that "there's nothing anyone can do to help solve the problem." Almost 10 percent of spouses wrote in another reason why they had no needs for one or both of their problems.

Did the Choice of Top Needs Differ by Sociodemographic Subgroup Characteristics?

To answer the question of whether sociodemographic characteristics of the spouses or their soldiers were related to the types of needs they prioritized for their problems, we examined multiple regression models using the same characteristics as earlier. Below we focus on the statistically significant characteristics influencing the selection of a given type of need.

Characteristics of the Spouse and Family

Statistically significant differences by spouse employment status and presence of dependent children in the household are shown in Table 3.7. Compared with spouses who were unemployed and looking for work, those who were unemployed and not looking for work or who were employed part time were less likely to indicate a need for general information. In addition, those who

For married soldiers from the 2014 survey (Sims et al., 2017), 20 percent or more of respondents chose general information, professional counseling, activities, and advice or education as one of their top needs, followed by an advocate and emotional or social support (about 16 percent each).

were unemployed and not looking for work were less likely to indicate a need for a helping hand than those who were unemployed and looking for work. After examining differences by the presence of dependent children, we found that those spouses with dependent children were less likely to indicate a need for general information, specific information, or advice and were much more likely to indicate a need for a helping hand than spouses without dependent children.

Characteristics of the Household Location

No statistically significant differences in type of needs were observed by characteristics of the household location (distance of household from post or urbanicity of the installation).

Characteristics of the Soldier

As shown in Table 3.8, examining the needs of spouses by their soldiers' pay grades and whether their soldiers had been deployed in the past year revealed several significant differences by pay grade and one difference by deployment status: Spouses of soldiers who had deployed in the past year were more likely to indicate a need for emotional or social support than were spouses whose soldier had not deployed. For pay grade differences, spouses of junior enlisted soldiers were more likely to indicate a need for general information and for a helping hand than spouses of soldiers in any of the other pay grades. In addition, compared with spouses of junior enlisted soldiers, spouses of junior officers were more likely to indicate a need for activities and less likely to indicate a need for professional counseling. Finally, spouses of senior enlisted soldiers were less likely to indicate a need for specific information than spouses of junior enlisted soldiers.

What Were the Most Commonly Identified Pairs of Needs and Top Problems?

We also examined the frequency of individual problem-need pairs—that is, how often specific needs and problems were reported together by respondents. The ten most frequent problem-need pairs are shown in Table 3.9. The most selected need overall,

Table 3.7
Probability of Each Type of Need Relative to the Reference Group, by Spouse and Family Characteristics

Characteristic	Emotional or Social Support	Activities	Professional Counseling	General Information	Advice or Education	Specific Information	Advocate	Helping Hand
Spouse employment status								
Unemployed, looking for work ^a	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Unemployed, not looking for work				15% ↓				23% ↓
Employed part time				24% ↓				
Employed full time								
Presence of dependent children								
No dependent children ^a	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Has dependent children				23% ↓	12% ↓	18% ↓		134% ↑

^a The reference groups for the analysis.

NOTES: $N = 6,238$. The percentages in the table represent risk ratios relative to the reference group for significant differences (blank cells indicate no significant difference). Risk ratios can be interpreted as the percentage that the group is more or less likely to experience the problem relative to the reference group, which is denoted by arrows up (more likely than the reference group) or down (less likely than the reference group).

emotional or social support, was frequently paired with *relationship problems*, *own well-being*, and *soldier's well-being*. Professional counseling paired with *relationship problems* and *own well-being*. Activities often paired with *work-life balance* and *own well-being*, while the need for information (general or specific) paired with *military practices and culture*.

Examining problem-need pairs another way, Figure 3.3 displays the frequency of prioritized needs for the three most chosen problem domains. For *work-life balance* and *military practices and culture*, it is clear that one need predominates within the problem domain, whereas for *own well-being*, spouses were somewhat more likely to choose a variety of options in terms of needs. Just over 9 percent of spouses chose activities as a

Table 3.8
Probability of Each Type of Need Relative to the Reference Group, by Characteristics of the Soldier

Characteristic	Emotional or Social Support	Activities	Professional Counseling	General Information	Advice or Education	Specific Information	Advocate	Helping Hand
Pay grade								
E1–E4 ^a	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
E5–E9				27% ↓		18% ↓		41% ↓
O1–O3		25% ↑	24% ↓	28% ↓				56% ↓
O4+	22% ↓			30% ↓				71% ↓
Soldier deployed in the past year								
Not deployed ^a	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Deployed	13% ↑							

^a The reference groups for the analysis.

NOTES: $N = 6,238$. The percentages in the table represent risk ratios relative to the reference group for significant differences (blank cells indicate no significant difference). Risk ratios can be interpreted as the percentage that the group is more or less likely to experience the problem relative to the reference group, which is denoted by arrows up (more likely than the reference group) or down (less likely than the reference group).

need for *work-life balance* problems. The next most frequent need for *work-life balance* problems was social or emotional support (6 percent). Around 9 percent of spouses chose general information, specific information, or both as a need for *military practices and culture* problems. Advice, activities, and an advocate were the next most frequent needs for *military practices and culture* problems, at 4 percent each. Finally, more than 10 percent of spouses chose social or emotional support for *own well-being*, and around 7 percent chose activities, professional counseling, or both.

To determine whether sociodemographic subgroup characteristics might be related to the choice of a given need, given a particular problem, such as *military practices and culture*, we analyzed subgroup differences for the most common problem-need pairs shown in Figure 3.3. Analyses revealed significant subgroup differences for the top needs related to *military practices and culture* but no significant subgroup differences for *work-life balance* plus activities and *own well-being* plus social support. Among spouses who chose *military practices and culture* as a top problem, spouses of junior enlisted soldiers were significantly more likely to choose general information as a top need (45 percent) than spouses of soldiers in the other pay grades (ranging from 23 to 31 percent). In addition, among spouses who chose *military practices and culture* as

Table 3.9

Percentage of Respondents Choosing Each Pairing of Top Problem and Top Type of Help Needed: The Ten Most Frequent Problem-Need Pairs

Top Needs Associated with Top Problems: Problem-Need Pairs	Percentage	95% CI
Relationship problems + professional counseling	12.2	11.3, 13.0
Relationship problems + emotional or social support	10.5	9.8, 11.3
Own well-being + emotional or social support	10.4	9.6, 11.2
Work-life balance + activities	9.4	8.7, 10.2
Military practices and culture + general information	9.2	8.5, 9.9
Military practices and culture + specific information	8.9	8.2, 9.7
Own well-being + activities	7.5	6.8, 8.1
Own well-being + professional counseling	6.8	6.2, 7.4
Health care system problems + general information	6.5	5.9, 7.1
Soldier's well-being + professional counseling	6.4	5.8, 7.0

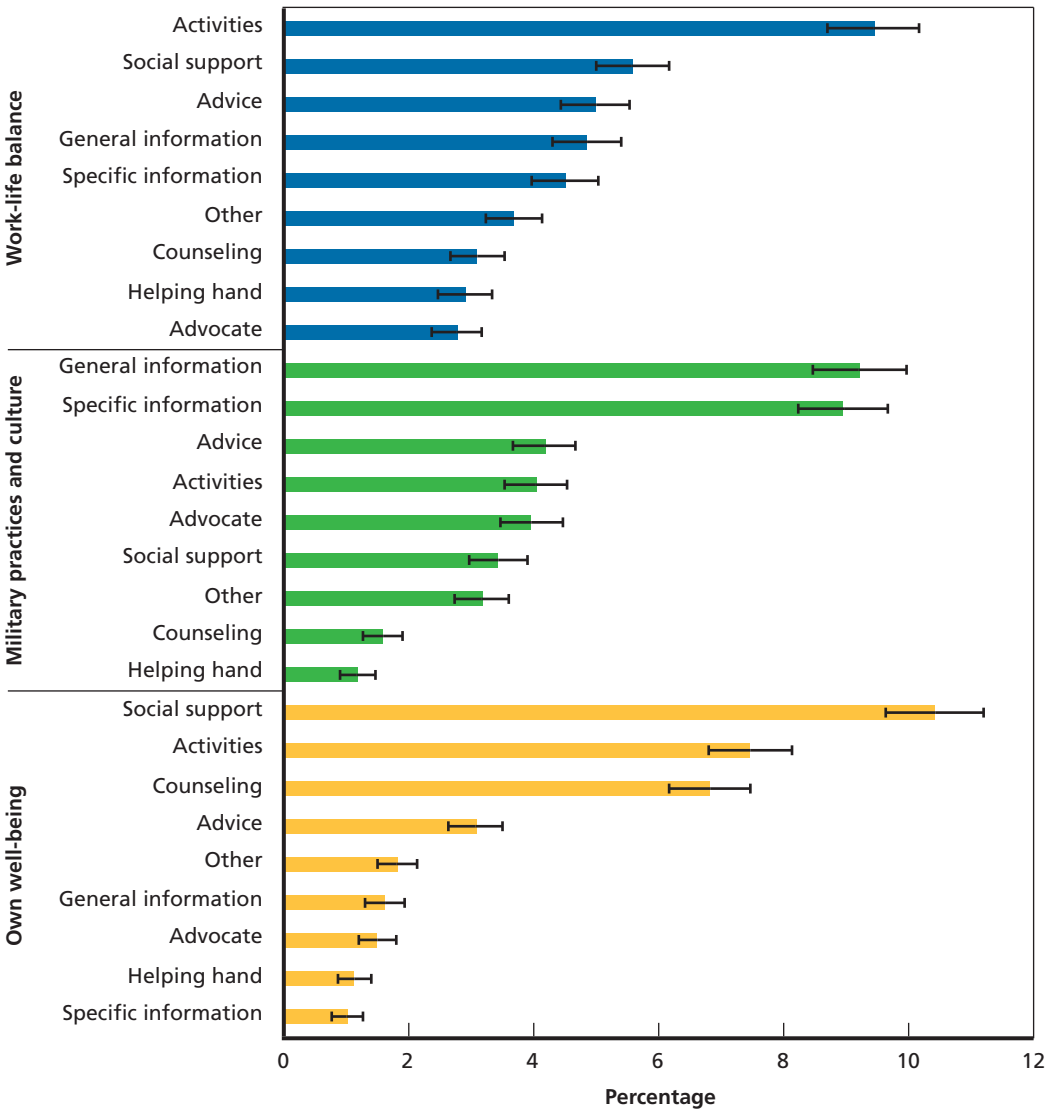
NOTES: $N = 6,449$. Percentages were weighted to be representative of the population. CIs help convey the uncertainty that is found in any estimate. For the 95 percent CIs that we report, if we measured the same variables in the same way from the same population, in 95 percent of those samples, our results would fall within the upper and lower bounds we report. For analyses with larger sample sizes, our estimates can be more precise, and the CIs may be quite narrow. If the CIs of two estimates do not overlap, those estimates are sufficiently different that, even taking into account the estimates' uncertainty, the groups can be considered significantly different on that variable at $p < 0.05$ or better.

a top problem, spouses without children were more likely than those with children to choose specific information as a top need (39 versus 31 percent, respectively); spouses whose soldier was deployed in the past year were more likely to choose specific information as a top need (40 percent) than those who did not experience a deployment in the past year (30 percent).

Summary of Findings About Top Needs and Needs Linked to Problems

Army spouses most often chose emotional or social support as a top need for help with their problems, and it was cited frequently as a need for *relationship problems*, *own well-being*, and *work-life balance*. Activities were a top need for many spouses, especially for *work-life balance* and *own well-being*. Professional counseling was another common top need for *own well-being*, and general information and specific information were top needs for problems with *military practices and culture*. Also, emotional and social support and, especially, counseling were frequently reported as needs for *relationship problems*. Most who said that they had no needs indicated that they had solved or were solving the problem on their own, but a sizable percentage (30 percent) thought that there was nothing anyone could do to help solve the problem.

Figure 3.3
Percentage of Respondents Choosing Each Type of Help as a Top Need, for the Three Most Frequently Reported Top Problem Domains



NOTES: $N = 6,449$. Percentages weighted to be representative of the population. Error bars represent 95 percent CIs. CIs help convey the uncertainty that is found in any estimate. For the 95 percent CIs that we report, if we measured the same variables in the same way from the same population, in 95 percent of those samples, our results would fall within the upper and lower bounds we report. For analyses with larger sample sizes, our estimates can be more precise, and the CIs may be quite narrow. If the CIs of two estimates do not overlap, those estimates are sufficiently different that, even taking into account the estimates' uncertainty, the groups can be considered significantly different on that variable at $p < 0.05$ or better.

Married soldiers from the 2014 survey (Sims et al., 2017) reported similar top needs for their top problems, with some notable differences. For *work-life balance*, 10 percent of married soldiers chose activities as one of their top needs, while general information was chosen by 5 percent. General information was also chosen as the top need by married 2014 soldiers for *military practices and culture* (11 percent). For *own well-being*, the most frequently chosen needs of married 2014 soldiers were professional counseling (7 percent) and social or emotional support (6 percent).

In terms of sociodemographic subgroup characteristics that relate to the needs chosen for top problems, those who were unemployed and looking for work were more likely to indicate they needed a helping hand to help them manage their problems. Spouses with dependent children and spouses of junior enlisted soldiers were also more likely to indicate that they needed a helping hand. These findings perhaps represent the financial burden experienced by spouses who are looking for work and those who are experiencing a financial strain associated with having children or being the spouse of a junior enlisted soldier.

Interestingly, spouses with children were less likely than those without children to indicate a need for either general or specific information. A lower likelihood of needing specific information was particularly the case if their problem was *military practices and culture*. Spouses of junior enlisted soldiers were more likely to indicate a need for both general and specific information. Because of the nature of the analysis, these two findings are independent, suggesting that there is something about having children that is associated with a lesser need for information, and this is independent of the finding that junior enlisted spouses need more information to help them with their problems. This lesser need for information may be related to the natural conduit for community information that spouses with children may have—especially if they use CYS. Spouses of junior enlisted soldiers are both new to the military and, in many cases, lacking such a natural connection. However, the discrepancy may serve to suggest a model for connecting spouses who demonstrate a less robust connection to the military community.

Respondents' Use of Resources to Address Needs

This chapter focuses on exploring what resources spouses reached out to solve their problems and their perceptions of those resources, answering the following questions:

- What were the resources most used by spouses, and were they satisfactory?
- What barriers or facilitators were most prevalent that might explain the resource use?
- Did any sociodemographic characteristics of Army spouses or their soldiers affect how they interacted with resources, either within or outside the military?

What Resources Did Spouses Use to Try to Meet Their Needs?

For each problem-need pair, respondents indicated the resources they had contacted in the past year to help them meet the need. Respondents could select up to 12 military resources, such as their spouses' chain of command or Army MWR resources, or respondents could write in another military resource not included on the list. Respondents could also select up to 11 nonmilitary (i.e., civilian) resources, such as private off-post childcare or personal networks outside the military, or respondents could write in another nonmilitary resource not included on the list.

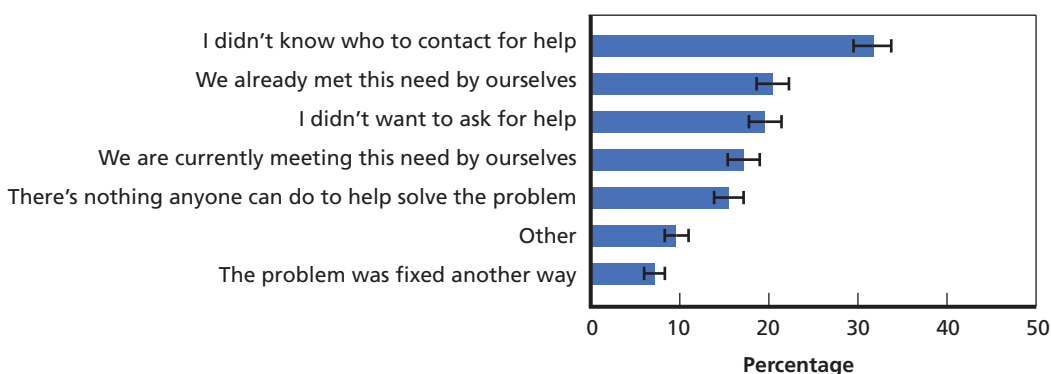
We categorized the "other resource" entries that fell within one of the military or nonmilitary resource categories from the survey. Two coders reviewed the responses and developed a set of guidelines regarding the types of responses to categorize within each resource. One researcher coded responses listed by respondents as "other military resources," and a second researcher coded responses listed by respondents as "other nonmilitary resources." The coding suggested that our lists of resources, designed to be holistic and comprehensive, could reasonably be considered to have met that goal.¹

¹ Out of 1,027 "other military resource" entries, 511 were categorized under one of the military resource categories, 150 were categorized under one of the nonmilitary resource categories (i.e., belonged in the other open-ended text box), 306 were not categorized and remained as "other resources," and 60 did not describe a resource. Out of 689 "other nonmilitary resource" entries, 533 were categorized under one of the nonmilitary resource cat-

In seeking help with their needs, spouses exhibited varied use of resources, both inside and outside the military. Among Army spouses who had problems and needs, 90 percent reported using one or more resources for help with their needs. Among sociodemographic subgroups, the only significant difference in use of resources was by soldier pay grade: Spouses of junior officers were more likely to have used resources to help meet their needs (94 percent) than were spouses of junior or senior enlisted soldiers (90 percent each). In addition, spouses of senior officers were more likely to have used resources to help meet their needs (93 percent) than spouses of senior enlisted soldiers. No other subgroup differences were significant.

For spouses who had problems and needs but did not contact any resources, we included a follow-up question asking why they did not contact anyone for help with their need. As shown in Figure 4.1, the most common response among respondents who did not use resources for one or more of their needs was that they did not know whom to contact for help (32 percent). The next most common responses were that respondents had already met the need themselves, did not want to ask for help, were currently meeting their needs without help, and “there’s nothing anyone can do to help solve the problem.” The least-common responses were that the problem was fixed

Figure 4.1
Reasons Why Army Spouses with Problems and Needs Did Not Contact Resources for Help with One or More of Their Needs



NOTES: The denominator is all respondents who did not contact a resource for one or more of their needs, aggregated across problems and needs. $N = 1,909$. Error bars represent 95 percent CIs. Respondents could check all responses that apply, so percentages do not sum to 100 percent. Percentages were weighted to be representative of the population. CIs help convey the uncertainty that is found in any estimate. For the 95 percent CIs that we report, if we measured the same variables in the same way from the same population, in 95 percent of those samples, our results would fall within the upper and lower bounds we report. For analyses with larger sample sizes, our estimates can be more precise, and the CIs may be quite narrow. If the CIs of two estimates do not overlap, those estimates are sufficiently different that, even taking into account the estimates' uncertainty, the groups can be considered significantly different on that variable at $p < 0.05$ or better.

gories, 20 were categorized under one of the military resource categories (i.e., belonged in the other open-ended text box), 119 were not categorized and remained as “other resources,” and 17 did not describe a resource.

some other way or some “other” write-in response. Some of these responses suggest that resources were not sought because other solutions were available, but other responses, such as not knowing whom to contact for help, suggest that potentially solvable problems could be persisting because of a lack of information.

How Many Resources Did Spouses Use for Help?

On average, spouses reported reaching out to 4.4 resources per problem across needs (ranging from 0 to 46; 95 percent CI: 4.2, 4.5). Spouses of junior officers used more resources per problem (mean = 4.9) than junior or senior enlisted soldiers (means = 4.2 and 4.3, respectively) or senior officers (mean = 4.5). The total number of resources used per problem also significantly differed by housing location; there was a significant trend in which spouses who lived farther from the installations where their soldiers were posted tended to use fewer resources (e.g., mean resource use for spouses living on post was 4.6, and mean resource use for spouses living more than 40 miles away from post was 4.0).

Did Spouse Use of Military and Nonmilitary Resources for Help Differ?

Among spouses who used resources, we calculated whether a respondent had used one or more military or nonmilitary resources. Almost 71 percent of spouses who used resources contacted both military and nonmilitary resources for help, while 15 percent contacted military resources only and 14 percent contacted nonmilitary resources only. The high rate of military resource use suggests that civilian spouses of Army soldiers heavily rely on the Army to help address pressing problems, although a minority do solely seek solutions elsewhere.

To answer the question of whether sociodemographic characteristics of the spouse or soldier were related to the use of military or nonmilitary resources, we examined logistic multiple regression models using the sociodemographic characteristics discussed in Chapter Two. Although the vast majority of Army spouses contacted one or more military resources for help, those who lived farther from post were significantly less likely to have contacted military resources for help with one or both of their problems. For example, 89 percent of spouses who lived on post contacted military resources for help, while 79 percent of spouses who lived more than 40 miles from post contacted military resources for help. In contrast, spouses who lived farther away from post were significantly *more* likely to contact *nonmilitary* resources for help with one or more of their problems. In addition, spouses of junior officers were more likely to contact nonmilitary resources for help (90 percent) than spouses of junior or senior enlisted soldiers (84 percent for both groups). Spouses of senior officers (88 percent) did not significantly differ from other groups, and no other subgroup differences reached significance.

For married soldiers from the 2014 survey (Sims et al., 2017), a smaller proportion (52 percent) used both military and nonmilitary resources for their top problems, and only 5 percent used only nonmilitary resources. About 26 percent of married 2014 soldiers used only military resources for their top problems.

What Specific Resources Did Spouses Access?

When it comes to the type of resources spouses contacted to help them with their top problems, the most commonly used resource was a military-covered medical provider, followed by military internet resources or official Army social media (see Table 4.1). A spouse's chain of command, ACS, and military mental health care provider were all contacted by 21 to 23 percent of spouses, while Army MWR was contacted by around 19 percent of spouses. An Army FRG was contacted by around 15 percent of spouses. Note that these percentages are based on contacting each resource type for one or more needs for one or both of a spouse's top problems (i.e., we aggregated across problem-solving experiences). However, because spouses could have contacted each resource for a different problem or need not identified by this survey, the percentages do not reflect the overall rate of use of these resources by Army spouses; the percentages reflect only the resources sought for the top needs for spouses' most-pressing problems.

Also shown in Table 4.1 are the percentages of spouses contacting different types of nonmilitary resources for help with their top problems and needs. The most commonly contacted type of nonmilitary resource was spouses' personal networks outside the military. Other military spouses known in person were also a common resource contacted by spouses, followed by nonmilitary internet resources and unofficial social media military networks.

Table 4.1
Resources and Percentage of Spouses Who Used Each Resource for at Least One Problem

Resource Used	Percentage Using Resource for at Least One Problem	95% CI
Military resources		
Military-covered medical provider	42.5	41.2, 43.9
Military internet resources or official Army social media	28.8	27.6, 30.0
Spouse's chain of command	22.5	21.4, 23.6
ACS	21.4	20.3, 22.5
Military mental health care provider	21.1	20.0, 22.1

Table 4.1—Continued

Resource Used	Percentage Using Resource for at Least One Problem	95% CI
Army MWR	18.7	17.7, 19.7
CYS	15.9	14.9, 16.8
Chaplain or members of military religious or spiritual group	15.2	14.3, 16.2
Army FRG	15.0	14.0, 15.9
Military employment resources	14.0	13.1, 14.9
Military education loans or grants	10.4	9.6, 11.2
Other military resource	6.5	5.9, 7.2
AER	4.5	3.9, 5.1
Nonmilitary resources		
Personal networks outside the military	52.0	50.6, 53.3
Other military spouses known in person	42.5	41.2, 43.8
Internet resources	35.2	33.9, 36.5
Unofficial social media military networks	27.9	26.7, 29.1
Religious or spiritual group or leader	19.8	18.7, 20.8
Private clubs, organizations, recreation or fitness centers	19.5	18.5, 20.6
Government or community resources for family services	15.0	14.0, 16.0
Private medical provider	12.8	11.9, 13.7
Private mental health care provider	11.2	10.3, 12.0
Private off-post childcare	11.0	10.2, 11.8
Civilian employer	9.5	8.7, 10.2
Other civilian resource	8.3	7.6, 9.0

NOTES: $N = 5,826$. Percentages were weighted to be representative of the population. CIs help convey the uncertainty that is found in any estimate. For the 95 percent CIs that we report, if we measured the same variables in the same way from the same population, in 95 percent of those samples, our results would fall within the upper and lower bounds we report. For analyses with larger sample sizes, our estimates can be more precise, and the CIs may be quite narrow. If the CIs of two estimates do not overlap, those estimates are sufficiently different that, even taking into account the estimates' uncertainty, the groups can be considered significantly different on that variable at $p < 0.05$ or better.

Did Use of Specific Resources Differ by Sociodemographic Characteristics?

To answer the question of whether sociodemographic characteristics of spouses or their soldiers were related to the resources that spouses accessed for help with their needs, we examined logistic multiple regression models that used the characteristics discussed above. Below, we focus on the statistically significant characteristics influencing the use of each type of military and nonmilitary resource.

Military Resources

Characteristics of the Spouse and Family

Statistically significant differences in resource use by spouse employment status and presence of dependent children in the household are shown in Table 4.2. Compared with spouses in other employment groups, spouses who were unemployed and looking for work were more likely to use ACS and much more likely to use military employment or education resources to help with their top problems and needs. Spouses who were unemployed and looking for work were also more likely to use official military internet resources or CYS than spouses who were unemployed but not looking for work.

In terms of the presence of dependent children, spouses with dependent children were more likely to use ACS and much more likely to use AER than were spouses without dependent children. Spouses with dependent children were also less likely to use their soldiers' chains of command for help with top problems and needs.

Characteristics of the Household Location

Statistically significant differences in use of military resources by characteristics of household location are shown in Table 4.3. The distance from spouses' households to their soldiers' post was significantly related to use of several types of military resources: The farther spouses lived from post, the less likely they were to use ACS, Army MWR, CYS, Army FRG, military employment resources, and AER resources. Many of these relationships were small, but they did show a consistent pattern across several types of resources. Also, spouses who had soldiers stationed at installations near midsize cities were less likely to go to their soldiers' chains of command for help than those stationed near rural or urban areas.

Characteristics of the Soldier

As shown in Table 4.4, examining spouses' use of resources by their soldiers' pay grade groups and whether their soldiers had been deployed in the past year revealed several significant differences. Compared with spouses in other pay grade groups, spouses of junior enlisted soldiers were more likely to use their soldiers' chains of command as a resource, and they were also much more likely to use military education loans or grants and AER than were spouses of soldiers in any of the other pay grade groups. Because

Table 4.2
Probability of Using Each Military Resource Relative to the Reference Group, by Spouse and Family Characteristics

Resource	Spouse Employment Status				Presence of Dependent Children	
	Unemployed, Looking for Work ^a	Unemployed, Not Looking for Work	Employed Part Time	Employed Full Time	No Dependent Children ^a	Has Dependent Children
Military-covered medical provider	—				—	
Military internet resources or official Army social media	—	22% ↓			—	
Spouse's chain of command	—				—	20% ↓
ACS	—	33% ↓	19% ↓	22% ↓	—	21% ↑
Military mental health care provider	—				—	
Army MWR	—				—	
CYS ^b	—	23% ↓			—	
Chaplain or members of military religious or spiritual group	—				—	
Army FRG	—				—	
Military employment resources	—	76% ↓	39% ↓	40% ↓	—	
Military education loans or grants	—	51% ↓	32% ↓	51% ↓	—	
AER	—				—	94% ↑

^a The reference groups for the analysis.

^b The analysis of CYS use controlled for differences in the presence of dependent children among the other demographic groups.

NOTES: $N = 5,667$. Not surprisingly, having dependent children was highly related to use of CYS, although that relationship is not shown in this table. The percentages in the table represent risk ratios relative to the reference group for significant differences (blank cells indicate no significant difference). Risk ratios can be interpreted as the percentage that the group is more or less likely to experience the problem relative to the reference group, which is denoted by arrows up (more likely than the reference group) or down (less likely than the reference group).

Table 4.3
Probability of Using Each Military Resource Relative to the Reference Group, by
Characteristics of the Household

Resource	Distance from Post (Estimate of the Effect)	Urbanicity of Installation		
		Midsized ^a	Rural	Urban
Military-covered medical provider		—		
Military internet resources or official Army social media		—		
Spouse's chain of command		—	19% ↑	15% ↑
ACS	13% ↓	—		
Military mental health care provider		—		
Army MWR	18% ↓	—		
CYS	23% ↓	—		
Chaplain or members of military religious or spiritual group		—		
Army FRG	8% ↓	—		
Military employment resources	7% ↓	—		
Military education loans or grants		—		
AER	11% ↓	—		

^a The reference group for the analysis.

NOTES: $N = 5,667$. The analysis of CYS use controlled for differences in the presence of dependent children among the other demographic groups. The percentages in the table represent risk ratios relative to the reference group for significant differences (blank cells indicate no significant difference). Risk ratios can be interpreted as the percentage that the group is more or less likely to experience the problem relative to the reference group, which is denoted by arrows up (more likely than the reference group) or down (less likely than the reference group).

some military education scholarship programs limit eligibility by pay grade,² it is perhaps not surprising that use of military education loans or grants differed by soldier pay grade. Spouses of junior enlisted soldiers were much less likely to use MWR resources than were spouses of soldiers in any of the other pay grade groups, and spouses of senior enlisted soldiers were less likely to use MWR resources than spouses of junior and senior officers, who did not differ from one another. Compared with spouses of junior officers, spouses of junior enlisted soldiers were more likely to use a military mental health care provider and less likely to use CYS to help with their top problems and needs. Spouses of junior enlisted soldiers and junior officers were more likely

² For example, at the time of the survey, DoD's MyCAA scholarship is limited to spouses of soldiers in the following pay grade groups: E1–E5, W1–W2 (warrant officers), and O1–O2.

Table 4.4
Probability of Using Each Military Resource Relative to the Reference Group, by
Characteristics of the Soldier

Resource	Pay Grade				Soldier Deployed in the Past Year	
	E1–E4 ^a	E5–E9	O1–O3	O4+	Not Deployed ^a	Deployed
Military-covered medical provider	—	20% ↑		24% ↑	—	
Military internet resources or official Army social media	—				—	
Spouse's chain of command	—	31% ↓	33% ↓	51% ↓	—	
ACS	—				—	
Military mental health care provider	—		25% ↓		—	
Army MWR	—	34% ↑	79% ↑	73% ↑	—	
CYS	—		78% ↑		—	25% ↑
Chaplain or members of military religious or spiritual group	—				—	
Army FRG	—	18% ↓		47% ↓	—	60% ↑
Military employment resources	—				—	
Military education loans or grants	—	46% ↓	64% ↓	83% ↓	—	
AER	—	49% ↓	91% ↓	97% ↓	—	

^a The reference group for the analysis.

NOTES: *N* = 5,667. The analysis of CYS use controlled for differences in the presence of dependent children among the other demographic groups. The percentages in the table represent risk ratios relative to the reference group for significant differences (blank cells indicate no significant difference). Risk ratios can be interpreted as the percentage that the group is more or less likely to experience the problem relative to the reference group, which is denoted by arrows up (more likely than the reference group) or down (less likely than the reference group).

to use FRGs for help and less likely to use a military-covered medical provider than spouses of senior enlisted soldiers or senior officers. Use of a military mental health care provider differed by pay grade, with spouses of senior enlisted soldiers more likely to use one (24 percent) than spouses in any of the other pay grades.

Examining deployment status in the past year, spouses whose soldiers had experienced a deployment in the past year were much more likely to have used an FRG for

help than spouses of soldiers who had not experienced a deployment. Those who had experienced a deployment were also more likely to have used CYS than those who had not experienced a deployment.

Nonmilitary Resources

Characteristics of the Spouse and Family

We next examined whether use of nonmilitary resources significantly differed by spouse employment status and presence of dependent children in the household. Results of this analysis are shown in Table 4.5. A few consistent patterns emerged: Compared with spouses who were unemployed and looking for work, spouses who were employed full time were more likely to use a private mental health provider or private off-post childcare and were less likely to use government or community resources for family services to help them with their top problems and needs. Spouses who were unemployed and not looking for work were less likely to use government or community resources for family services and less likely to use private off-post childcare or a (presumably former) employer than those who were unemployed and not looking for work.

In terms of the presence of dependent children, spouses with dependent children were more likely to reach out to a nonmilitary religious or spiritual leader, and they were more likely to reach out to government or community resources for family services than were spouses without dependent children. Spouses with dependent children were also slightly less likely to use nonmilitary internet resources for help with their top problems and needs than were spouses without dependent children.

Characteristics of the Household Location

Statistically significant differences in use of nonmilitary resources by characteristics of the household location are shown in Table 4.6. Perhaps not surprisingly, distance from post had a small but consistent pattern of relationships with use of several types of nonmilitary resources. It is worth noting that, although spouses who lived farther from post were more likely to use nonmilitary resources, such as a private medical provider and private childcare, those who lived farther from post were less likely to rely on other military spouses for help with their top problems and needs. This included spouses they knew in person and contacts with spouses through unofficial social media military networks (e.g., Facebook pages for Army spouses). For example, 46 percent of spouses who lived on post, compared with 30 percent of spouses who lived 40 miles or more away from post, reported relying on other military spouses they knew in person for help. In addition, 30 percent of spouses who lived on post used unofficial social media military networks for help with one of their needs, compared with 24 percent of spouses who lived 40 miles or more away from post. Although this difference is relatively small, it is somewhat surprising, since social media is one way that spouses who live far from post could connect to other Army spouses who do not live near them.

Table 4.5
Probability of Using Each Nonmilitary Resource Relative to the Reference Group, by Spouse and Family Characteristics

Resource	Spouse Employment Status				Presence of Dependent Children	
	Unemployed, Looking for Work ^a	Unemployed, Not Looking for Work	Employed Part Time	Employed Full Time	No Dependent Children ^a	Has Dependent Children
Personal networks outside the military	—				—	
Other military spouses known in person	—				—	
Internet resources	—				—	13% ↓
Unofficial social media military networks	—				—	
Religious or spiritual group or leader	—				—	48% ↑
Private clubs, organizations, recreation or fitness centers	—				—	
Government or community resources for family services	—	30% ↓		49% ↓	—	129% ↑
Private medical provider	—				—	
Private mental health care provider	—			45% ↑	—	
Private off-post childcare ^b	—	33% ↓		56% ↑	—	
Civilian employer	—	64% ↓	91% ↑	220% ↑	—	

^a The reference groups for the analysis.

^b The analysis of private off-post childcare controlled for differences in the presence of dependent children among the other demographic groups. Not surprisingly, having dependent children was highly related to use of private off-post childcare, although that relationship is not shown in this table.

NOTES: *N* = 5,667. The percentages in the table represent risk ratios relative to the reference group for significant differences (blank cells indicate no significant difference). Risk ratios can be interpreted as the percentage that the group is more or less likely to experience the problem relative to the reference group, which is denoted by arrows up (more likely than the reference group) or down (less likely than the reference group).

Table 4.6

Probability of Using Each Nonmilitary Resource Relative to the Reference Group, by Characteristics of the Household

Resource	Distance from Post (Estimate of the Effect)	Urbanicity of Installation		
		Midsized ^a	Rural	Urban
Personal networks outside the military		—		
Other military spouses known in person	10% ↓	—		
Internet resources		—		
Unofficial social media military networks	6% ↓	—		
Religious or spiritual group or leader	6% ↑	—		
Private clubs, organizations, recreation or fitness centers		—		
Government or community resources for family services		—		
Private medical provider	13% ↑	—		
Private mental health care provider	11% ↑	—		
Private off-post childcare	13% ↑	—		
Civilian employer		—		

^a The reference group for the analysis.

NOTES: *N* = 5,667. The analysis of private off-post childcare controlled for differences in the presence of dependent children among the other demographic groups. The percentages in the table represent risk ratios relative to the reference group for significant differences (blank cells indicate no significant difference). Risk ratios can be interpreted as the percentage that the group is more or less likely to experience the problem relative to the reference group, which is denoted by arrows up (more likely than the reference group) or down (less likely than the reference group).

Characteristics of the Soldier

Several significant differences by pay grade emerged, as shown in Table 4.7. Spouses of officers were more likely than spouses of junior or senior enlisted soldiers to rely on other military spouses they know in person for help with their top problems and needs. Spouses of junior enlisted soldiers were also less likely to rely on their personal networks for help than were spouses from any of the other pay grade groups. Compared with spouses of junior enlisted soldiers, spouses in all other pay grade groups, and particularly officers, were more likely to use private clubs, organizations, or recreation or fitness centers and less likely to use government or community resources for family services, and spouses of junior officers were more likely to use private off-post childcare and nonmilitary religious leaders for help with their top problems and needs.

Table 4.7
Probability of Using Each Nonmilitary Resource Relative to the Reference Group, By
Characteristics of the Soldier

Resource	Pay Grade				Soldier Deployed in the Past Year	
	E1–E4a	E5–E9	O1–O3	O4+	Not Deployed ^a	Deployed
Personal networks outside the military	—	11% ↑	28% ↑	21% ↑	—	
Other military spouses known in person	—		43% ↑	32% ↑	—	10% ↑
Internet resources	—				—	
Unofficial social media military networks	—				—	
Religious or spiritual group or leader	—		60% ↑		—	
Private clubs, organizations, recreation or fitness centers	—	27% ↑	92% ↑	80% ↑	—	
Government or community resources for family services	—	39% ↓	55% ↓	67% ↓	—	
Private medical provider	—				—	
Private mental health care provider	—				—	
Private off-post childcare	—		57% ↑		—	29% ↑
Civilian employer	—				—	

^a The reference groups for the analysis.

NOTES: *N* = 5,667. The analysis of private off-post childcare controlled for differences in the presence of dependent children among the other demographic groups. The percentages in the table represent risk ratios relative to the reference group for significant differences (blank cells indicate no significant difference). Risk ratios can be interpreted as the percentage that the group is more or less likely to experience the problem relative to the reference group, which is denoted by arrows up (more likely than the reference group) or down (less likely than the reference group).

Spouses of soldiers who experienced a deployment in the past year were more likely to have used private off-post childcare and were more likely to have reached out to other military spouses for help than spouses of soldiers who did not deploy in the past year.

Did Use of Resources Vary by Top Problem Domains?

Table 4.8 displays the most-frequent resources used for help with each of the top two problem domains prioritized by spouses. This table clearly shows that spouses' social networks and the internet are frequently used to help with needs across all problem domains. Similar to the overall frequency of resources used shown in Table 4.1, a spouse's personal network of friends and family outside the military was the most frequently used resource for eight of the nine problem domains, and it was the fourth most frequently used resource for *health care system problems*. Other military spouses known in person was the second or third most frequently used resource for eight of the nine problem domains. Nonmilitary internet resources were also used across a variety of problem domains, appearing in the four most frequent resources for seven of the nine problem domains. Unofficial military-related social media networks, such as Facebook groups, were frequently used for problems with *work-life balance* or *household management*.

The most frequently used military resources appeared to match relevant problem domains: Spouses frequently contacted their soldiers' chains of command for problems with *military practices and culture*, and they frequently used a military-covered medical provider for *health care system problems*, *own well-being*, *relationship problems*, *soldier's well-being*, and *child well-being*. They also used a military mental health care provider for *relationship problems* and *soldier's well-being*. Spouses also frequently contacted ACS for help with needs related to *financial or legal problems*.

Summary of Findings for Resource Use for Top Problems

In seeking help with their needs, spouses exhibited varied use of resources, both inside and outside the military. Among Army spouses who had problems and needs, 90 percent reported using one or more resources for help with their needs, suggesting that they are willing to seek help to resolve their problems. Spouses of junior officers, in particular, were more likely to have used resources to help meet their needs (94 percent). Spouses reported reaching out to more than four resources per problem (mean = 4.4, ranging from 0 to 46), with spouses of junior officers using more resources per problem (mean = 4.9). Resource use also differed such that there was a significant trend in which spouses who lived farther from an installation tended to use fewer resources and fewer military resources, in particular. About 85 percent of spouses reported reaching out to one or more military resource across problems, which suggests that even the civilian side of an Army family relies on the Army to help address pressing problems, although a minority do solely seek solutions elsewhere.

Table 4.8
Four Most Frequent Resources Used for Help with Each Top Problem Domain

Problem Domain	Most Frequent Resources Used	Percentage	95% CI
Work-life balance	Personal networks outside the military	43.6	41.3, 45.9
	Other military spouses known in person	36.8	34.6, 39.1
	Nonmilitary internet resources	28.7	26.6, 30.8
	Unofficial social media military networks	25.1	23.0, 27.1
Military practices and culture	Personal networks outside the military	38.3	35.8, 40.8
	Other military spouses known in person	38.3	35.7, 40.8
	Soldier's chain of command	32.1	29.6, 34.5
	Nonmilitary internet resources	30.4	28.0, 32.8
Own well-being	Personal networks outside the military	43.9	41.2, 46.6
	Other military spouses known in person	32.0	29.5, 34.5
	Military-covered medical provider	27.4	25.0, 29.9
	Nonmilitary internet resources	21.3	19.0, 23.5
Relationship problems	Personal networks outside the military	43.1	40.5, 45.8
	Other military spouses known in person	28.6	26.2, 31.0
	Military mental health care provider	23.6	21.3, 25.9
	Military-covered medical provider	22.0	19.8, 24.2
Health care system problems	Military-covered medical provider	61.1	58.4, 63.8
	Nonmilitary internet resources	29.2	26.7, 31.8
	Other military spouses known in person	29.0	26.5, 31.6
	Personal networks outside the military	27.8	25.3, 30.3
Soldier's well-being	Personal networks outside the military	36.4	33.5, 39.3
	Military-covered medical provider	30.3	27.5, 33.0
	Military mental health care provider	26.8	24.1, 29.5
	Spouse's chain of command	22.5	19.9, 25.0
Financial or legal problems	Personal networks outside the military	35.9	33.0, 38.9
	Nonmilitary internet resources	24.3	21.7, 27.0
	Other military spouses known in person	22.3	19.7, 24.8
	ACS	22.0	19.5, 24.5

Table 4.8—Continued

Problem Domain	Most Frequent Resources Used	Percentage	95% CI
Household management	Personal networks outside the military	32.9	29.5, 36.2
	Other military spouses known in person	29.9	26.7, 33.1
	Nonmilitary internet resources	22.6	19.6, 25.6
	Unofficial social media military networks	20.4	17.5, 23.2
Child well-being	Personal networks outside the military	42.0	38.6, 45.4
	Other military spouses known in person	33.6	30.4, 36.9
	Military-covered medical provider	28.6	25.4, 31.7
	Nonmilitary internet resources	27.2	24.1, 30.3

NOTES: *Ns* ranged from 869 (*child well-being*) to 1,877 (*work-life balance*). Percentages were weighted to be representative of the population. CIs help convey the uncertainty that is found in any estimate. For the 95 percent CIs that we report, if we measured the same variables in the same way from the same population, in 95 percent of those samples, our results would fall within the upper and lower bounds we report. For analyses with larger sample sizes, our estimates can be more precise, and the CIs may be quite narrow. If the CIs of two estimates do not overlap, those estimates are sufficiently different that, even taking into account the estimates' uncertainty, the groups can be considered significantly different on that variable at $p < 0.05$ or better.

Among those who used resources for help with their needs, military medical providers and military internet or social media were the most commonly used resources provided through the military. Relatively few spouses reported using an Army FRG for help with their top needs.

Among resources that were not provided by the military, spouses' personal networks and other military spouses were the most commonly used resources, and they were the most-frequent sources of help across almost all problem domains. Clearly, spouses rely on their networks of social support for help with a variety of problems in their lives. Nonmilitary internet resources were also frequently used across most problem domains, including for problems with *military practices and culture*. Unofficial military-related social media networks, such as Facebook groups, were frequently used overall and particularly for problems with *work-life balance* or *household management*. These groups perhaps present another source of social or informational support for spouses. Indeed, the top resources used across all problem domains and especially for problems with *work-life balance*, *military practices and culture*, and *household management* were either social networks (including their soldiers' chains of command for *military practices and culture*) or the internet.

Spouses who were unemployed and looking for work availed themselves of many relevant resources: ACS, military internet resources, and military programs and loans intended to help employment-seeking spouses. Employment status also had another interesting effect: Although employment did not predict the use of a medical provider

(rather, distance from the soldiers' military posts did), it did predict use of a mental health provider; employed spouses were more likely to avail themselves of this resource, presumably because they had coverage through insurance at work. Spouses of junior enlisted soldiers were surprisingly less likely to use some resources, such as Army MWR or CYS, and yet more likely to use such resources as their soldiers' chains of command, which could be indicative of a lack of familiarity with the system. Spouses who lived farther away from post were less connected to several of the military resources available for them.

For the minority who did not use resources for one or more of their needs, the most commonly reported reason was that they did not know whom to contact for help (32 percent). Some of the responses to the question of why resources were not contacted suggest that other solutions were available, but the one-third who reported not knowing whom to contact for help suggests that potentially solvable problems could be persisting because of a lack of information.

How Much Did the Resources Spouses Used Help Them?

We asked respondents to rate how well each of the resources they contacted helped them meet their needs with their top problems. Participants rated each of the resources they contacted using the following scale: "very well" (coded 5), "well" (coded 4), "all right" (coded 3), "not very well" (coded 2), and "not at all" (coded 1).³

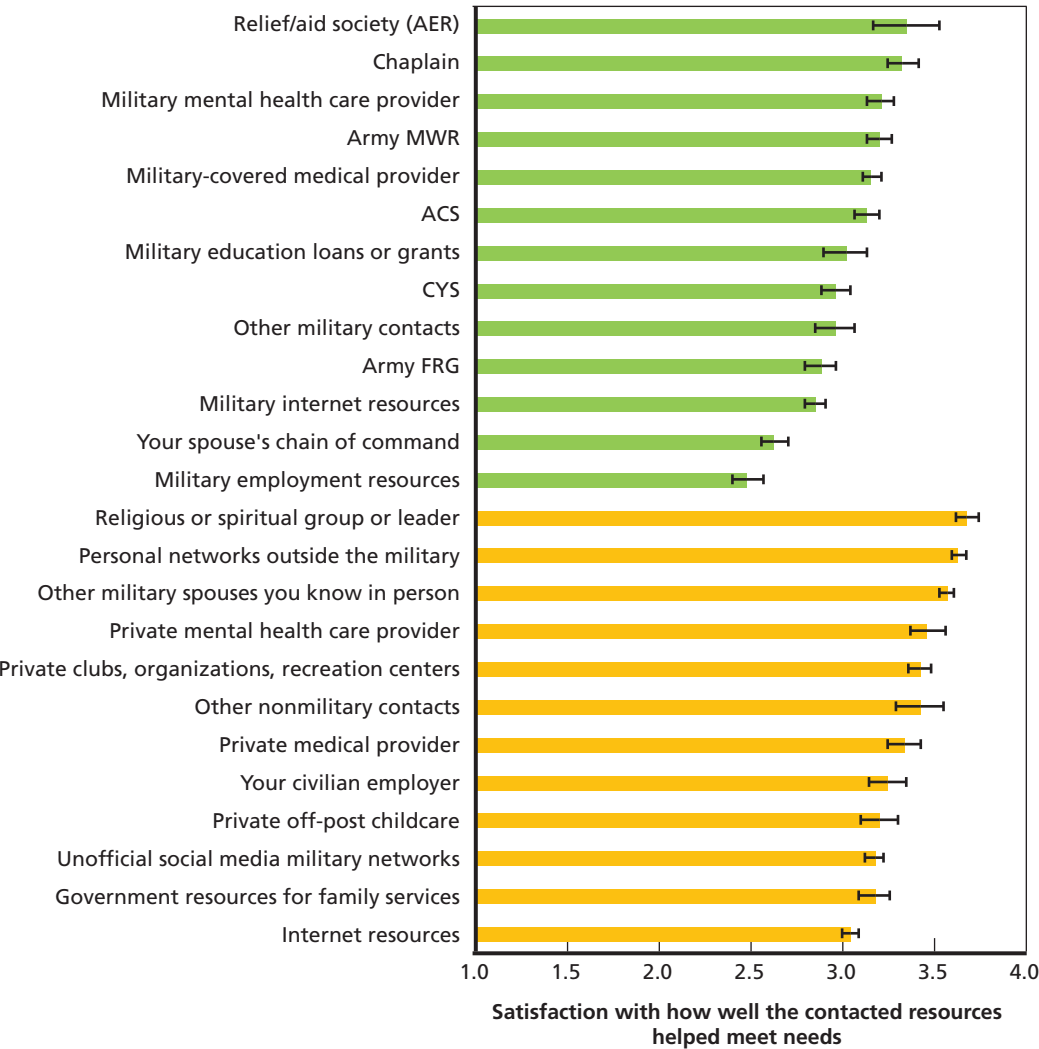
Figure 4.2 displays the average ratings of each military resource (shaded green) and nonmilitary resource (shaded yellow) contacted.

On average, spouses rated their satisfaction with how well military resources met their needs at just over 3—or "all right." Among subgroups of spouses, those who were unemployed and looking for work or employed full time were less satisfied with military resources than spouses who were unemployed and not looking for work (means of 3.0, 3.0, and 3.2, respectively). Spouses employed part time were not significantly different from other groups (mean = 3.1). In addition, spouses who lived farther away from their soldiers' military post were less satisfied with military resources than spouses who lived closer to post.

As shown in Figure 4.2, several resources were rated at just above "all right," on average, including AER (mean = 3.3, *N* = 227), chaplains (mean = 3.3, *N* = 873), military mental health provider (mean = 3.2, *N* = 1,154), and Army MWR (mean = 3.2, *N* = 1,112). Those resources that spouses were least satisfied with included military employment resources (mean = 2.5, *N* = 803) and the soldier's chain of command (mean = 2.6, *N* = 1,218).

³ Note that these items were used to compute unmet needs in the soldier survey (Sims et al., 2017) because we did not ask directly about unmet needs in that survey. Here, they are used as an indicator of the general effectiveness of the resources to help spouses with their most-pressing problems.

Figure 4.2
Average Satisfaction Ratings of Military and Nonmilitary Resources by Respondents Who Used Each Resource to Address Their Needs



NOTES: Military resources are green; nonmilitary resources are yellow. *Ns* range from 227 (Army relief/aid society) to 3,054 (personal networks outside the military). Averages were weighted to be representative of the population. Error bars represent 95 percent CIs. CIs help convey the uncertainty that is found in any estimate. For the 95 percent CIs that we report, if we measured the same variables in the same way from the same population, in 95 percent of those samples, our results would fall within the upper and lower bounds we report. For analyses with larger sample sizes, our estimates can be more precise, and the CIs may be quite narrow. If the CIs of two estimates do not overlap, those estimates are sufficiently different, that even taking into account the estimates' uncertainty, the groups can be considered significantly different on that variable at $p < 0.05$ or better.

In terms of the ratings of individual nonmilitary resource in Figure 4.2, nonmilitary religious or spiritual group or leader (mean = 3.7, $N = 1,185$), personal networks outside the military (mean = 3.6, $N = 3,054$), and other military spouses respondents knew in person (versus the internet; mean = 3.6, $N = 2,531$) were the highest-rated resources. The lowest-rated nonmilitary resource was internet resources (mean = 3.03, $N = 2,037$).

To understand how satisfied spouses were with military and nonmilitary resources they used to address their problems and needs, we averaged satisfaction ratings across resources. On average, the rating of satisfaction with how well nonmilitary resources met their needs was 3.4, compared with an average of 3.1 across military resources used. Among subgroups of spouses, those who were unemployed and looking for work or employed full time were less satisfied with military resources, on average, than spouses who were unemployed and not looking for work. Spouses employed part time were not significantly different from other groups. In addition, spouses who lived farther away from their soldiers' military posts were less satisfied with military resources than spouses who lived closer to post.

The only significant subgroup difference to emerge from the analysis of average satisfaction with nonmilitary resources was employment status: Spouses who were unemployed and looking for work were less satisfied on average with nonmilitary resources than those who were employed part time or unemployed and not looking for work. Those who were employed full time were not significantly different from the other groups. Thus, for both military and nonmilitary resources, spouses who were unemployed and looking for work were less likely to be satisfied that the resources they contacted met their needs.

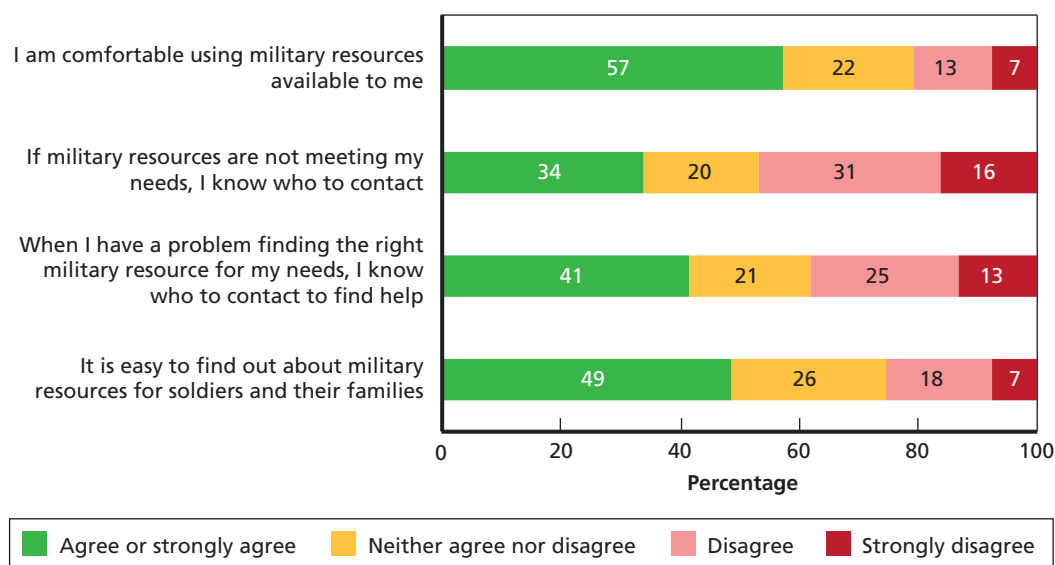
What Barriers Do Spouses Experience When Trying to Access Military Resources?

Questions in the previous sections examined the specific problems and needs prioritized by spouses and the resources used to address those prioritized needs. However, we now turn to questions that were more broadly applicable and not tied to spouses' top problems. We first examine spouses' general perceptions of ease of access to military resources, followed by their perceptions of specific types of military resources.

Perceptions of Ease of Access to Military Resources

We assessed spouses' perceived ease of accessing military resources by asking all respondents to rate their agreement with four statements developed for this survey. These were asked of all respondents (i.e., not just those who used resources for one of their top problems and needs). The statements, rating scale, and responses are shown in Figure 4.3. Most respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they are comfortable using

Figure 4.3
Rated Ease of Accessing Military Resources



NOTES: $N = 7,826$. Percentages were weighted to be representative of the population.

military resources, and about one-half agreed or strongly agreed that it is easy to find out about military resources, with about 25 percent disagreeing or strongly disagreeing.

However, spouses expressed more uncertainty about next steps when they experienced difficulties accessing military resources: 34 percent agreed or strongly agreed that they knew whom to contact if military resources are not meeting their needs, and 47 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. About 40 percent agreed or strongly agreed that they know whom to contact when they have a problem finding the right military resource for their needs, and 38 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement.

We examined sociodemographic subgroup differences in perceptions of military resources and found several significant differences. Spouses differed in perceived ease of finding out about military resources and comfort using military resources by employment status: Spouses who were unemployed and not looking for work reported greater ease finding out about military resources and greater comfort using those resources than did spouses employed full time and those who were unemployed and looking for work. Spouses employed part time did not significantly differ from the other employment groups on either question.

Across all four questions, spouses differed by distance from their soldiers' military posts, the presence of children, and pay grade. The farther spouses lived from post, the less comfortable they were using military resources, the less they knew whom to contact when military resources were not meeting their needs or when they had a problem

finding the right resource for their needs, and the less easy they discovered it was to find out about military resources. In addition, across all four questions, spouses with dependent children found it easier to access and navigate military resources than those without children.

Compared with spouses of soldiers in the other pay grade groups, spouses of junior enlisted soldiers indicated that they found it less easy to find out about military resources and knew less about whom to contact when military resources were not meeting their needs or when they had a problem finding the right resource for their needs. Spouses of junior enlisted soldiers were less comfortable using military resources than spouses of senior enlisted and senior officers but were not significantly different from spouses of junior officers. Across all four questions, spouses of senior officers found it easier to access and navigate military resources than spouses of soldiers in the other pay grade groups, while spouses of senior enlisted and junior officers did not significantly differ from one another.

How Are Specific Military Resources Perceived?

The survey also assessed respondents' perceptions of specific military resources, regardless of whether they had contacted the resource for one of their top problems. Respondents were asked to indicate their agreement with several statements about each resource. As shown in Table 4.9, resources that had the most agreement for having a "good reputation" were military-covered medical providers, Army MWR, ACS, and official military internet resources. However, some resources were unfamiliar to one-third or more of spouses. A sizable proportion of spouses indicated that they "know little to nothing about" their soldiers' chains of command, Army FRGs, military employment resources, military education loans or grants, and ACS. Although one could argue that spouses would not know about employment or education resources unless they sought them out, it is surprising that more than one-third were unfamiliar with their soldiers' chains of command or Army FRGs, and more than one-quarter were unfamiliar with ACS, which serves as a resource for help and information for Army families.

What Are the Best Ways to Get Information to Spouses About Resources?

To better understand what kind of outreach is acceptable to Army spouses, we asked respondents to indicate "the best ways to get information to you about services available to help meet your needs" from a list of alternatives, shown in Table 4.10. The most frequently cited outreach method was a postcard in the mail. Of course, respondents were contacted through a postcard to participate in the survey, which might have led them to be more likely choose this method (i.e., they were certainly already amenable

Table 4.9
Perceptions of Military Resources, by Percentage Endorsed

Military Resource	Has Not Been Relevant for My Needs	Resource Has a Good Reputation	I Know Little to Nothing About Them	Close or Easy to Access	Might Hurt My (or My Spouse's) Reputation to Contact Them for Help	Wait List or Response Time Too Long	Unfriendly/ Not Welcoming
Spouse's chain of command	36.0	14.9	34.0	11.0	17.0	1.5	8.2
Army FRG	31.2	20.4	35.7	12.0	3.0	2.0	6.5
Army MWR	24.8	38.8	21.2	21.8	0.6	2.1	1.9
ACS	27.6	32.6	27.4	16.3	1.5	2.5	2.2
Military employment resources	33.0	18.6	35.8	8.9	0.6	6.7	3.6
Military education loans or grants	39.9	23.1	29.3	9.1	0.6	2.2	1.9
Military internet resources or official Army social media	22.9	32.9	22.5	25.5	1.1	1.4	1.9
Military mental health care provider	36.6	19.1	26.1	12.3	6.3	5.4	3.1
Military-covered medical provider	10.3	40.3	9.6	32.0	0.9	13.1	5.7
CYS	42.7	20.6	18.8	13.1	0.3	9.6	2.8
Chaplain or members of military religious or spiritual group	42.4	24.6	24.0	12.5	1.7	0.9	1.3
AER	51.4	16.3	27.1	7.8	1.7	0.8	0.9

NOTES: $N = 8,107$. Percentages were weighted to be representative of the population. The four most common responses within each question are displayed in boldface (five responses are bolded when there is a tie). The denominator for percentages is the number of spouses who responded to this set of questions. Respondents could choose as many options as they wished, so percentages do not add up to 100.

Table 4.10
Percentage of Respondents Saying a Given Outreach Method Is Acceptable

Outreach Method	Percentage of Respondents	95% CI
Postcard in the mail	61.3	60.2, 62.4
Facebook	53.6	52.5, 54.7
Email/announcement from unit leader	45.8	44.7, 46.9
Email/announcement from Family Readiness Group	44.2	43.1, 45.4
Friend/family/coworker	24.7	23.8, 25.7
Unit website	19.1	18.2, 20.0
Installation website	18.4	17.6, 19.3
Unit newsletter	17.8	17.0, 18.7
Phone app	16.8	15.9, 17.6
Flyer/poster on post	15.3	14.5, 16.1
Installation newspaper	10.8	10.1, 11.5
Instagram	8.9	8.2, 9.5
TV	6.8	6.3, 7.4
Other social media	4.3	3.8, 4.7
Pinterest	3.0	2.6, 3.4
Other outreach method	2.9	2.5, 3.2
Twitter	2.8	2.5, 3.2

NOTES: $N = 8,052$. Percentages were weighted to be representative of the population. CIs help convey the uncertainty that is found in any estimate. For the 95 percent CIs that we report, if we measured the same variables in the same way from the same population, in 95 percent of those samples, our results would fall within the upper and lower bounds we report. For analyses with larger sample sizes, our estimates can be more precise, and the CIs may be quite narrow. If the CIs of two estimates do not overlap, those estimates are sufficiently different that, even taking into account the estimates' uncertainty, the groups can be considered significantly different on that variable at $p < 0.05$ or better.

to contact by postcard, as shown by responding to the survey invitation, which came by postcard), although other types of informative and timely mailings might prove useful for spouses. The next most frequently chosen outreach method was Facebook, followed by an email announcement from their soldiers' unit leaders or from the Army FRG. Importantly, other social media, as well as Pinterest and Twitter, were not chosen by very many spouses (2.8 to 4.3 percent of spouses).

Summary of Resource Use: Helpfulness and Barriers to Help

We asked respondents to rate how well each of the resources they contacted helped them meet their needs with their top problems, which we used as an indicator of how satisfied they were with the resource. By this measure, across resources, most spouses indicated that the resources they contacted for their most pressing needs met their needs All Right or Well/Very Well. Among sociodemographic subgroups of spouses, those who were unemployed and looking for work or employed full time were less satisfied with military resources than spouses who were unemployed and not looking for work; they were also less likely to be satisfied with nonmilitary resources. In addition, spouses who lived farther away from their soldiers' military posts were less satisfied with the military resources they used for their needs than spouses who lived closer to post.

Turning to questions not tied to specific problems and their solutions, we found that most respondents agreed they are comfortable using military resources, but spouses expressed more uncertainty about next steps when they experience difficulties accessing military resources. The farther spouses lived from their soldiers' military posts, the less comfortable they were using military resources, the less they knew whom to contact when military resources were not meeting their needs or when they had a problem finding the right resource for their needs, and the less easy they found it to learn about military resources. Spouses of junior enlisted soldiers were significantly less comfortable using military resources and navigating the system than spouses of soldiers with more tenure, but also than spouses of junior officers. Spouses of junior officers reported less familiarity with the resources available to them than spouses of soldiers with more tenure, but they also generally reported higher resource use. Spouses with dependent children found it easier to access and navigate military resources than those without children. Paired with the finding about needs for information, these findings offer additional evidence that spouses with children have an easier time understanding and navigating the system than those without children.

In terms of perceptions of specific military resources reported by all respondents, military-covered medical providers, Army MWR, ACS, and official military internet resources were most likely to generate agreement with a statement that the resource has a "good reputation." However, some resources were unfamiliar to one-third or more of spouses: soldier's chain of command, Army FRGs, and military employment resources. Since military employment resources are directed at spouses specifically, this suggests that additional outreach may be helpful, perhaps through flyers or promotional materials distributed through the resources with which spouses are likely to be more familiar: doctor waiting rooms, CYS, and Army MWR locations. Given that soldier's chain of command and Army FRGs are potentially important sources of information for Army families, it is concerning that many spouses indicated that they knew "little or nothing about them." Furthermore, more than one-quarter of spouses were unfamiliar with

ACS, which is specifically tasked with providing information and assistance to soldiers and families in need. Not knowing about these resources makes spouses less likely to reach out to them for help—or be able to tell other spouses about them—which could result in less efficient problem-solving and greater unmet needs among Army spouses.

In terms of outreach, our findings suggest that postcards or other informative mailings may be a viable method of reaching Army spouses. They are more expensive than electronic methods, such as email or Facebook, but they might get more attention and provide a physical reminder of an event or activity. In addition, Facebook membership is not universal, nor is following an installation's or specific resource's Facebook page. Email is easiest and cheapest, but spouses are not issued email addresses by the Army or DoD, and no systematic record of spouse email addresses is maintained by the Army.

Unmet Needs and Interrelations Among Problems, Needs, Resources, and Attitudes

Previous chapters examined, in detail, two main questions:

1. What were the most-common responses within each of the steps in the problem-solving process?
2. Were there differences in responses among important sociodemographic subgroups of Army spouses?

In this chapter, we examine these questions in the context of whether needs went unmet among Army spouses. We also turn to a third question: Are differences in problem-solving experiences—specifically, having unmet needs—related to important indicators of spousal well-being and satisfaction with the Army, including favoring their soldiers staying in the Army?

How Many and Which Spouses Experience Unmet Needs?

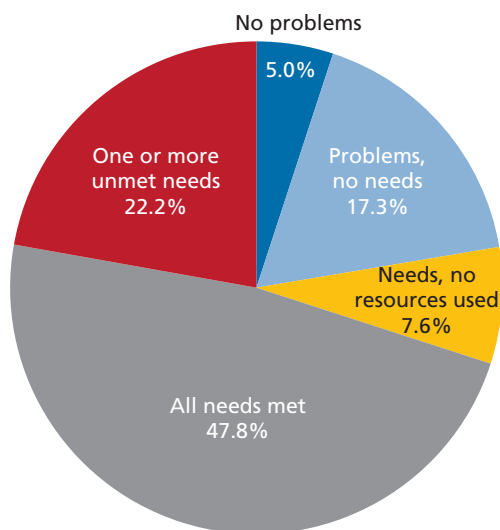
Respondents who had needs and used resources to help with those needs were asked to indicate whether they received the help they needed. For each need for which they sought resources, respondents were asked, “In general, across the resources you used, did you get the help you needed?” Response options were “yes,” which was coded as having one’s needs met, or “no” or “I’m not sure,” which were coded as *not* having one’s needs met. Thus, respondents could indicate that they had an unmet need for each problem-need pair. We aggregated across problems and needs to calculate the percentage of spouses who had one or more unmet needs—that is, we counted anyone who said that they had at least one unmet need in this overall number.¹

¹ We do not provide a direct comparison with married soldiers for this number because the soldier survey did not ask the direct question of whether or not needs were met (Sims et al., 2017). Rather, for soldiers, we created a proxy score of unmet needs based on the satisfaction with resources items described in Chapter Four. Because we included both types of items—satisfaction with resources and the direct question of whether needs were met—in the Army Spouse Survey, we were able to compare the two methodologies for calculating unmet needs. Using

Figure 5.1 displays the percentage of spouses with one or more unmet needs in the past year among all respondents, along with the percentage of spouses with no reported problems, problems but no reported needs, needs but no use of resources to address them, and, finally, those who used resources and indicated that they had all their needs met across problems. Out of all respondents, just over 22 percent indicated that they had one or more unmet needs, and almost 48 percent indicated that the resources they used met their needs. As reported earlier, 5 percent of all respondents reported having no problems, while 17 percent reported having problems but no needs and almost 8 percent reported having problems and needs but using no resources to help with those needs.

Limiting the analysis to just those spouses with problems and needs who used resources ($N = 5,796$) provides a better estimate of the general effectiveness of resources in meeting spouses' needs. Among this group of help-seeking spouses, 32 percent reported having one or more unmet needs. We examined this group more closely and included the same sociodemographic characteristics used in previous analyses in a logistic multiple regression model to explore their relationship to spouses' reported

Figure 5.1
Percentage of Army Spouses with Unmet
Needs Among All Respondents



NOTES: $N = 8,202$. Percentages were weighted to be representative of the population.

the proxy of unmet needs based on satisfaction items, 14 percent (rather than 22 percent) of spouses had unmet needs, suggesting that the numbers reported in the soldier survey were a *conservative* estimate of unmet needs, and had we asked them directly whether their needs were met, our estimate of unmet needs among soldiers likely would have been higher.

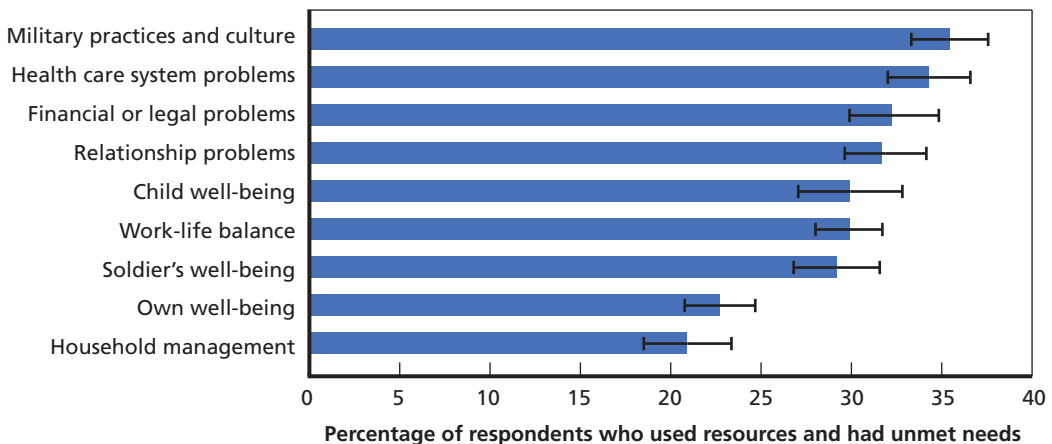
unmet needs. Among sociodemographic subgroups, spouses who were unemployed and looking for work were more likely to have unmet needs (37 percent) than spouses who were employed full time (33 percent), part time (32 percent), or unemployed and not looking for work (29 percent), who did not significantly differ from one another. In addition, the farther spouses lived from post, the more likely they were to have unmet needs. No other sociodemographic group differences reached significance.

Did the Proportion of Unmet Needs Vary by Problem Domain?

Figure 5.2 displays the percentage of spouses with unmet needs within each of the nine problem domains. Most problem domains had similar rates of unmet needs (as indicated by overlapping 95 percent CIs), ranging from 29 percent for *soldier's well-being* to 35 percent for *military practices and culture*. Two problem domains with lower rates of unmet needs were *own well-being* (23 percent) and *household management* (21 percent).

We next analyzed sociodemographic subgroup differences in the percentage of spouses with unmet needs among those who chose each problem domain as one of their top two problems. Analysis revealed that spouses with dependent children were less likely to have unmet needs with *military practices and culture* problems than spouses without children (33 and 40 percent, respectively). In addition, spouses whose soldiers had been deployed in the past year were more likely to have unmet needs with *military practices and culture* than spouses of soldiers who had not been deployed in the

Figure 5.2
Percentage of Respondents with Unmet Needs, by Top Two Problem Domain



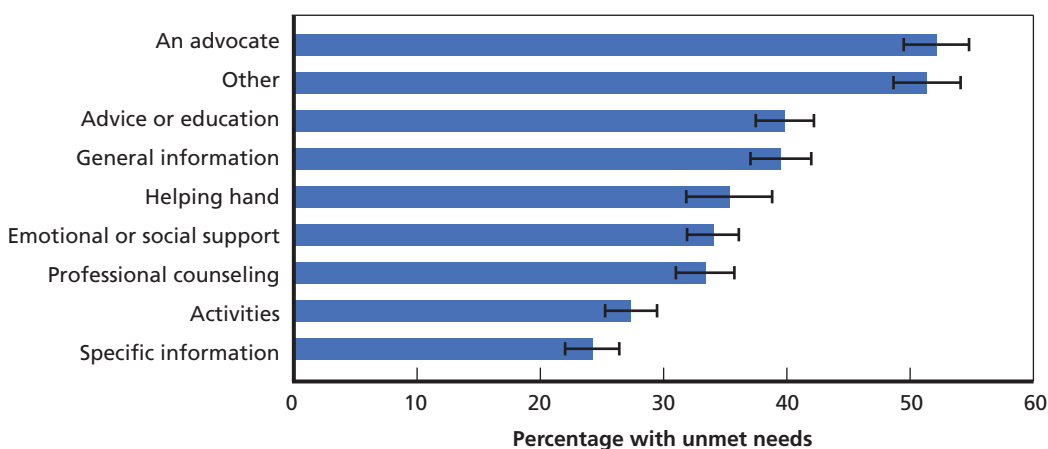
NOTES: *N*s range from 1,050 to 2,548. Error bars represent 95 percent CIs of the percentages. Percentages were weighted to be representative of the population. CIs help convey the uncertainty that is found in any estimate. For the 95 percent CIs that we report, if we measured the same variables in the same way from the same population, in 95 percent of those samples, our results would fall within the upper and lower bounds we report. For analyses with larger sample sizes, our estimates can be more precise, and the CIs may be quite narrow. If the CIs of two estimates do not overlap, those estimates are sufficiently different that, even taking into account the estimates' uncertainty, the groups can be considered significantly different on that variable at $p < 0.05$ or better.

past year (42 and 33 percent, respectively). No other significant sociodemographic subgroup differences in unmet needs emerged among any of the other problem domains.

Did the Proportion of Unmet Needs Vary by Type of Need?

Figure 5.3 displays the percentage of spouses with unmet needs within each type of need they indicated having for their top problems. Spouses who expressed a need for an advocate were particularly likely to indicate that the need went unmet (52 percent). Spouses were also likely to indicate that some “other” type of need went unmet (51 percent). However, since respondents volunteered the “other” type of need, it is possible that what they volunteered was particularly salient *because* it was unmet in the first place, so participants were more likely to take the effort to write them in. Needs that were particularly likely to be met by resources were activities (27 percent with unmet needs) and specific information (24 percent with unmet needs). No significant sociodemographic subgroup differences emerged in the analysis of unmet needs by type of need.

Figure 5.3
Percentage of Respondents with Unmet Needs, by Top Need



NOTES: *N*s range from 521 to 2,096. Error bars represent 95 percent CIs of the percentages. Percentages weighted to be representative of the population. CIs help convey the uncertainty that is found in any estimate. For the 95 percent CIs that we report, if we measured the same variables in the same way from the same population, in 95 percent of those samples, our results would fall within the upper and lower bounds we report. For analyses with larger sample sizes, our estimates can be more precise, and the CIs may be quite narrow. If the CIs of two estimates do not overlap, those estimates are sufficiently different that, even taking into account the estimates' uncertainty, the groups can be considered significantly different on that variable at $p < 0.05$ or better.

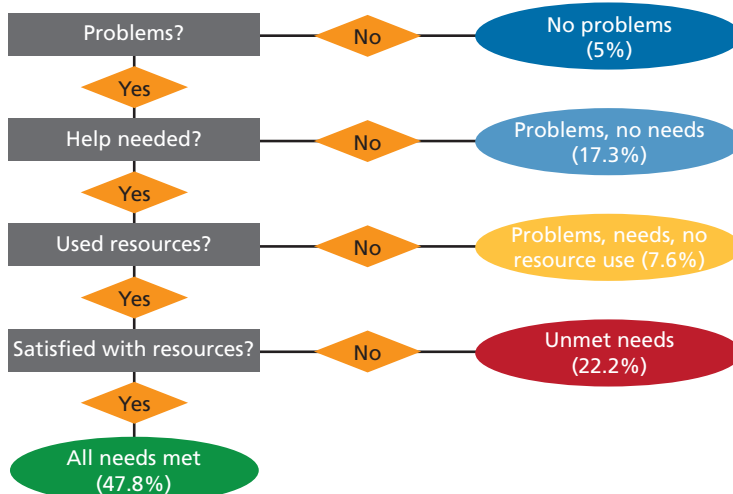
How Is the Problem-Solving Process Related to Important Spousal Outcomes?

We next performed a series of analyses to understand how the problem-solving process assessed by the survey was related to important outcomes for Army spouses. A diagram of the problem-solving process is displayed in Figure 5.4. The outcomes we examined consisted of spouses' levels of stress, attitudes toward the military, and support for their soldiers staying in the military. Each analysis consisted of a regression model testing the association between an outcome with respondent categories of problem-solving status noted in Figure 5.4:

- had no reported problems
- had problems but did not report having needs
- had needs but did not report using resources
- used resources and had all needs met
- used resources but had one or more unmet needs.

All regression models also included the same sociodemographic subgroup variables used in previous analyses. This allowed us to statistically control for sociodemographic subgroup differences among the problem-solving categories, lending more confidence that the observed associations between problem-solving categories and outcomes were not the result of subgroup differences among categories. Including sociodemographic

Figure 5.4
Flow Diagram of Key Survey Response Patterns of Spouses' Problem-Solving Process



NOTES: Percentages were weighted to be representative of the population. Percentages do not sum to 100 because of rounding.

subgroups in the analysis also allowed us to examine the association between these subgroups and outcomes.

What Influences Were Key for Spouse Level of Stress?

We first analyzed the relationship between spouse level of stress (using the Perceived Stress Scale; see Cohen and Williamson, 1988) and the problem-solving status categories, controlling for subgroups. Average level of stress among Army spouses was 2.4 on a scale of 1 to 5, with higher numbers indicating greater stress. First, when we examined sociodemographic subgroups, we found significant differences in level of stress by employment status, distance from post, and pay grade. For employment status, spouses who were unemployed and looking for work experienced higher levels of stress than those who were employed full time or were unemployed and not looking for work (no other differences were significant). There was also a significant trend for spouses who lived farther from their soldiers' military post to report experiencing higher levels of stress. This was especially true of those who lived more than 40 miles from post. Finally, spouses of junior enlisted soldiers reported significantly higher levels of stress than spouses from any other pay grade group. Spouses of senior enlisted soldiers reported higher levels of stress than spouses of junior or senior officers, who did not significantly differ from one another.

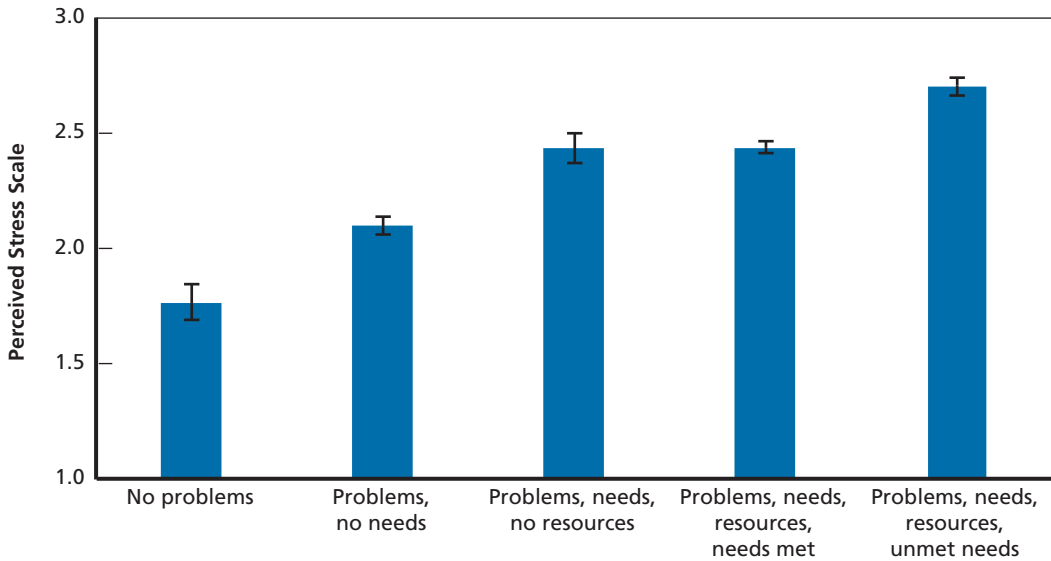
Our analysis of spouses' problem-solving category revealed several significant differences. As shown in Figure 5.5, controlling for sociodemographic groups, levels of reported stress increased almost incrementally with the progression of the problem-solving process. Those spouses who reported having no problems in the past year reported significantly lower levels of stress than spouses in the other problem-solving groups. Those who reported problems but no needs for their problems reported significantly higher levels of stress than those with no problems, but lower levels of stress than the other problem-solving groups. Spouses with problems and needs who used no resources reported similar levels of stress as those who had problems and needs but used resources to meet their needs. Finally, spouses who had problems, had needs, and reached out to resources but did not have all their needs met experienced significantly higher levels of stress than any other group.

What Influences Were Key for Spouse Attitudes Toward the Military?

We next examined spouses' attitudes toward the military using a multi-item attitude measure that encompasses fit with or adaptation to the military way of life and its challenges. Because the items were reported on different scales, we standardized individuals' ratings of each item prior to creating an average score, with zero representing that average.

First, when we examined sociodemographic subgroup differences, we found significant differences for distance from soldiers' military posts, the presence of dependent children, urbanicity, soldiers' pay grades, and whether spouses' soldiers had been

Figure 5.5
Spouses' Level of Perceived Stress, by Problem-Solving Status Category

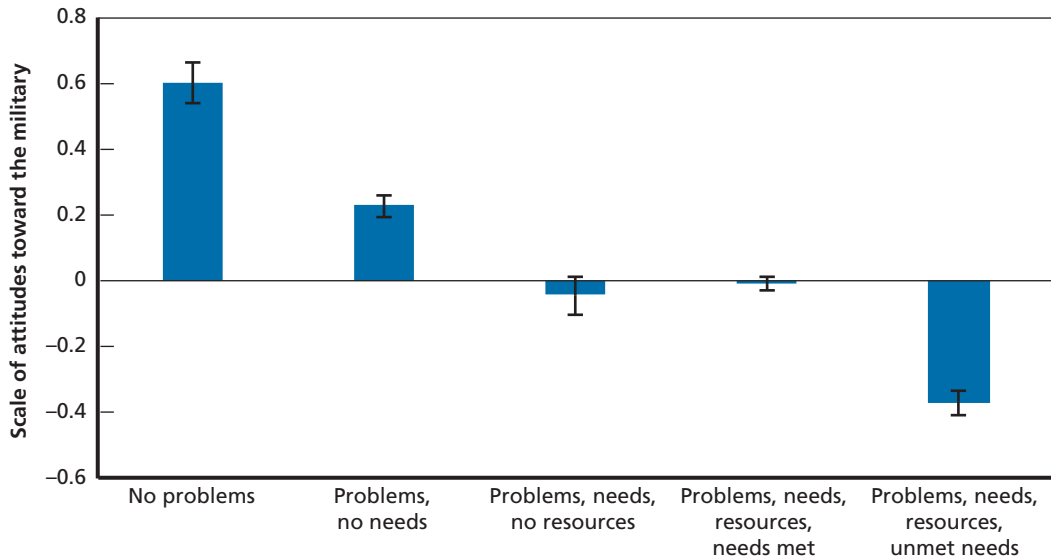


NOTES: $N = 7,997$. Means were weighted to be representative of the population. Error bars represent 95 percent CIs of the means. CIs help convey the uncertainty that is found in any estimate. For the 95 percent CIs that we report, if we measured the same variables in the same way from the same population, in 95 percent of those samples, our results would fall within the upper and lower bounds we report. For analyses with larger sample sizes, our estimates can be more precise, and the CIs may be quite narrow. If the CIs of two estimates do not overlap, those estimates are sufficiently different that, even taking into account the estimates' uncertainty, the groups can be considered significantly different on that variable at $p < 0.05$ or better.

deployed in the past year. Attitudes toward the military generally declined with distance from post, with those living on post having the most-positive attitudes toward the military and those living more than 40 miles away having the least-positive attitudes. Spouses with children had significantly more-positive attitudes toward the military than those without children. Spouses of soldiers stationed at installations near midsize cities had more-positive attitudes toward the military than those whose spouses were stationed in urban areas (those with spouses stationed in rural areas did not significantly differ from the other groups). In addition, spouses of senior officers had more-positive attitudes toward the military than did any other pay grade group, while spouses of junior enlisted soldiers had less-positive attitudes than did the other pay grade groups. Spouses of junior officers and senior enlisted soldiers did not significantly differ from one another. Finally, spouses of soldiers who had not been deployed in the past year had more-positive attitudes toward the military than those whose soldiers had been deployed.

Average attitudes toward the military of spouses in each of the problem-solving groups are displayed in Figure 5.6. Spouses who reported having no problems in the

Figure 5.6
Spouses' Attitudes Toward the Military, by Problem-Solving Status Category



NOTES: $N = 8,005$. The figure displays standardized values of the attitudes measure, where the overall mean is set as 0 and the standard deviation is set as 1. Means were weighted to be representative of the population. Error bars represent 95 percent CIs of the means. CIs help convey the uncertainty that is found in any estimate. For the 95 percent CIs that we report, if we measured the same variables in the same way from the same population, in 95 percent of those samples, our results would fall within the upper and lower bounds we report. For analyses with larger sample sizes, our estimates can be more precise, and the CIs may be quite narrow. If the CIs of two estimates do not overlap, those estimates are sufficiently different that, even taking into account the estimates' uncertainty, the groups can be considered significantly different on that variable at $p < 0.05$ or better.

past year, controlling for sociodemographic groups, had significantly more-positive attitudes toward the military than all other problem-solving groups. Those who reported problems but no needs for their problems reported significantly less-positive attitudes than those with no problems but significantly more-positive attitudes than the other problem-solving groups. Spouses with problems and needs who used no resources reported attitudes similar to those who had problems and needs but used resources to meet their needs. Finally, spouses who had problems, had needs, and reached out to resources but did not have all their needs met reported significantly less-positive attitudes toward the military than any other group.

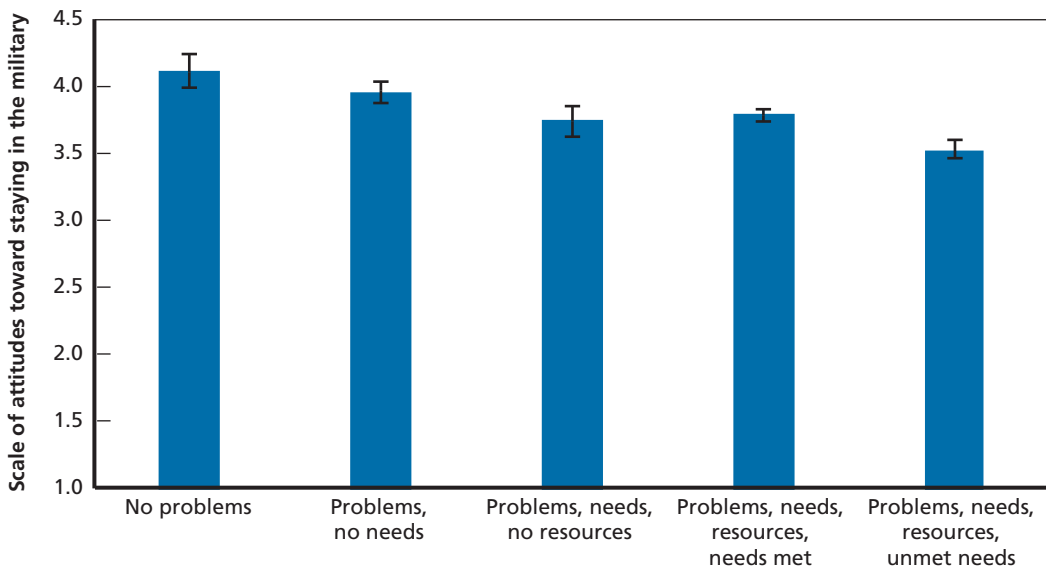
What Influences Were Key for Support for Service Member Staying in the Military?

Finally, we asked spouses to report how much they favor their soldiers staying or leaving the military, rated from 1 ("I strongly favor leaving") to 5 ("I strongly favor staying"). Spouses who expected their soldier to leave the military soon were not included in this analysis.

First, in terms of sociodemographic subgroup differences, significant differences emerged for distance from their soldiers' military posts, the presence of dependent children, and soldiers' pay grades. Spouses' support for their soldiers staying in the military generally declined with distance from post, with those living on post having the most favorable attitude about staying in the military and those living more than 40 miles away having the least favorable attitude about staying in the military. Spouses with children had significantly more-favorable attitudes toward staying in the military than those without children. In addition, spouses of senior officers and senior enlisted soldiers had more-favorable attitudes toward staying in the military than did spouses of junior officers and junior enlisted soldiers (spouses of senior officers and senior enlisted soldiers did not significantly differ from one another). Spouses of junior enlisted soldiers had less-favorable attitudes toward staying in the military than any of the other pay grade groups.

As shown in Figure 5.7, after we controlled for sociodemographic groups, we found that spouses who reported having no problems in the past year had more-favorable attitudes toward staying in the military than all other problem-solving status

Figure 5.7
Spouses' Attitudes Toward Staying in the Military, by Problem-Solving Status Category



NOTES: $N = 7,526$. Error bars represent 95 percent CIs of the means. Means weighted to be representative of the population. CIs help convey the uncertainty that is found in any estimate. For the 95 percent CIs that we report, if we measured the same variables in the same way from the same population, in 95 percent of those samples, our results would fall within the upper and lower bounds we report. For analyses with larger sample sizes, our estimates can be more precise, and the CIs may be quite narrow. If the CIs of two estimates do not overlap, those estimates are sufficiently different that, even taking into account the estimates' uncertainty, the groups can be considered significantly different on that variable at $p < 0.05$ or better.

groups. Those who reported problems but no needs for their problems reported significantly less-favorable attitudes than those with no problems but more-favorable attitudes toward staying in the military than the other problem-solving groups. Spouses with problems and needs who used no resources reported similar attitudes toward staying in the military as those who had problems and needs but used resources to meet their needs. Finally, spouses who had problems, had needs, and reached out to resources but did not have all their needs met reported significantly less-favorable attitudes toward staying in the military than any other group.

Why Did Spouses Who Used Resources and Have Their Needs Met Not Differ from Those Who Did Not Use Resources?

For each outcome—perceived stress, general attitudes toward the military, and support for the soldier staying in the military—the outcomes tended to be less positive for each successive stage of the problem-solving process. The one exception across outcomes was that those spouses with needs who did not reach out to resources and those who reached out to resources and had their needs met were not significantly different from one another. A similar finding emerged from the soldier survey analysis (Sims et al., 2017). The number of spouses with problems and needs who did not reach out to resources is small—just 7.6 percent of respondents—but this finding is perplexing, especially because one-third of these spouses reported that they did not know whom to contact for help (see Figure 4.1).

To understand the relationship between seeking resources for needs and spousal outcomes, we performed an additional regression analysis comparing spouses who used resources and had their needs met with those who did not use resources for various reasons. To better understand the lack of difference between these two groups, we included the reported reasons for not using resources in the model (i.e., we compared those who used resources and had their needs met with those who did not use resources because they reported that they did not know whom to contact for help, had already met the need themselves, did not want to ask for help, were currently meeting their needs without help, indicated that the problem went away on its own, indicated that “there’s nothing anyone can do to help solve the problem,” or cited some “other” reason for not using resources; $N = 4,469$). The models controlled for the same sociodemographic variables used previously.

For perceived stress, two large significant differences emerged: Compared with spouses who had their needs met through using resources, those who did not use resources because they had already met their needs without help experienced significantly lower stress, and those who did not know whom to turn to for help experienced significantly higher levels of stress. Those who did not want to ask for help experienced somewhat higher levels of stress ($p = 0.03$). No other reasons for not using resources approached significance.

In terms of spouses’ general attitudes toward the military, several significant differences emerged. Similar to the finding for stress, compared with spouses who had

their needs met through using resources, those who did not use resources because they had already met their needs without help expressed significantly more-positive attitudes toward the military. In contrast to those who had their needs met through using resources, those who did not know whom to turn to for help expressed significantly less-positive attitudes, as did those who thought that there was nothing anyone could do to solve the problem. Spouses who did not want to ask for help expressed somewhat less-positive attitudes toward the military than resource users who had their needs met ($p = 0.016$). No other reasons for not using resources approached significance.

Finally, for spouses' support for their soldiers staying in the military, one significant difference emerged: Compared with spouses who had their needs met through using resources, those who thought that there was nothing anyone could do to solve the problem expressed significantly less-positive attitudes toward staying in the military. No other reasons for not using resources approached significance.

Summary of Unmet Needs and Outcomes of the Problem-Solving Process

This chapter examined how frequently the problem-solving process resulted in unmet needs for spouses, whether there were differences in unmet needs among important sociodemographic subgroups of Army spouses, and whether differences in having unmet needs related to important indicators of spouse well-being and satisfaction with the Army, including favoring their soldier's staying in the Army. Out of all respondents, just over 22 percent of spouses indicated that they had one or more unmet needs, while almost 48 percent indicated that the resources they used met their needs. In terms of relationships between sociodemographic subgroups, spouses who were unemployed and looking for work were more likely to have unmet needs than were spouses who were employed full or part time or who were unemployed and not looking for work. In addition, the farther spouses lived from post, the more likely they were to have unmet needs. Most problem domains had similar rates of unmet needs, but two problem domains with lower rates of unmet needs were *own well-being* and *household management*. Of spouses expressing a need for an advocate (22 percent of those with needs), one-half indicated that the need went unmet.

We then examined how unmet needs (as well as other categories of the problem-solving process) were related to such outcomes as perceived stress, attitudes toward the Army, and support for the soldier remaining in the Army. These analyses also used the relevant sociodemographic subgroups from other analyses, so the analysis controls for significant differences in problem-solving among these subgroups. Looking first at sociodemographic subgroups, we found that spouses who were unemployed and looking for work, lived farther from their soldiers' military posts, or were married to junior enlisted soldiers experienced higher levels of stress, less-positive attitudes toward the

military, and less-favorable attitudes toward staying in the military than other groups. This analysis provides additional evidence that these groups of spouses are more vulnerable and could be targeted for additional resources and outreach. Spouses with children had significantly more-positive attitudes toward the military and more-favorable attitudes toward staying in the military than those without children, suggesting that, in addition to having fewer needs for information and greater comfort and ability to navigate military resources, spouses with children are also more likely to be happy with the military and want to stay part of the Army.

There was also a clear pattern in these various outcome measures for problem-solving categorization. We ordered the problem-solving categories from notionally positive to negative: going in order from having no problems, to having problems but no needs, to having needs but not reaching out to resources, to having needs that were met by resource use, and finally to having needs that were unmet (the least positive problem-solving state). For each outcome—perceived stress, general attitudes toward the military, and support for the soldier staying in the military—the outcomes tended to be less positive for each successive stage, and those who had their needs unmet had the most stress and the least-positive attitudes.

The one exception to this pattern across outcomes was that those spouses with needs who did not reach out to resources and those who reached out to resources and had their needs met were not significantly different from one another. An exploration of spouses' reasons for why they did not seek resources to help with their needs revealed that spouses who solved their problems on their own experienced less stress and had more-positive general attitudes toward the military than spouses who used resources and had their needs met. In contrast, spouses who had difficulty finding resources because they did not know whom to turn to for help experienced more stress and less-positive general attitudes toward the military than those who used resources and had their needs met. Spouses who did not use resources because they thought that there was nothing anyone could do to solve their problems also expressed significantly less-positive general attitudes toward the military and less support for their soldiers remaining in the military. Finally, those who did not want to ask for help also tended to have more stress and less-positive general attitudes toward the military.

Thus, part of the explanation for why spouses who did not use resources were similar on stress and attitudes toward the military to those who used resources and had their needs met is due to their reasons for not using resources: Those who had already solved their problems had better outcomes, and those who did not use resources because they did not know whom to turn to for help had worse outcomes, perhaps canceling each other out in the analysis. It is unclear why these same reasons were not associated with spouses' support for their soldiers staying in the military, but spouses' feelings that there was nothing anyone could do to help them was a significant factor in this particular outcome. This suggests that spouses' perceptions that there was nothing anyone could do to help them and lack of knowledge regarding what help might be available are both avenues that warrant further exploration.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This study followed up on a 2014 survey of soldiers to examine the problems and needs of Army spouses and the resources they used to try to solve their problems (Sims et al., 2017). We used a survey that paralleled the 2014 soldier survey and included some important modifications based on lessons learned from the soldier survey. Like the soldier survey, the current survey was composed of a holistic assessment of the problems spouses and their families faced in the past year, their perceived needs for assistance for their most-pressing problems, resources sought to address those problems, and whether those resources met their needs. Spouses also reported their experience of stress and their attitudes toward the military, and we used those measures to assess the relationship between having unmet needs and important outcomes for spouses and the Army. In this chapter, following some caveats, we discuss our findings, their application, and the study limitations.

Brief Caveats to Consider When Interpreting the Results

Although the research described in this report has several strengths, including a large probability-based sample of Army spouses from different sociodemographic groups, there are several important caveats to consider when interpreting the results. First, it is possible that self-reported problems and needs may differ from actual problems and needs for a number of reasons. These include a possible reluctance to report issues (although it is unlikely that this concern was prevalent on a large scale; respondents were quite willing to name a number of issues faced in the past year), as well as the possibility that respondents' self-reported needs might differ from how an external observer, such as a helping professional, might characterize their needs. For example, it is possible that people do not understand what kinds of help would be most likely to alleviate their problems (e.g., people may think that they need information when they really need professional counseling).

We asked spouses to prioritize their most-pressing problems and thoroughly explored solution-seeking and outcomes for those problems only. So, when we examine whether or how well these problems were resolved, we cannot speak to the whole range

of challenges Army spouses face over the course of a year. Neither can we use the data to evaluate the effectiveness of any particular program or resource for solving spouses' problems: A program or resource might have different effects for spouses who use it for lower-priority problems. Finally, this survey provided a single point-in-time perspective on a process of problem-solving that inherently unfolds over time. Perceptions of problems and needs may change over time, and respondents' memories may be imperfect. Moreover, we did not assess some aspects of the process that might be useful for interpretation, such as whether unmet needs were long-standing or recent, although we did ask spouses to indicate perceptions of problem severity.

Our response rate was not high, which indicates that there might have been unknown factors influencing response to the survey, although we attempted to mitigate these potential influences. The data from the Army spouses who responded to the survey were weighted to be representative but could still be biased in ways that are not observable. We did consider a number of potentially relevant characteristics, both in choosing our sample and in the weighting itself, in an attempt to cast a broad net.

Although these caveats are important, our findings in themselves represent an important advance in understanding the potential problems that weigh on soldiers and their families in that we have direct reports of spouses' perceptions. Furthermore, regardless of how an objective observer may characterize a situation, spouses' perceptions are what influence how spouses interact with the Army way of life.

Summary of Findings

What Problems Do Army Spouses Have?

Spouses selected the issues they experienced in the past year from among 96 different issues, and they could write in their own responses for issues that were not listed. **Feeling stressed, overwhelmed, or tired—both the spouse or the soldier—were the most frequently selected issues, followed by feelings of loneliness or boredom.** When asked to choose the top two problem areas that were most significant in the past year, **spouses most frequently chose *work-life balance*, *military practices and culture*, and *own well-being* as their top problem domains.** In terms of the write-in responses for problems that were not listed on the survey, almost 2 percent of spouses wrote in that they had “trouble finding suitable employment.” However, not all spouses reported problems; around 5 percent of spouses reported that they had experienced no problems in the past year.

Compared with spouses with other employment statuses, spouses who were unemployed and looking for work were more likely to prioritize problems in the *financial or legal problems* domain, while those who were unemployed and not looking for work were more likely to prioritize problems with their *own well-being*. Spouses who were employed full time were more likely to prioritize problems in the *work-life balance*

domain than spouses who were unemployed. **These differences serve to confirm a narrative in which spouse employment is necessary for the financial stability of the family unit but brings with it the need to balance the demands of employment with home life.**

In addition, the farther spouses lived from their soldiers' military posts, the more likely they were to prioritize *relationship problems*, while spouses who lived closer to post (or on post) were more likely to prioritize *work-life balance* and *household management*. Spouses whose soldiers had deployed in the past year were less likely to prioritize *soldiers' well-being* but more likely to prioritize *relationship problems*.

The soldier's pay grade was also associated with the likelihood of prioritizing different problem domains. **Spouses of junior enlisted soldiers were more likely to prioritize *financial or legal problems*. Spouses of both junior enlisted and junior officers were more likely to prioritize problems with *military practices and culture*.**

On average, *the relationship problems* domain was rated as the most severe, among those who chose this problem as a top two problem domain. *Military practices and culture* had lower severity ratings, although it was chosen as a top two problem by one-quarter of respondents. **Thus, *relationship problems* among military couples should be considered a priority issue, even though it is not as widespread a problem as *military practices and culture*.**

What Types of Help Did Spouses Need to Address Their Problems?

We asked spouses to indicate the types of help they needed to address their problems; if they had several needs, we asked them to prioritize, again, the top two needs for each problem. **The most frequently prioritized type of help needed to address problems was emotional or social support, with about one-third of spouses reporting this need. Activities, general information, advice, and counseling were only somewhat less frequently chosen.**

However, about 17 percent of respondents reported that they had no needs for any of their problems. When asked why, these spouses said that they had already solved (32 percent) or were currently solving (32 percent) one or both of their problems by themselves. On a less positive note, 30 percent of these spouses indicated, "There's nothing anyone can do to help solve the problem." Since, by design, questionnaires rely on respondent reports of their perspectives, it is difficult to know whether these spouses are actually able to solve their problems or whether there is truly nothing anyone could do to help solve the problems of spouses who chose this response. However, it seems evident that they perceive themselves as unable to find solutions to their problems, and this would influence their behavior.

Employment status played a part in reported needs: Those who were unemployed and looking for work were more likely to indicate that they needed a helping hand to help them manage their problems than those who were not looking and a greater need

for general information than all other groups, except those who were employed full time.

Those who had dependent children were more likely to indicate that they needed a helping hand but *less* likely than those without dependent children to indicate a need for advice or either general or specific information. A lower likelihood of needing specific information was particularly the case if the problem was *military practices and culture*. **Pay grade was associated with choice of needs, such that junior enlisted spouses were more likely to indicate a need for general information, particularly for problems with *military practices and culture*, and were much more likely to indicate a need for a helping hand.**

Looking at the most frequently reported problem domains, the most frequent need for *work-life balance* was activities (for fitness, recreation, stress relief, and family bonding), while general (i.e., about rules or policies or about what is available and how to access it) and specific (i.e., about training or deployment schedules) information were the most frequently reported needs for *military practices and culture*. The most frequent type of need reported for *own well-being* was social or emotional support, although some spouses also reported needing activities or professional counseling.

What Types of Resources, If Any, Did Spouses Use to Try to Meet Their Needs?

Among Army spouses who had problems and needs, 90 percent reported using one or more resources for help with their needs, suggesting that they are willing to seek help to resolve their problems. For the minority of spouses who did not use resources for one or more of their needs, the most commonly reported reason was that they did not know whom to contact for help (32 percent), which suggests that potentially solvable problems could be persisting because of a lack of awareness of programs and services available to Army spouses and how to access those resources.

Spouses of junior officers, in particular, were more likely to have used resources to help meet their needs (94 percent). Spouses reported reaching out to more than four resources per problem, with spouses of junior officers using almost five resources per problem. There was also a general tendency for spouses who lived farther from post to use fewer resources and fewer military resources, in particular.

About 85 percent of spouses reported reaching out to one or more military resources across problems, which suggests that even the civilian side of an Army family relies on the Army to help address pressing problems, although a minority of spouses do solely seek solutions elsewhere. For those who did access resources, the most commonly used military resources were a military-covered medical provider, followed by military internet resources or official Army social media (43 and 29 percent, respectively). An Army FRG was contacted by around 15 percent of spouses.¹ The most commonly contacted type of nonmilitary resource was spouses' social networks: Personal

¹ Army FRGs have previously been shown to have low awareness and uptake among spouses (Booth et al., 2007).

networks outside the military were contacted by more than 50 percent of spouses who used resources, followed by other military spouses known in person (43 percent), non-military internet resources (35 percent), and unofficial social media military networks (28 percent). Indeed, **among the most frequently used resources for help with each of the problem domains were social networks and nonmilitary internet resources.**

How Well, and Easily, Were Their Needs Met?

On average, spouses were somewhat satisfied with the resources they contacted for their most-pressing needs, with the average rating falling around the midpoint of the scale. Spouses who were unemployed and looking for work were less satisfied with both military and nonmilitary resources. In addition, spouses who lived farther away from their soldiers' military posts were less satisfied with military resources than spouses who lived closer to post.

Most respondents reported that they were generally comfortable using military resources, and about one-half of spouses agreed that it is easy to find out about military resources. **However, spouses expressed more uncertainty about next steps when they experience difficulties accessing military resources:** About one-third agreed that they knew whom to contact if military resources were not meeting their needs, and almost one-half disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. About 40 percent agreed that they know whom to contact when they have a problem finding the right military resource for their needs, but almost 40 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement.

Generally, the farther spouses lived from their soldiers' military posts, the less comfortable they were using military resources, the less they knew whom to contact when military resources were not meeting their needs, and the less easy they found it to learn about military resources. They also were less likely to rely on other military spouses as a resource. **Spouses of junior enlisted soldiers were also significantly less comfortable using military resources and navigating the system.** This also echoes prior research (e.g., Booth et al., 2007; Sims et al., 2017, 2018) regarding the vulnerability of this group.

When asked directly about whether their needs were met, **just over 22 percent of all spouses (i.e., not only those with problems and needs) indicated that they had one or more unmet needs,** while almost 48 percent indicated that the resources they used met their needs. Spouses who were unemployed and looking for work were more likely to have unmet needs. In addition, the farther spouses lived from post, the more likely they were to have unmet needs.

Among those with unmet needs, two problem domains stood out with higher rates of unmet needs: *military practices and culture* (35 percent) and *health care system problems* (34 percent). Two domains with lower rates of unmet needs were *own well-being* (23 percent) and *household management* (21 percent).

What Were Spouses' General Perceptions of Resources?

Stepping back from the discussion of problem-solving: We asked all spouses about their perceptions of military resources. Military-covered medical providers, Army MWR, ACS, and official military internet resources were most likely to generate agreement with a statement that the resource has a "good reputation." However, some resources were unfamiliar to one-third or more of spouses: the soldier's chain of command, Army FRGs, and military employment resources. Given that Army FRGs and military employment resources are directed at spouses specifically, this suggests that additional outreach may be helpful.

In terms of what modes of contact would be best in terms of outreach, our findings suggest that postcards may be viable, with about 60 percent of spouses selecting this method. Postcards or other informative mailings are more expensive but might get more attention, provide targeted and timely information about available resources (e.g., resources related to preparing for or adjusting after deployments), and provide a physical reminder of an event or activity. Facebook (selected by 54 percent) and email (selected by about 45 percent) are cheaper, but Facebook membership is not universal, nor is following an installation's or a specific resource's Facebook page. Email is easiest and cheapest, but spouses are not issued email addresses by the Army or DoD, and no systematic record of spouses' email addresses is maintained.

How Are Problems, Needs, and Resource Use Related to Attitudes About the Army?

We examined how problem-solving status, including unmet needs, affected outcomes, such as perceived stress, general attitudes toward the Army, and support for the soldier remaining in the Army. To do this, we categorized spouses into groups based on their status regarding problem resolution, help needed, resources accessed, and whether those resources met (or did not meet) their needs.

We then examined the relationship between these problem-solving status categories and outcomes of interest. Of note, the sociodemographic characteristics examined in the other analyses we did were included, so that such characteristics as employment and distance from military post were also controlled for in these outcome analyses. Again, demonstrating the vulnerability shown in other findings, **spouses who were unemployed and looking for work experienced higher levels of stress** than those who were employed full time or were unemployed and not looking for work. In addition, there was a general trend in which **spouses who lived farther from their soldiers' military posts experienced greater levels of stress, less-positive attitudes toward the military, and less support for their soldiers staying in the military.** When considered with the finding that spouses who live farther from post are less comfortable using military resources, this trend suggests that these spouses are less integrated with the Army community.

Finally, **spouses of junior enlisted soldiers reported significantly higher levels of stress, less-positive general attitudes toward the military, and less-favorable**

attitudes toward staying in the military than spouses from any other pay grade group. Spouses of senior enlisted soldiers reported higher levels of stress than spouses of junior or senior officers. These influences on various outcomes were clear, despite controlling for problem-solving status.

However, there was also a clear pattern in these various outcome measures for problem-solving categorization. We ordered the problem-solving categories from notionally positive to negative: going in order from having no problems, to having problems but no needs, to having needs but not reaching out to resources, to having needs that were met by resource use, and, finally, to having needs that were unmet. **For each outcome—perceived stress, general attitudes toward the military, and support for the soldier staying in the military—the outcomes tended to be less positive for each successive stage. For each outcome, those who had their needs unmet had the most stress and the least-positive attitudes, suggesting that, although not having a problem in the first place is best, a problem solved is a far better outcome than a need that goes unmet.**

The one exception to the general pattern across outcomes was that those spouses with needs who did not reach out to resources and those who reached out to resources and had their needs met were not statistically different from one another. An exploration of spouses' reasons for why they did not seek resources to help with their needs revealed that **spouses who solved their problems on their own experienced less stress and had more-positive general attitudes toward the military than spouses who used resources and had their needs met.** In contrast, **spouses who had difficulty finding resources because they did not know whom to turn to for help experienced more stress and less-positive attitudes toward the military** than those who used resources and had their needs met. This suggests that, although some spouses seem able to resolve their problems on their own, lack of awareness of resources may have a serious impact on spousal well-being.

Implications of Study Findings

This report describes the types of problems Army spouses experience, their needs for help with their highest-priority problems, which resources they used to help meet those needs, and whether those resources actually helped meet their needs. The results of the survey have several implications for Army policy for spouses.

As with the soldier survey, our findings indicate that **junior enlisted soldiers, and their spouses, are particularly vulnerable.** They are not yet integrated into the military community and are more likely to cite problems with military practices and culture, more likely to cite a need for both general (particularly if their problems are part of *military practices and culture*) and specific information, and less comfortable with aspects of navigating the system in place to help them. It is possible that this is

a lack of experience with the network of resources available to help and that innovative outreach could increase their awareness. Spouses of junior officers, while obviously advantaged in some regards, confront some similar challenges, such as a higher reported rate of problems with *military practices and culture* and a higher need for specific information. However, these spouses do not show the same concerns navigating the system and indeed use it to a greater extent than other pay grade groups. New to the military way of life, they nonetheless seem to have a leg up on using its resources to help solve their problems.

Spouses who live farther away from their soldiers' military posts appear to be facing challenges integrating into the Army community. Although the problems and needs they prioritize most frequently do not suggest specific problems with the military system, they use fewer resources overall to solve their problems, have lower comfort with military resources and lower satisfaction with resources, and have higher levels of needs that go unmet. They are also less likely to be connected to other military spouses, either in person or through social media groups. Although a lower use of military resources seems reasonable for spouses for whom those resources are less convenient, the relative lack of comfort navigating military resources reported by those living farther from post, the use of fewer resources overall, greater unmet need, more stress, less-positive general attitudes toward the military, and less support of the soldier staying in the military suggest that initiatives to better reach this population and integrate them into Army life may be valuable.

One group that seems to fare better is spouses with dependent children. Although having children can represent a demand on family resources and present its own problems (for example, these spouses are more likely to indicate a need for a direct helping hand), these spouses reported lower needs for general and specific information, fewer unmet needs, and greater comfort with resource navigation. It is possible that use of military resources, such as CYS, presents an opportunity to bring these spouses into the fold and communicate relevant navigational information.

A clear finding is that **military and nonmilitary resources do not always work well for spouses.** More than 20 percent of all spouses reported one or more unmet needs, and prominent needs were for social support and for information about how to navigate the military system. Spouses of junior enlisted soldiers and those living farther from their soldiers' military posts are the most vulnerable subgroups, although spouses who are unemployed and looking for work also face challenges in several aspects of problem-solving.

Army FRGs are intended to provide support for spouses, but these groups are not well used (14 percent reported contacting an Army FRG for help). However, Army FRGs are also not rated as particularly helpful by those who do use them, and almost one-third of spouses indicated that they were not aware of this resource. Still, Army FRGs have the most potential to help spouses learn how to navigate the Army system and to provide needed social support and decrease loneliness and social

isolation among spouses, addressing the social and emotional support that spouses highlighted as a top need. **We recommend that the Army consider ways to boost the effectiveness of Army FRGs and increase participation in them**, especially by spouses of junior enlisted soldiers and those who live far from their soldiers' military posts. Given the poor use of Army FRGs and the lack of awareness and poor reputation of them, **this will likely require a complete rethinking or reboot of Army FRGs as a family support resource**. Some practical preliminary recommendations regarding what factors make an Army FRG effective (including current contact information and provision of training for the group leader) are delineated in Booth et al. (2007).

In addition, **there is a lack of awareness of programs that could help spouses with their problems**. Although spouses were quite willing to use resources, when they did not, about one-third did so because they did not know where to seek resources. Short mail communications (such as postcards) or emails directly to spouses are relatively unexplored avenues for reaching spouses and informing them of programs, activities, or services that could benefit them. Mail communications are costly, so they might be useful for special events, important program reminders, or even to direct spouses to such resources as Army FRGs, ACS, and Military OneSource (whose mission includes connecting soldiers and families with other resources). However, mail is not cost-effective for regular communication with spouses. Facebook is another option for reaching spouses, and many installations have Facebook groups for spouses, but they must be aware of the group, and awareness of such resources as installations' Facebook groups is the crux of the problem facing spouses. Furthermore, spouses would have to be willing to join Facebook and be willing to join an installation's Facebook group. These conditions suggest that Facebook (or other social media), although useful for reaching spouses who are already connected, might not be the best conduit for reaching *all* spouses who could benefit from program outreach. Many spouses indicated that email would also be a good way to reach them. However, unlike soldiers, spouses are not issued an official Army email address where they can be contacted by programs with outreach materials or information, and there is currently no procedure to collect spouses' personal email addresses as a means of contacting them about resources that might interest them. **We recommend that the Army explore outreach to spouses through systematic collection or provision of email addresses for spouses**.

Even when spouses know about resources, **spouses have difficulty accessing and navigating the Army system**. A sizable proportion of spouses have problems with military practices and culture and have unmet needs after contacting resources, as well as discomfort using resources and lack of knowledge about whom to go to for help when a resource is not helpful. These are key issues in getting spouses the help they need to solve problems, and unmet needs, in particular, have a significant association with spouses' levels of stress, attitudes toward the military, and willingness for their soldiers to remain in the Army. Results of the soldier survey in 2014 suggested that the Army implement a "no wrong door" policy for soldiers seeking resources—that is, any

program or service that a soldier goes to for help should be able offer direction to the best resource to address a problem, even if the resource is in another program office. **We recommend a “no wrong door” policy to help spouses find the resources they need.**

In addition, because spouses have difficulty accessing Army resources in the first place, **we recommend that the Army encourage spouses to use helplines (e.g., Military OneSource) as a tool for negotiating resources.** Encouraging spouses to use helplines to assist them in finding the best resources for their needs would serve as the “best” door for making Army services work better for spouses. The helplines could be through existing resources (e.g., the Military OneSource helpline) or a new Army-specific helpline, but they should be staffed with operators who can help spouses find the resources they need and help them remediate problems when resources fail to provide them with the help they were seeking. In addition, **we recommend that the Army build systematically solicited “customer” feedback into ongoing program evaluation and monitoring systems,** including automated comment systems. Information about groups that are particularly vulnerable to not having their needs met successfully may help providers solicit feedback from spouses (and other users) who may be facing particular challenges engaging the system. This feedback will help program staff understand the problems spouses are having accessing and using their resources and how to better improve program functioning for Army families.

Survey Instrument

This study recruited spouses of Army soldiers through postcards to take a web-based survey. Three screener questions verified that respondents were eligible to take the survey (e.g., they were 18 years old or older and married to an Army soldier). The survey was programmed so that respondents were presented only the items that might apply to them (e.g., spouses without children did not see items about children). In addition to skipping questions that did not apply to the respondent, the web-based version was programmed to autofill some questions based on prior responses. For example, the survey displayed which problems had been selected as top two problems when asking the respondent about what types of help were needed. The full text of the survey is presented in this appendix, with notes in brackets indicating skip patterns and autofills that were in place programmatically in the web-based version of the survey. The response options to nondemographic items (e.g., questions on problems, needs, resources, and barriers) were randomized to prevent order effects in survey responses.

Welcome to the Army Spouse Survey

To confirm that you are eligible to participate in this survey, please answer the following questions:

SCR1. Are you 18 years old or older?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

SCR2. Are you married to an active duty Army soldier?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

SCR3a. What is **your** military status?

(Check one)

- ☐ I am currently in the Active Duty military
- ☐ I am currently serving in the Reserves or National Guard
- ☐ I am not currently in the military, but my spouse is

[If SCR3a=ACTIVE OR RESERVES, DISPLAY AT TOP OF INTRO SCREEN
"You are eligible to take this survey if you take it off-duty."]

[If ANY SCR1, SCR2 equal "no" display the following message and discontinue the survey: *Thank you for your interest in the survey. These are all the questions we have for you today.*]

Army Spouse Survey

SURVEY APPROVAL AUTHORITY:

U.S. ARMY RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR THE BEHAVIORAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

SURVEY CONTROL NUMBER: DAPE-ARI-AO-18-03

RCS: MILPC-3

Expires: 10/13/2018

Thank you. It looks like you are eligible to take part in our survey and receive \$10 for your time. [IF IN MILITARY (SCR3a=1 or 2) AT SCR3a: **You should only take this survey when you are off-duty.**] The information below tells you more about it, so you can decide if you want to take part.

This consent form provides information that describes why this information is being collected and how it will be used.

Purpose of the Survey

The Army wants to learn more about the needs of spouses of Soldiers and their families and how well those needs are being met. The Army has asked the RAND Corporation, a non-profit research organization, to conduct a research study to provide the Army with up-to-date information on whether those needs are being met, which support services are working well and which need improvement. Your responses are critical in ensuring that the Army has the best information possible in order to support spouses of Soldiers and their families.

Who Is Being Asked To Take The Survey

This survey is being offered to a random sample of spouses of Soldiers living in the US, age 18 years and older.

What Survey Participation Involves

Participation involves completing this Web-based survey, which should take about 20 minutes to complete.

The survey will ask you about different kinds of problems or challenges you may have had in the past year, about what kinds of help you needed with those problems, and whether you were satisfied with the kinds of support available to you for those problems. Finally, we will ask some background questions and you will have the chance to comment on the survey itself or on issues that the survey did not cover. You will receive a \$10 gift card for completing the survey. Your gift card will be emailed to you at the email address you provide within 5 business days.

Confidentiality

RAND will treat your answers as confidential. This survey is not designed to collect personally identifying information: please do not give us your name, contact information or other identifying details in any written comments. If you provide it, the research team will delete it before they analyze the results. We cannot provide confidentiality for your comments if you state that you have engaged in, or plan to engage in, criminal misconduct or you threaten to harm yourself or others. Note: We will not be able to read your comments in real time or respond to requests for help. If you are in distress and need help, please contact one of the resources listed below.

The email address you provide for the gift card will only be used to send you the gift card.

To reduce the number of questions on the survey, we will be linking your survey responses to some basic demographic information from your spouse's personnel files, such as rank and duty station. However, we will use the survey responses and demographic information from personnel files only for research. The responses and demographic information of survey participants will be combined together and reported only in summary form to ensure that individual participants cannot be identified. While there is a possibility that DoD personnel responsible for the protection of human subjects may have access to the research records collected during this study in order to ensure the protection of research participants, your information will never be shared with anyone else outside of the RAND research team, such as anyone in your spouse's chain of command. At the end of the study, we will destroy any information that identifies you as a participant.

Participation Is Entirely Voluntary

Your participation in this survey is voluntary. You may decide not to take part now or at any time. If you feel uncomfortable answering any of the questions, you may skip to the next question. You may stop taking the survey at any time without any negative consequences to you or your spouse.

Although there are no direct benefits to you for participating in the study, your participation in the survey will help Army families by informing installation commands about the strengths and weaknesses of its family support programs. This knowledge will guide future improvements to these programs. In a time of declining resources it will enable the Army to prioritize services that are most important to you. The risk of participation in this study is minimal. Some questions may touch upon sensitive topics such as problems you have experienced in the past year. If this causes you distress, or you need help with resolving those problems, we encourage you to contact your local chain of command, a chaplain, or mental health professional. Support is available 24/7 through Military OneSource: www.militaryonesource.mil or 1-800-342-9647. If you are in emotional crisis, confidential help is also available through the Military Crisis Line: call 1-800-273-8255 and press 1, or send a text to 838255, or visit the website to initiate a confidential chat <http://veteranscrisisline.net/ActiveDuty.aspx>

Whom to Contact

If you have any technical issues in taking this survey, please contact [Survey Help](#) [[link to send email to technical assistance](#)].

If you have any questions about the purpose or content of the survey, please send them to:

Thomas Trail
Thomas_Trail@rand.org
(703) 413-1100 ext. 5681

If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject, or need to report a research-related injury or concern, you can contact RAND's Human Subjects Protection Committee toll-free at (866) 697-5620 or by emailing hspcinfo@rand.org. If possible, when you contact the Committee, please reference Study #2016-1041.

Press the Continue button if you agree to do the survey. You can print a copy of this Informed Consent Statement by clicking the following link [[Link to consent pdf](#)].

[CONTINUE TO THE SURVEY]

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this important study. Please answer each question thoughtfully and truthfully. This will allow us to provide an accurate picture of the different experiences of today's Army Spouses. If you prefer not to answer a specific question for any reason, just leave it blank. Some of the questions in this survey will be personal. For your privacy, you may want to take this survey where other people won't see your screen.

As you move through the survey, please do not use your browser's navigation buttons. If you need to go back to a previous survey question, please use the "Back" button at the bottom of each page.

We would first like to know about your current living situation:

SB1. Which of the following best describes where you live?

If you have PCS'd or moved locally in the past year, please answer with respect to the place where you were located for more than half of the time.

- ☐ Privatized military housing on post
- ☐ Military family housing on post
- ☐ Military family housing off post
- ☐ Civilian housing that I own or pay mortgage on
- ☐ Civilian housing that I rent, off post
- ☐ With friends or family
- ☐ Temporary housing (hotel, motel)

[For branching instructions: If "Privatized military housing on post" or "Military family housing on post" are NOT checked in SB1, then store "lives off post"]

SB2. **[If lives off post, ask. ELSE GO TO SB7]** How far away from your spouse's installation do you live (one way)?

- ☐ Less than 5 miles away
- ☐ 5–10 miles away
- ☐ 11–20 miles away
- ☐ 21–40 miles away
- ☐ More than 40 miles away

SB7. At which military installation is your spouse currently stationed?

[Option to select from drop-down list of all sampled installations]

SB8. How long has your spouse been stationed at this installation?

- ☐ Less than 1 month
- ☐ 1–6 months
- ☐ More than 6 months, less than 1 year

- ☐ 1 to 2 years
- ☐ More than 2 years

SB9. Are you currently living in the same location as your spouse? Please answer yes if you and your spouse share a household but he or she is temporarily stationed at another location.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

SB10. How long have you lived in your current location?

- ☐ Less than 1 month
- ☐ 1–6 month
- ☐ More than 6 months, less than 1 year
- ☐ 1 to 2 years
- ☐ More than 2 years

SB11. How many years have you been married to your current spouse?
_____ year/s *(If less than 1 year, please enter 0)* [RANGE 0–99 YEARS]

SB12. [Response required to proceed] Do any children under the age of 18 live with you at least half time?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

SB13. [If SB12 = YES]. Please select the number of children in each age group who live with you at least half time. Please select “0” to indicate “none.”

Age group	Number of children
a. Under 1 year	[Drop-down box that goes from 0 to “10 or more”]
b. 1–5 years	[Drop-down box that goes from 0 to “10 or more”]
c. 6–13 years	[Drop-down box that goes from 0 to “10 or more”]
d. 14–17 years	[Drop-down box that goes from 0 to “10 or more”]
e. 18–21 years	[Drop down box that goes from 0 to “10 or more”]

SB14. How many children **under the age of 18** do NOT live with you, but depend on your household for at least half of their financial support?

- ☐ 0 children

- ☐ 1 child
- ☐ 2 or more children

[For branching instructions:

If SB12 = YES OR SB14 > 0, then STORE “has dependent children.”]

SB6. Not including yourself or your spouse, **how many ADULTS (age 18 or over) depend on your household income for more than half of their financial support?**

This can include adult children or parents who may or may not live with you.

- ☐ 0 adults
- ☐ 1 adult
- ☐ 2 or more adults

Problems or Challenges

Life sometimes creates changes for Soldiers and their families that can take the form of problems or challenges. We developed a list of general categories of challenges that may come up:

- Military Practices and Culture
- Work/Life Balance
- Household Management
- Financial or Legal Problems
- Your Spouse’s Well-Being
- Health Care System Problems
- Relationship Problems
- Child Well-Being
- Your Own Well-Being

We’d like to ask you to check off the kinds of problems and challenges you experienced **in the past year**. Then we will ask about what you needed to deal with these problems, the ways you tried to solve the problems, and your satisfaction with the kinds of assistance available to you.

Military Practices and Culture Problems

PB1. Please check any problems or challenges you experienced with **Military Practices and Culture** during the **past year**:

(Check all that apply)

- ☐ Adjusting to military language, organization, or culture
- ☐ Figuring out how to use “the system”—where to go, with whom to talk to get help or information
- ☐ Getting your spouse’s chain of command to listen to you, take you seriously, treat you with respect

- ☐ Rumors/gossip in the military community
 - ☐ Not being able to stay at/go to the military installation you prefer
 - ☐ Lack of or incorrect information about deployments
 - ☐ Lack of contact with other military spouses
 - ☐ Other military spouses not treating you with respect
 - ☐ Other challenge dealing with military practices and culture
- Please specify: _____
- OR
- ☐ I did not experience any of the above problems.

Work/Life Balance Problems

PB2. Regardless of whether you work for pay or have unpaid responsibilities such as childcare, schoolwork, or volunteer activities, please check any problems or challenges you experienced related to **Work/Life Balance** during the **past year**:

(Check all that apply)

- ☐ Finding time for sleep/healthy diet/physical exercise
 - ☐ Being able to pursue educational opportunities (going back to school, finding time for classes, etc.)
 - ☐ Lack of recreational activities/sports/hobbies for you
 - ☐ Finding nearby or affordable options for recreation/stress relief/family time
 - ☐ Long work hours/inconvenient schedule for you
 - ☐ Long work hours/inconvenient schedule for your spouse
 - ☐ Not enough leave time for your spouse before or after a deployment or assignment away from home
 - ☐ Long commute to work or other responsibilities
 - ☐ Work not challenging or doesn't use your skills/education
 - ☐ Finding time for social activities outside of work
 - ☐ Distance from military childcare
 - ☐ Military childcare availability (waiting list, hours, priorities, etc.)
 - ☐ Other challenge related to work/life balance
- Please specify: _____
- OR
- ☐ I did not experience any of the above problems.

Household Management Problems

PB3. Please check any problems or challenges regarding **Household Management** you experienced in the **past year**:

(Check all that apply)

- ☐ Moving/storage of belongings for PCS moves
 - ☐ Theft/break-in/vandalism of home
 - ☐ Transportation issues (car problems, lack of transportation options, etc.)
 - ☐ Time management (getting everything done in the amount of time you have)
 - ☐ Housework/yard work problems
 - ☐ Managing kids' or other family members' schedules (lessons, school or sports events, doctor appointments, play dates, etc.)
 - ☐ Finding suitable housing/current housing is poor
 - ☐ Home repairs/work orders/home maintenance
 - ☐ Other household management challenge
- Please specify: _____

OR

- ☐ I did not experience any of the above problems.

Financial or Legal Problems

PB4. Please check any **Financial or Legal** problems or challenges you experienced in the **past year**:

(Check all that apply)

- ☐ Pay issues for you or your spouse (access to pay, errors)
 - ☐ Trouble paying debt or bills
 - ☐ Managing bank accounts, budgeting
 - ☐ Bankruptcy or foreclosure
 - ☐ Power of attorney problems
 - ☐ Child custody/family legal problems
 - ☐ Filing for legal separation or divorce
 - ☐ Finding a job that pays me enough or offers me enough hours
 - ☐ Spouse's job security/preparation to transition
 - ☐ Other financial or legal challenge
- Please specify: _____

OR

- ☐ I did not experience any of the above problems.

Health Care System Problems

This section asks about problems you may have experienced with the health care system, to include insurance and medical treatment.

PB5. Please check any problems or challenges you experienced with **Health Care** in the **past year**:

(Check all that apply)

- ☐ Difficulty finding a physician who takes TRICARE
 - ☐ Timeliness at a treatment facility (e.g., getting a timely appointment, waiting time for an appointment, hours or days open)
 - ☐ Distance/transportation to a health treatment facility
 - ☐ Understanding your family's military health benefits
 - ☐ Problems handling military health insurance claims
 - ☐ Managing dependents' health care [spouses with dependents only—DISPLAY IF RESPONDENT HAS DEPENDENT CHILDREN OR SB6 > 0]
 - ☐ Poor quality of military or TRICARE network health care services
 - ☐ Problems with managing pregnancy/childbirth
 - ☐ Managing health care needs of family members who are not military dependents
 - ☐ Problems managing injuries or illness
 - ☐ Other health care system challenge
- Please specify: _____
- OR
- ☐ I did not experience any of the above problems

Relationship Problems

PB6. Please check any **Relationship Problems** or challenges you experienced with your spouse or partner in the **past year**:

(Check all that apply)

- ☐ Communication challenges (not enough communication/difficulty expressing feelings)
- ☐ Growing apart/in different directions
- ☐ Arguments
- ☐ Physical violence or verbal mistreatment
- ☐ Infidelity (cheating)
- ☐ Divorce/Separation/End of relationship
- ☐ Little or no physical affection
- ☐ Changing roles or responsibilities in the family/marriage
- ☐ Trouble reuniting/reconnecting after a deployment

- ☐ Problems due to having to be separated during deployment
- ☐ Problems due to having to live far away from your spouse
- ☐ Other marital/relationship challenge:
Please specify: _____

OR

- ☐ I did not experience any of the above problems.

Child Well-Being Problems

[ASK IF DEPENDENT CHILDREN (age 21 or younger) ONLY]

PB7. Please check any **Child Well-Being** problems or challenges your child or children experienced in the **past year**:

(Check all that apply)

- ☐ Poor quality military childcare
- ☐ Lack of affordable military childcare
- ☐ Lack of quality non-military childcare
- ☐ Lack of affordable non-military childcare
- ☐ Lack of quality, affordable schools for your child
- ☐ Lack of wholesome recreation/sports activities/groups/hobbies
- ☐ Child's poor or declining grades
- ☐ Emotional/behavior problems
- ☐ Child's trouble bonding with parent
- ☐ Child's lack of contact with other military children
- ☐ Child's health problems
- ☐ Child's safety problems (bullying, abuse, etc.)
- ☐ Trouble adjusting after moving or relocation
- ☐ Trouble adjusting to separation from parent deployed or serving far from home
- ☐ Other child well-being challenge

Please specify: _____

OR

- ☐ I did not experience any of the above problems.

Problems with Your Own Well-Being

PB8. Please check any problems or challenges you experienced with **Your Own Well-Being** in the **past year**:

(Check all that apply)

- ☐ Feeling stressed/overwhelmed/tired
- ☐ Doing poorly in school/college or work

- ☐ Physical injury/illness/pain
- ☐ Difficulty adjusting to parenthood
- ☐ Loneliness/boredom
- ☐ Trouble forming lasting connections with people outside your immediate family
- ☐ Mood changes: feeling depressed, impatient, angry, aggressive, or anxious
- ☐ Substance abuse (alcohol, tobacco, drugs)
- ☐ Grieving the loss of a friend or loved one
- ☐ Trouble sleeping
- ☐ Problems as a result of risk-taking (like reckless driving)
- ☐ Difficulty controlling my spending
- ☐ Other well-being challenge:
Please specify: _____
- OR
- ☐ I did not experience any of the above problems

Problems with Your Spouse's Well-Being

PB9. Please check any problems or challenges related to **Your Spouse's Well-Being**. In the **past year**, did YOUR SPOUSE experience problems with:

(Check all that apply)

- ☐ Feeling stressed/overwhelmed/tired
- ☐ Doing poorly in school/college or work
- ☐ Physical injury/illness/pain
- ☐ Difficulty adjusting to parenthood
- ☐ Loneliness/boredom
- ☐ Trouble forming lasting connections with people outside your immediate family
- ☐ Mood changes: feeling depressed, impatient, angry, aggressive, or anxious
- ☐ Substance abuse (alcohol, tobacco, drugs)
- ☐ Grieving the loss of a friend or loved one
- ☐ Trouble sleeping
- ☐ Risk taking (like reckless driving)
- ☐ Difficulty controlling spending
- ☐ Other challenge related to your spouse's well-being:
Please specify: _____
- OR
- ☐ My spouse did not experience any of the above problems.

Other Problems

PB10. If you didn't see a description of the challenges you faced, please briefly describe any OTHER type of problem you experienced in the past 12 months. You'll have a chance at the end of the survey to provide more detail about these issues, if you wish.

[Three empty numbered text boxes for write-in responses]

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

OR

☐ I did not experience any other challenges or problems in the past year.

NoP. [If respondents did not select any problems FROM ANY ITEM IN PB1–9 or list any “other” problems as individual options from PB10_1–PB10_3] It appears that you did not face any challenges or problems in the past year. *If that is correct, please check this box to proceed:*

☐ I did not experience any challenges or problems in the past year
[If checked, skip to S3]

If that is not correct, please return to the previous pages and be sure that your answers were recorded. For technical difficulties with the survey, please contact [INSERT contact information].

Top Two Problems

[If the respondent selected only one problem in PB1–9, code the domain that problem falls under as TTP1 and GO TO P1N1.]

[If the respondent selected two problems in PB1–9 and PB10_1–PB10_3, code the domains those problems as TTP1 and TTP2. Survey then skips to P1N1.]

[If the respondent selected more than two problems in PB1–9 and PB10_1–PB10_3, they are prompted to select top two problems in question TTP. The top two problems should be indicated by two variables: TTP1 and TTP2.]

TTP. From this list of problems you indicated you've faced in the past year, please pick which TWO TYPES OF PROBLEMS were most significant to you. These could include problems that are already resolved or ongoing problems.

[Displays all issues selected from each problem domain in PB1–10, organized by problem domain, including each of the three “other” responses in PB10, if relevant.]

[Sample autopopulated display for a respondent who selected three military practices and culture issues, four household management issues, and one own well-being issue.]

Military Practices and Culture

Figuring out how to use the “system”—where to go, with whom to talk to get help or information

Not being able to stay at/go to the military installation you prefer

Issues with spouse or partner adjustment to military culture

Household Management

Moving/storage of belongings for PCS move

Transportation issues

Finding suitable housing/current housing is poor

Home repairs/work orders/car maintenance

Problems with Your Own Well-Being

Loneliness/Boredom

** If you're having trouble deciding on only two, please pick the two that you would like to address in the survey right now. There will be a place for additional comments at the end of the survey where you can describe other problems.*

P1N1. You said that the following was one of the problems you faced in the past year:
*[Problem and issues autofilled below from TTP1. Display below simulated for respondent who selected three issues from **military practices and culture** and then selected this problem area as a top two problem.]*

Military Practices and Culture

Figuring out how to use the “system”—where to go, with whom to talk to get help or information

Not being able to stay at/go to the military installation you prefer

Issues with spouse or partner adjustment to military culture

During the past year...	Extremely severe	Very severe	Somewhat severe	Slightly severe	Not at all severe
How severe was this problem, at its worst?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

During the past year...	Extremely	Quite a bit	Somewhat	Slightly	Not at all
How much did this challenge interfere with work or daily routines?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
How much did this challenge make you feel stressed or anxious?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

P1N2. What kinds of help, if any, did you or your family NEED in the **past year** to deal with this problem?

(Check all that apply)

[EXAMPLE] Military Practices and Culture

Figuring out how to use the “system”—where to go, with whom to talk to get help or information
Not being able to stay at/go to the military installation you prefer
Issues with spouse or partner adjustment to military culture

- ☐ General information: for example, about rules or policies, or about what’s available and how to access it
- ☐ Specific information: for example, about schedules or points of contact
- ☐ An advocate: someone to try to get help for you
- ☐ Advice or education: people with experience to recommend the best solution for someone in your situation
- ☐ Emotional or social support
- ☐ Professional counseling
- ☐ A helping hand: loans, donations, services to help out with some of your responsibilities
- ☐ Activities: for fitness, socializing, recreation, stress relief, family bonding
- ☐ Other needs that don’t fit into the categories above.
Please specify: _____
- ☐ OR
- ☐ I had no need for assistance in this area.

[IF NOTHING CHECKED PLEASE CONFIRM WITH RESPONDENT]

P1N3. [If the respondent selects, "I had no need for assistance in this area," AT P1N2]
Why didn't you or your spouse/child need help with this problem?

- ☐ We already solved the problem by ourselves
- ☐ We are currently solving the problem by ourselves
- ☐ The problem went away on its own
- ☐ I expect the problem to go away on its own
- ☐ There's nothing anyone can do to help solve the problem
- ☐ Other (Please specify) _____

[If the respondent selected one need in P1N2, store it as P1Need1 AND GO TO P2N1]

[If the respondent has selected more than two needs in P1N2, an additional prompt on the next screen asks the respondent to pick the top two greatest needs. Code these into variables P1Need1 and P1Need2.]

[The following example is for a respondent who selected four types of needs for problems with *military practices and culture*.]

P1Need. The following is a list of the types of needs you indicated that you had for dealing with your problems. Please pick which TWO you think were the greatest, most significant needs you had:

Military Practices and Culture

Figuring out how to use the "system"—where to go, with whom to talk to get help or information

Not being able to stay at/go to the military installation you prefer

Issues with spouse or partner adjustment to military culture

- ☐ An advocate: someone to try to get help for you
- ☐ Advice or education: people with experience to recommend the best solution for someone in your situation
- ☐ Emotional or social support
- ☐ Activities: for fitness, socializing, recreation, stress relief, family bonding

[If only one problem area was selected, and respondent selects "I had no need for assistance in this area," respondent skips to S3.]

[If only one problem area was selected, and respondent indicates one or more needs, survey skips to Needs/Ways of Meeting Needs.]

[If a second top two problem area was selected, the respondent proceeds to P2N1.]

Second Top Two Problem Linked to Needs

P2N1. You said that the following was one of the problems you faced in the past year:
[Problem and issues autofilled below from TTP2. Display below simulated for respondent who selected one issue from *own well-being* and then selected this problem area as a top two problem.]

Problems with your Own Well-Being
Loneliness/Boredom

During the past year...	Extremely severe	Very severe	Somewhat severe	Slightly severe	Not at all severe
How severe was this problem, at its worst?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

During the past year...	Extremely	Quite a bit	Somewhat	Slightly	Not at all
How much did this challenge interfere with work or daily routines?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
How much did this challenge make you feel stressed or anxious?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

P2N2. What kinds of help, if any, did you or your spouse/child NEED in the past year to deal with this problem? Please include both help that you needed and were able to obtain, and help that you needed and were unable to obtain.

Problems with your Own Well-Being
Loneliness/Boredom

(Check all that apply)

- ☐ General information: for example, about rules or policies, or about what’s available and how to access it
- ☐ Specific information: for example, about schedules or points of contact
- ☐ An advocate: someone to try to get help for you
- ☐ Advice or education: people with experience to recommend the best solution for someone in your situation
- ☐ Emotional or social support
- ☐ Professional counseling
- ☐ A helping hand: loans, donations, services to help out with some of your responsibilities
- ☐ Activities: for fitness, socializing, recreation, stress relief, family bonding
- ☐ Other needs that don’t fit into the categories above:
Please specify: _____

- ☐ I had no need for assistance in this area.

P2N3. [If the respondent selects, "I had no need for assistance in this area," AT P2N2]
Why didn't you or your spouse/child need help with this problem?

- ☐ We already solved the problem by ourselves
☐ We are currently solving the problem by ourselves
☐ The problem went away on its own
☐ I expect the problem to go away on its own
☐ There's nothing anyone can do to help solve the problem
☐ Other (Please specify) _____

[If the respondent has selected more than two needs, an additional prompt on the next screen asks the respondent to pick the top two greatest needs. Code these into variables P2Need1 and P2Need2.]

[If the respondent selected one need in P2N2, store it as P2Need1 AND GO TO C1.]

[If the respondent has selected more than two needs in P2N2, an additional prompt on the next screen asks the respondent to pick the top two greatest needs. Code these into variables P2Need1 and P2Need2.]

[The following example is for a respondent who selected four types of needs for problems with Own Well-Being.]

P2Need. The following is a list of the types of needs you indicated that you had for dealing with your problems. Please pick which TWO you think were the greatest, most significant needs you had:

Problems with your Own Well-Being

Loneliness/Boredom

(Check all that apply)

- ☐ An advocate: someone to try to get help for you
☐ Advice or education: people with experience to recommend the best solution for someone in your situation
☐ Emotional or social support
☐ Activities: for fitness, socializing, recreation, stress relief, family bonding

[If respondent selects "I had no need for assistance in this area" for the second problem and had also responded this way for the first problem, respondent skips to S3.]

[If the respondent indicates a need for either first or second problem, survey proceeds to C1.]

Needs/Ways of Meeting Needs

C1. [Question autofills based on answers about problems and needs from prior questions: TTP1: P1Need1 and P1Need2, and TTP2: P2Need1 and P2Need2. The following simulates a display for a respondent who chose a need for specific information for problems with *military practices and culture*.]

[EXAMPLE:] For help with **Military Practices and Culture**, you said that you needed:

Specific Information: for example, about training or deployment schedules, or how spouses can reach deployed troops

Please check any of the following official **MILITARY** resources you or your spouse contacted in the **past year** to try to meet this need.

On the next page, we will ask you about non-military resources you may have contacted.

(Check all that apply)

[PROGRAMMING NOTE: RANDOMIZE PRESENTATION]

- ☐ Your spouse's chain of command (squad leaders, NCOs/officers)
- ☐ Army Family Readiness Group
- ☐ Installation Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) (for example, recreation/sports services such as intramural sports, libraries, post gymnasium)
- ☐ Army Community Service (ACS) (for example, financial services, relocation assistance, and family services)
- ☐ Military employment resources (for example, getting a federal job through spouse preference, using Military Spouse Employment Partnership Career Center)
- ☐ Military education loans or grants, such as MyCAA
- ☐ Military Internet resources or official Army social media (such as Army or DoD web pages, Army OneSource, installation Twitter accounts, official Facebook groups)
- ☐ Military mental health care provider
- ☐ Military-covered medical provider (such as a doctor, nurse, or dentist; on-post or off-post covered by TRICARE)
- ☐ Child and Youth Services (for example, on-post child care, youth sports)
- ☐ Chaplain or members of military religious or spiritual group
- ☐ Relief/aid society (Army Emergency Relief)
- ☐ Other military contacts (Please specify) _____

OR

- ☐ I didn't contact any military contacts for help with this need.

C2. [EXAMPLE:] For help with **Military Practices and Culture**, you said that you needed:

Specific Information: for example, about schedules or points of contact

Please check any of the following **NON-military** resources you or your spouse contacted to try to meet this need.

(Check all that apply)

- ☐ Government or community resources for family services (for example, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, WIC, Public Library, Head Start, community center)
- ☐ Private clubs, organizations, recreation or fitness centers
- ☐ Private off-post child care
- ☐ Religious or spiritual group or leader
- ☐ Private mental health care provider, not referred by the military
- ☐ Private medical provider (such as a private doctor, nurse or dentist) not referred by the military
- ☐ Internet resources (such as WebMD, Google, Craigslist, Wikipedia, Yahoo)
- ☐ Unofficial social media military networks where other service members and/or spouses share questions, comments, stories and advice
- ☐ Other military spouses you know in person (not only online)
- ☐ Personal networks outside the military (friends, family)
- ☐ Your civilian employer
- ☐ Other nonmilitary contacts (Please specify) _____
- ☐ I didn't contact any nonmilitary contacts for help with this need.

C3. [If the respondent didn't contact anyone for help with this need] Why didn't you or your spouse/child contact anyone for help with this need?

- ☐ We already met this need by ourselves
- ☐ We are currently meeting this need by ourselves
- ☐ The problem was fixed another way
- ☐ There's nothing anyone can do to help solve the problem
- ☐ I didn't want to ask for help
- ☐ I didn't know who to contact for help
- ☐ Other (Please specify) _____

[These items repeat as needed for each problem-need pair, as many as four (e.g. two needs for each of top two problems). If “I didn’t contact anyone for help with this need” is checked for all needs, respondent skips to S3.]

Satisfaction with Ways for Meeting Needs

S1. To review, you indicated that the most important problems and needs for you in the past year were:

[This item autofills from problems, needs, and resources used selected in prior items. The following simulates a display for a respondent who indicated two issues within the *military practices and culture* domain and two issues within the *own well-being* domain.]

[EXAMPLE:]

Military Practices and Culture

Need: Specific information

Need: An advocate

Problems with your Own Well-Being

Need: Emotional or social support

Need: Professional counseling

Please tell us how well each of these contacts you made helped to meet your needs with:

[If C1 and C2 for this problem/need both = “did not contact anyone,” then skip to next problem/need.]

Military Practices and Culture

Need: Specific information

	Very Well	Well	Somewhat	Not Very Well	Not at All
Child and Youth Services	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Army OneSource, post homepage, other military internet resources	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Comments:					

S2. In general, across the resources you used, did you get the help you needed?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I’m not sure

[These items repeat as needed for each problem-need pair, as many as four (e.g., two needs for each of top two problems). If possible, keep S2 on the same page as S1.]

[All survey respondents come here no matter how many problems or needs or if they had no problems or needs.]

S3. This next set of questions asks you more generally about military resources for Army personnel and their families. Please indicate the extent that you agree with the following statements.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	I have not tried to find out about military resources
It is easy to find out about military resources for soldiers and their families.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
When I have a problem finding the right military resource for my needs, I know who to contact to find help.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
If military resources are not meeting my needs, I know who to contact.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am comfortable using military resources available to me.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Potential Challenges in Using Resources

S4. [All] Below is a list of Military Resources you may or may not have ever contacted for help with problems or life challenges. Please select all statements that describe how you feel today about current resources. [Values = 1 if selected, 0 if not selected. This section will be shown to all respondents, regardless of whether they report past year problems or needs in the earlier section.] (Check all that apply)

S5. [All] Below we continue the list of Military Resources you may or may not have ever contacted for help with problems or life challenges. Please select all statements that describe how you feel today about current resources. [Values = 1 if selected, 0 if not selected. This section will be shown to all respondents, regardless of whether they report past year problems or needs in the earlier section.]
(Check all that apply)

Military Resources:	Has not been relevant for my needs	Resource has a good reputation	I know little to nothing about them	Close or easy to access	Might hurt my [or my spouse's] reputation to contact them for help	Wait list or response time too long	Unfriendly/ Not welcoming
Military Internet resources or official Army social media (such as Army or DoD web pages, Army OneSource, installation Twitter accounts, official Facebook groups)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Military mental health care provider	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Military-covered medical provider (such as a doctor, nurse, or dentist; on-post or off-post covered by TRICARE)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Child and Youth Services (for example, on-post child care, youth sports)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Chaplain or members of military religious or spiritual group	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Relief/aid society (Army Emergency Relief)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

S6. Please take a moment to think about the needs or problems that might come up for your family in the near future or in the next few years, as your circumstances change or stay the same. Please consider also the ways in which some types of resources might be more useful or preferable to you over others, including resources not listed here.

What impact, if any, might there be if **you were no longer able to access** the following **resources to help you address any** problems you or your family might face?

<u>If the following were no longer available to help you . . .</u>	Little to no impact on me or my family	Some impact on me or my family	Serious impact on me or my family	I don't know whether there would be any impact
Your spouse's chain of command (squad leaders, NCOs/ officers)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Army Family Readiness Group	☐	☐	☐	☐
Installation Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) (for example, recreation/sports services such as intramural sports, libraries, post gymnasium)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Army Community Service (ACS) (for example, financial services, relocation assistance, and family services)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Military employment resources (for example, getting a federal job through spouse preference, using Military Spouse Employment Partnership Career Center)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Military education loans or grants, such as MyCAA	☐	☐	☐	☐
Military Internet resources or official Army social media (such as Army or DoD web pages, Army OneSource, installation Twitter accounts, official Facebook groups)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Military mental health care provider	☐	☐	☐	☐
Military-covered medical provider (such as a doctor, nurse, or dentist; on-post or off-post covered by TRICARE)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Child and Youth Services (for example, on-post child care, youth sports)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Chaplain or members of military religious or spiritual group	☐	☐	☐	☐
Relief/aid society (Army Emergency Relief)	☐	☐	☐	☐

Comments:

S7. What are the best ways to get information to you about services available to help meet your needs?
(Check all that apply)

- ☐ Postcard in the mail
- ☐ Flyer/poster on post
- ☐ Email/announcement from unit leader
- ☐ Email/announcement from Family Readiness Group (FRG)
- ☐ Friend/family/co-worker
- ☐ Unit newsletter
- ☐ Unit website
- ☐ Installation newspaper
- ☐ Installation website
- ☐ TV
- ☐ Twitter
- ☐ Facebook
- ☐ Instagram
- ☐ Pinterest
- ☐ Phone app
- ☐ Other social media
- ☐ Other _____

The next questions are about you and your relationships.

S8. Please answer the following questions:

	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
How often can you open up to family and friends outside the military if you need to talk about your worries?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
How often can you rely on family and friends outside the military for help if you have a problem?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
How often can you open up to family and friends within the military if you need to talk about your worries?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
How often can you rely on family and friends within the military for help if you have a problem?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
How often do you feel that you lack companionship?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
How often do you feel left out?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
How often do you feel isolated from others?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

S9. The following questions ask about your feelings and thoughts during the past month. In each case, please indicate how often you felt or thought a certain way.

In the <u>past month</u> , how often have you . . .	Never	Almost never	Sometimes	Fairly often	Very often
Felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Felt that things were going your way?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Attitudes Toward the Military

A1. How do you feel about your spouse being in the military?

- ☐ Very supportive
- ☐ Fairly supportive
- ☐ Mixed or neutral
- ☐ Fairly opposed
- ☐ Very opposed

A2. Do you favor your spouse staying or leaving the military?

- ☐ I strongly favor staying
- ☐ I somewhat favor staying
- ☐ I have no opinion one way or the other
- ☐ I somewhat favor leaving
- ☐ I strongly favor leaving
- ☐ N/A service member retiring soon

A3. Overall, how satisfied are **you** with the military way of life?

- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ Very dissatisfied

A4. Overall, how satisfied do you think your spouse is with the military way of life?

- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Satisfied

- ☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ Very dissatisfied

How satisfied are you with the following:

A5. The respect that the Army shows family members

- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ Very dissatisfied

A6. The support and concern that the Army has for your Army family?

- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ Very dissatisfied

A7. In general, how well have you adjusted to the demands of being in the Army community?

Extremely badly										Extremely well
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

A8. In general, how well has your family adjusted to the demands of being an “Army family”?

Extremely badly										Extremely well
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

How much of a problem, if at all, is each of the following to you?

A9. The demands the Army makes on my spouse’s personal time

- ☐ Very serious problem
- ☐ Serious problem
- ☐ Moderate problem
- ☐ Slight problem
- ☐ Not a problem

A10. Separations from my spouse

- ☐ Very serious problem
- ☐ Serious problem
- ☐ Moderate problem
- ☐ Slight problem
- ☐ Not a problem

Background Information

There are about 5 minutes left in the survey. Please tell us more about you and your family if applicable. This information will help us make sure we have surveys from many different types of people, and will help us understand the most important issues facing them. We are not asking for any identifying information.

B1. What is your spouse's current rank or paygrade?

- ☐ Private to Specialist/Corporal (E1–E4)
- ☐ Sergeant or Staff Sergeant (E5–E6)
- ☐ Sergeant First Class to Sergeant Major/Command Sergeant Major (E7–E9)
- ☐ Warrant Officer (WO1–CW5)
- ☐ Second Lieutenant to Captain (O1–O3)
- ☐ Major or above (O4 or higher)

B2. How many years of active duty service has your spouse **completed?**

- ☐ One year or less
- ☐ 2 years
- ☐ 3 years
- ☐ 4 years
- ☐ 5 years
- ☐ 6–9 years
- ☐ 10–19 years
- ☐ 20 years or more

B3. At the time that you and your spouse got married, had your spouse already joined the military?

- ☐ Yes, my spouse had already joined the military when we got married
- ☐ No, my spouse had not joined the military when we got married

B4. Which describes you?

- ☐ Man
- ☐ Woman
- ☐ _____

B5. How old are you?

- ☐ 18–24
- ☐ 25–29
- ☐ 30–34
- ☐ 35–39
- ☐ 40 or older

B6. What is the highest degree or level of school that you have **completed**?

- ☐ 12 years of school or less, no diploma
- ☐ High school diploma or equivalent (such as GED)
- ☐ Some college or trade school, but no degree
- ☐ Associate degree (e.g., AA, AS) or trade school certificate (such as surgical technologist or cosmetician)
- ☐ Bachelor's degree or equivalent (e.g., BA, AB, BS, BSN)
- ☐ Graduate degree (e.g., MA/MS/Ph.D./MD/JD/DVM)

B7. Which of the following describes your current employment status? Check all that apply.

- ☐ Working full-time (typically 35 or more hours per week in one or more jobs; including self-employment)
- ☐ Working part-time (typically less than 35 hours per week)
- ☐ Unemployed and looking for work
- ☐ Unemployed but not looking for work
- ☐ Full-time care of the house and children
- ☐ Volunteer work on post (for example, at the ACS office, at special events)
- ☐ Volunteer work off post
- ☐ Full-time student
- ☐ Part-time student
- ☐ Other _____ [Limit to 100 characters (with spaces)]

B8. [If B7 = working full time or part time] How many hours per week do you USUALLY work at your job?

Enter number of hours each week: _____

B9. [If B7 = working part time] Do you want to work a full time workweek of 35 hours or more per week?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Regular hours are full-time

B10. [If B7 = working part time] Some people work part time because they cannot find full time work or because business is poor. Others work part time because of family obligations or other personal reasons. What is your MAIN reason for working part time instead of full time?

- ☐ Slack work/business conditions
- ☐ Could only find part-time work
- ☐ Seasonal work
- ☐ Child care problems
- ☐ Other family/personal obligations
- ☐ Health/medical limitations
- ☐ School/training
- ☐ Retired/Social Security limit on earnings
- ☐ Full-time workweek is less than 35 hours
- ☐ Other: _____

Deployment

B11. The next questions are about your spouse's deployment history. Since you have been married, has your spouse been deployed to a country outside of the U.S.?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ My spouse is currently deployed to a country outside of the U.S.

[If B11 = spouse is currently deployed, then go to B13. If B11 = "No," then go to B19]

B12. How many months has your spouse been home since the most recent deployment outside the U.S.?

_____ months

B13. For the most recent deployment, how many months was your spouse deployed outside the U.S.?

_____ months

B14. Did you move away from the post and its local area at any time during your spouse's most recent deployment?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable because I didn't live on post or in the local area around the post before the last deployment

B16. In the past year, was your spouse ever deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't know

[If B16 = “Yes,” then ask B17, **else go to B18**]

B17. For this deployment how many months was your spouse deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan?

_____ months

B18. Did you attend any deployment-related briefings offered by the military?

	Yes	No	I don't know
a. Before this most recent deployment?	☐	☐	☐
b. During this most recent deployment?	☐	☐	☐
c. After this most recent deployment?	☐	☐	☐

B19. Not counting deployments **outside of the U.S.**, how many nights in the past year has your spouse been away from home because of military duties (such as U.S. deployments, temporary duty/TDYS, training, field exercises).

- ☐ 0 nights
- ☐ 1 to 29 nights
- ☐ 30 to 89 nights (one to three months)
- ☐ 90 to 179 nights (three to six months)
- ☐ 180 to 269 nights (six to nine months)
- ☐ 270 to 365 nights (nine months to a year)

B20. How prepared or unprepared are you to handle family matters if your spouse is called for a deployment lasting more than 30 days?

- ☐ Not prepared
- ☐ Slightly prepared
- ☐ Moderately prepared
- ☐ Prepared
- ☐ Very prepared

B21. Are you a citizen of the United States? (This information will be used only for research purposes, such as to determine what types of benefits you might have been eligible for in the past year).

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

B22. Is English a second language for you?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

B23. Are you Spanish/Hispanic/Latino?

- ☐ No, I am not Spanish/Hispanic/Latino
- ☐ Yes, I am Mexican, Mexican-American, Chicano, Puerto Rican, Cuban, or other Spanish/Hispanic/Latino

B24. What is your race? Check one or more races to indicate what you consider yourself to be:

- ☐ White
- ☐ Black or African American
- ☐ American Indian or Alaska Native
- ☐ Asian (e.g., Asian Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese)
- ☐ Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander (e.g., Samoan, Guamanian, or Chamorro)

B25. [This item for respondents who reported dependent children only (“has dependent children”) **else go to B26.**] Do one or more of your children receive special education or early intervention services, or are in the Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP)?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Housing

B26. [If respondent lives off post] How long does it typically take you to commute to the nearest military installation (one way)?

- ☐ Less than 30 minutes away
- ☐ More than 30 minutes to less than 1 hour
- ☐ 1 to 2 hours
- ☐ More than 2 hours away

B27. How satisfied are you with the overall quality of your housing?

- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ Very dissatisfied

B28. How satisfied are you with the affordability of your current residence?

- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ Very dissatisfied

B29. **[If respondent lives off post]** You indicated earlier that you live off-post. What were the reasons why you decided to live away from the post? Check all that apply.

- ☐ To save money
- ☐ Best value for the money
- ☐ Safety and security
- ☐ Closer to work/education
- ☐ Better schools
- ☐ Fewer rules
- ☐ Privacy
- ☐ Wanted to live in a specific area or community
- ☐ Military housing was unavailable
- ☐ Civilian housing near the post was unavailable
- ☐ Wanted civilian neighbors
- ☐ Wanted to be closer to friends and family
- ☐ Other (specify): _____

B30. **[If respondent lives off post, ask. Else go to A11]** How often do you typically go to a military installation?

- ☐ At least a couple days a week
- ☐ Weekly
- ☐ Monthly
- ☐ Less than once a month

B31. [If respondent lives off post, ask. else go to A11.] What are the typical reasons that lead you to go to a military installation? Please check all that apply.

- ☐ Going to the doctor
- ☐ Shopping or getting groceries at the commissary
- ☐ Eating
- ☐ Using services such as childcare, the gym
- ☐ Socializing
- ☐ Other: ____

A11. No matter how well a couple gets along, they usually share good times and bad times. Couples also have many different ways of trying to settle their differences. Taking things altogether, how satisfied are you with your marriage right now?

- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ Very dissatisfied

If you have any additional comments about any problems or needs you experienced in the past year or your ability to meet those needs with military or nonmilitary assistance, please provide them in the space below. You may also provide any other type of related comments you would like. This survey is for Army Headquarters-level planning and decision-making. If you need assistance with a specific problem on your installation, please contact your local commander or service provider.

Please remember not to provide identifying information such as your name or contact information. We will not be able to read your comments in real time or respond to requests for assistance. **If you are in distress and need help,** please contact Military OneSource: <http://www.militaryonesource.mil> or 1-800-342-9647. If you are in emotional crisis, confidential help is also available through the Military Crisis Line: call 1-800-273-8255 and press 1, or send a text to 838255, or visit the website to initiate a confidential chat <http://veteranscrisisline.net/ActiveDuty.aspx>

COMMENTS:

F1. Thank you for completing the survey! RAND often conducts surveys with Army spouses—Would you be willing to be contacted in the future should new studies of Army spouses become available? (CHECK ONE ONLY)

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

F2. In the space below, please enter the email address where you would like to receive your \$10 Amazon.com electronic gift card. Note that your email address will not be sold or otherwise shared with any third parties. To maintain confidentiality, your email address will not be stored in the same data file as your survey responses.

Email address:

Re-type Email:

Thank you, once again, for taking the time to complete the survey. Your input will help us understand the needs military personnel and their families have and how we can support them. Below is contact information for Military OneSource, a free 24 hour service that is available 7 days a week to military personnel and their families.

Military OneSource

Whether it's help with childcare, personal finances, emotional support during deployments, relocation information, or resources needed for special circumstances, Military OneSource is there for military personnel and their families. . . . 24/7/365!

The service is available by phone, online and face-to-face through private counseling sessions in the local community. Highly qualified, master's prepared consultants provide the service. Personalized consultations on specific issues such as education, special needs, and finances are provided. Customized research detailing community resources and appropriate military referrals are offered. Clients can even get help with simultaneous language interpretation and document translation.

Our interactive Web site includes locators for education, childcare, and elder care, online articles, referrals to military and community resources, financial calculators, live online workshops called Webinars, and "Email a consultant." Additional resources include brief videos of consultants addressing common issues such as communicating as a couple, budgeting and managing anger.

Face-to-face counseling sessions focus on issues such as normal reactions to abnormal situations (e.g., combat), couples concerns, work/life balance, grief and loss, adjustment to deployment, stress management, and parenting. Persons seeking counseling will receive up to six counseling sessions per issue at no cost to them. To access a counselor in their local community, individuals may call a Military OneSource consultant directly. Service is available in CONUS as well as Hawaii, Alaska, U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico.

Military OneSource is provided by the Department of Defense at no cost to active duty, Guard and Reserve (regardless of activation status) and their families.

Military OneSource Website: <http://www.militaryonesource.mil>

Military OneSource Phone Numbers:

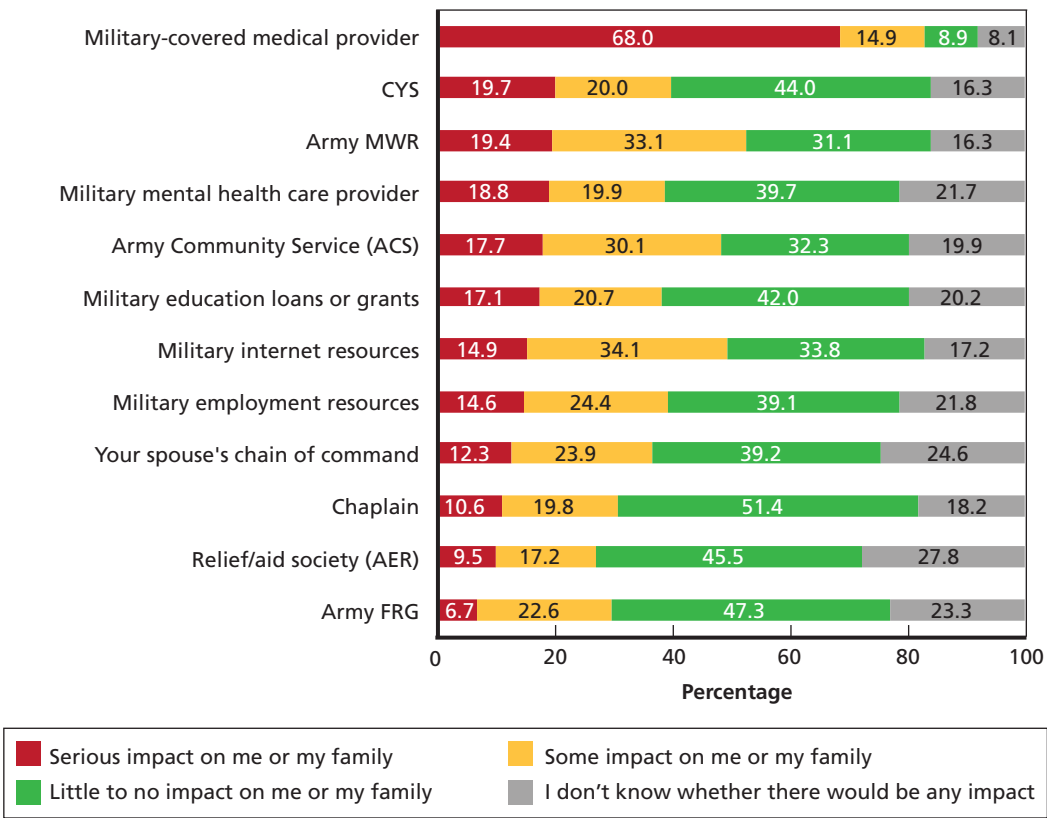
- Stateside: CONUS: 1-800-342-9647
- Overseas: OCONUS Universal Free Phone: 800-3429-6477
- Collect from Overseas: OCONUS Collect: 484-530-5908
- En Español llame al: 1-877-888-0727
- TTY/TDD: 1-800-346-9188

Additional Analyses

Participants were provided with a list of all the military resources provided in the survey and asked to estimate “what impact, if any, might there be if you were no longer able to access the following resources to help you address any problems you or your family might face?” Response options were “little to no impact on me or my family,” “some impact on me or my family,” “serious impact on me or my family,” and “I don’t know whether there would be any impact.”

The most serious estimated impact among military resources would be for the removal of military medical care providers, with the majority (68 percent) estimating a serious impact on themselves or their families. The military resources next most frequently chosen as having a potentially serious impact were MWR and CYS, at about 20 percent each. In terms of resources for which spouses were most likely to say that they didn’t know what the potential impact may be, some of the resources, such as a relief or aid society (27 percent), might have been less familiar to spouses. Others were the soldier’s chain of command (25 percent) and Army FRGs (23 percent).

Figure B.1
Respondent Ratings of Perceived Impact If Resource No Longer Available to Help



NOTES: N = 8,018. Percentages were weighted to be representative of the population.

Detailed Sociodemographic Subgroup Tables

Tables C.1–C.6 present detailed data, by sociodemographic subgroup; spouse, family, and household characteristics; and characteristics of the soldier.

Table C.1
Percentages and 99 Percent CIs of Respondents Choosing Each Problem Domain as a Top Two Problem, by Sociodemographic Subgroup

Sociodemographic Subgroup	Military Practices and Culture	Work-Life Balance	Own Well-Being	Household Management	Relationship Problems	Health Care System Problems	Financial or Legal Problems	Soldier's Well-Being	Child Well-Being
Employment status									
Unemployed, looking for work	27.5 23.9, 31.1	28.9 25.3, 32.5	23.2 19.8, 26.6	10.1 7.7, 12.5	23.6 20.2, 27.1	17.7 14.7, 20.7	30.5 26.8, 34.2	18.3 15.2, 21.4	15.9 12.4, 19.4
Unemployed, not looking for work	26.6 24.6, 28.7	27.0 25.0, 29.1	26.7 24.7, 28.8	15.6 13.9, 17.2	19.3 17.4, 21.1	23.7 21.8, 25.7	15.8 14.1, 17.5	20.2 18.4, 22.1	18.4 16.5, 20.3
Employed part time	23.4 20.0, 26.8	33.7 29.9, 37.5	22.5 19.1, 25.9	14.0 11.2, 16.8	24.4 20.9, 27.9	21.4 18.1, 24.6	21.5 18.1, 24.8	20.1 16.9, 23.4	17.9 14.2, 21.6
Employed full time	25.0 22.5, 27.5	37.9 35.1, 40.7	20.2 17.9, 22.5	13.9 11.9, 15.8	27.1 24.5, 29.7	20.3 18.0, 22.6	17.8 15.6, 20.1	19.3 17.0, 21.5	16.2 13.6, 18.9
Presence of dependent children									
Does not have dependents	31.6 28.9, 34.3	31.8 29.1, 34.5	26.9 24.3, 29.5	11.3 9.5, 13.2	23.5 21.0, 26.0	21.3 18.9, 23.7	19.4 17.0, 21.7	22.9 20.4, 25.4	—
Has dependent children	24.0 22.5, 25.5	31.0 29.4, 32.6	22.4 20.9, 23.8	15.1 13.9, 16.3	22.4 21.0, 23.9	21.9 20.5, 23.3	19.3 17.9, 20.7	18.4 17.1, 19.8	—
Urbanicity of installation									
Midsize	25.9 23.9, 27.8	32.2 30.1, 34.3	23.2 21.3, 25.1	14.3 12.8, 15.9	23.0 21.1, 24.9	21.7 19.9, 23.6	18.3 16.5, 20.0	20.1 18.3, 21.9	17.2 15.3, 19.2
Rural	26.8 23.9, 29.8	30.2 27.2, 33.2	24.5 21.7, 27.4	13.4 11.2, 15.7	23.9 21.1, 26.8	19.3 16.7, 21.9	21.8 19.0, 24.6	18.2 15.6, 20.8	16.7 13.8, 19.5
Urban	26.0 23.8, 28.3	30.6 28.3, 33.0	23.6 21.5, 25.8	14.1 12.3, 15.8	21.7 19.6, 23.8	23.1 21.0, 25.3	19.2 17.1, 21.2	20.0 17.9, 22.0	17.5 15.3, 19.7

Table C.1—Continued

Sociodemographic Subgroup	Military Practices and Culture	Work-Life Balance	Own Well-Being	Household Management	Relationship Problems	Health Care System Problems	Financial or Legal Problems	Soldier's Well-Being	Child Well-Being
Pay grade									
E1–E4	31.2 28.2, 34.2	26.7 23.8, 29.5	24.4 21.6, 27.2	13.0 10.8, 15.2	25.1 22.3, 27.9	16.3 13.9, 18.7	26.2 23.3, 29.0	21.6 18.9, 24.3	12.4 9.5, 15.2
E5–E9	23.6 21.8, 25.3	31.1 29.2, 33.0	23.3 21.5, 25.0	13.6 12.1, 15.0	23.8 22.0, 25.6	22.9 21.2, 24.7	19.0 17.3, 20.6	19.6 17.9, 21.2	18.4 16.6, 20.1
O1–O3	28.7 25.2, 32.1	39.8 36.1, 43.6	23.8 20.6, 27.0	14.8 12.1, 17.5	17.7 14.8, 20.6	25.1 21.8, 28.4	11.4 9.0, 13.8	17.3 14.4, 20.1	17.8 14.2, 21.5
O4+	19.6 16.3, 22.9	36.8 32.8, 40.8	25.0 21.4, 28.6	19.8 16.5, 23.1	15.6 12.6, 18.7	24.5 20.9, 28.1	10.5 7.9, 13.1	17.2 14.0, 20.3	23.4 19.5, 27.2
Soldier deployed in the past year									
Not deployed	25.0 23.4, 26.7	30.7 29.0, 32.4	24.0 22.4, 25.6	14.5 13.2, 15.8	21.1 19.6, 22.7	22.2 20.6, 23.7	20.0 18.5, 21.5	20.5 19.0, 22.1	17.3 15.7, 18.9
Deployed	27.3 24.9, 29.6	32.5 30.0, 34.9	23.3 21.0, 25.5	13.1 11.3, 14.8	26.2 23.9, 28.5	20.3 18.2, 22.4	18.2 16.1, 20.2	17.9 15.9, 19.9	17.9 15.6, 20.1

NOTES: $N = 8,275$. Percentages were weighted to be representative of the population. CIs help convey the uncertainty that is found in any estimate. For the 99 percent CIs that we report, if we measured the same variables in the same way from the same population, in 99 percent of those samples, our results would fall within the upper and lower bounds we report. For analyses with larger sample sizes, our estimates can be more precise and our CIs may be quite narrow. If the CIs of two estimates do not overlap, those estimates are sufficiently different that, even taking into account the estimates' uncertainty, the groups can be considered significantly different on that variable at $p < 0.01$ or better. The percentages displayed in this table do not account for other sociodemographic variables included in the regression models reported in Chapter Three, so comparisons between groups should be interpreted with caution.

Table C.2
Percentages and 99 Percent CIs of Top Needs Indicated by Respondents, by Sociodemographic Subgroup

Sociodemographic Subgroup	Emotional or Social Support	Activities	Professional Counseling	General Information	Advice or Education	Specific Information	Advocate	Helping Hand
Employment status								
Unemployed, looking for work	29.1 25.1, 33.2	25.6 21.8, 29.5	28.3 24.3, 32.3	33.0 28.8, 37.2	29.3 25.3, 33.3	23.3 19.6, 27.1	22.4 18.8, 26.1	15.5 12.2, 18.7
Unemployed, not looking for work	34.3 31.8, 36.7	31.0 28.6, 33.4	27.2 24.9, 29.5	25.6 23.3, 27.9	25.9 23.7, 28.2	23.4 21.2, 25.6	21.4 19.3, 23.5	13.0 11.2, 14.8
Employed part time	35.0 30.8, 39.2	29.9 25.9, 34.0	28.8 24.8, 32.8	24.7 20.9, 28.6	28.1 24.1, 32.1	22.5 18.8, 26.2	22.5 18.9, 26.2	15.3 12.1, 18.5
Employed full time	32.0 29.0, 34.9	28.3 25.5, 31.1	27.9 25.1, 30.8	28.0 25.2, 30.8	27.9 25.1, 30.8	23.2 20.6, 25.9	23.0 20.3, 25.6	11.7 9.6, 13.8
Presence of dependent children								
Does not have dependents	33.3 30.2, 36.3	30.6 27.7, 33.6	27.2 24.3, 30.1	33.9 30.9, 37.0	30.0 27.0, 32.9	27.5 24.6, 30.4	20.8 18.2, 23.4	8.2 6.3, 10.0
Has dependent children	32.7 30.9, 34.5	28.8 27.0, 30.5	27.9 26.1, 29.6	25.1 23.4, 26.8	26.2 24.5, 27.9	21.7 20.2, 23.3	22.8 21.1, 24.4	15.3 13.9, 16.7
Urbanicity of installation								
Midsize	33.2 30.8, 35.5	29.5 27.3, 31.8	28.0 25.8, 30.2	27.3 25.1, 29.5	26.3 24.1, 28.5	23.0 20.9, 25.0	21.8 19.8, 23.8	12.6 10.9, 14.2
Rural	31.2 27.8, 34.6	29.3 26.0, 32.6	25.4 22.2, 28.6	28.1 24.8, 31.4	27.3 24.0, 30.5	23.8 20.7, 27.0	22.2 19.2, 25.2	13.7 11.1, 16.3
Urban	33.4 30.7, 36.0	28.9 26.4, 31.5	28.5 26.0, 31.1	27.6 25.1, 30.1	28.4 25.9, 30.9	23.5 21.1, 25.9	22.8 20.4, 25.1	14.1 12.1, 16.1

Table C.2—Continued

Sociodemographic Subgroup	Emotional or Social Support	Activities	Professional Counseling	General Information	Advice or Education	Specific Information	Advocate	Helping Hand
Pay grade								
E1–E4	33.0 29.6, 36.3	28.1 24.9, 31.2	27.8 24.6, 31.0	35.8 32.3, 39.2	28.0 24.8, 31.2	26.7 23.5, 29.8	21.8 18.8, 24.7	18.4 15.6, 21.2
E5–E9	33.5 31.4, 35.7	28.7 26.6, 30.8	29.5 27.4, 31.6	24.2 22.2, 26.2	27.0 25.0, 29.1	20.9 19.0, 22.8	21.9 20.0, 23.9	12.8 11.2, 14.3
O1–O3	34.7 30.8, 38.7	35.2 31.3, 39.2	21.5 18.1, 24.9	25.4 21.8, 29.0	27.1 23.4, 30.8	26.5 22.8, 30.1	22.3 18.8, 25.7	8.4 6.1, 10.7
O4+	26.2 22.1, 30.2	28.4 24.3, 32.5	25.9 21.9, 29.9	22.6 18.8, 26.4	27.7 23.7, 31.8	21.7 17.9, 25.4	25.6 21.6, 29.6	6.6 4.3, 8.8
Soldier deployed in the past year								
Not deployed	31.4 29.5, 33.4	29.2 27.3, 31.0	27.5 25.6, 29.3	27.9 26.0, 29.8	28.2 26.4, 30.1	22.4 20.7, 24.2	22.9 21.1, 24.6	13.5 12.0, 14.9
Deployed	35.7 33.0, 38.5	29.4 26.8, 32.0	28.5 25.9, 31.1	26.2 23.6, 28.7	25.7 23.2, 28.2	24.6 22.1, 27.1	21.0 18.6, 23.3	13.0 11.0, 14.9

NOTES: $N = 6,238$. Percentages were weighted to be representative of the population. CIs help convey the uncertainty that is found in any estimate. For the 99 percent CIs that we report, if we measured the same variables in the same way from the same population, in 99 percent of those samples, our results would fall within the upper and lower bounds we report. For analyses with larger sample sizes, our estimates can be more precise and our CIs may be quite narrow. If the CIs of two estimates do not overlap, those estimates are sufficiently different that, even taking into account the estimates' uncertainty, the groups can be considered significantly different on that variable at $p < 0.01$ or better. The percentages displayed in this table do not account for other sociodemographic variables included in the regression models reported in Chapter Three, so comparisons between groups should be interpreted with caution.

Table C.3
Percentages and 99 Percent CIs of Military Resources Accessed by Respondents, by Spouse, Family, and Household Characteristics

Resource	Spouse Employment Status				Presence of Dependent Children		Urbanicity of Installation		
	Unemployed, Looking for Work	Unemployed, Not Looking for Work	Employed Part Time	Employed Full Time	No Dependent Children	Has Dependent Children	Midsize	Rural	Urban
Military-covered medical provider	41.1 36.5, 45.6	44.2 41.5, 46.9	43.6 39.1, 48.2	40.5 37.3, 43.8	43.2 39.8, 46.6	42.3 40.3, 44.3	42.6 40.0, 45.2	40.4 36.6, 44.2	43.7 40.8, 46.6
Military internet resources or official Army social media	33.8 29.4, 38.2	26.4 24.0, 28.8	29.7 25.5, 33.9	29.3 26.3, 32.3	32.4 29.3, 35.6	27.4 25.6, 29.2	28.4 26.1, 30.7	30.3 26.7, 33.8	28.5 25.8, 31.2
Soldier's chain of command	22.9 19.0, 26.9	23.2 20.8, 25.5	20.8 17.0, 24.6	22.1 19.4, 24.9	27.2 24.1, 30.3	20.7 19.0, 22.3	20.2 18.1, 22.3	25.6 22.2, 29.0	23.6 21.1, 26.2
ACS	28.3 24.1, 32.5	19.6 17.5, 21.8	21.5 17.7, 25.3	20.2 17.5, 22.8	19.5 16.7, 22.2	22.1 20.5, 23.8	19.9 17.8, 21.9	23.6 20.3, 26.8	22.1 19.6, 24.6
Military mental health care provider	20.2 16.4, 24.0	21.6 19.4, 23.8	19.2 15.5, 22.8	21.9 19.1, 24.6	18.9 16.2, 21.6	21.9 20.2, 23.5	19.8 17.8, 21.9	20.9 17.8, 24.1	22.7 20.2, 25.2
Army MWR	18.2 14.6, 21.8	18.9 16.8, 21.0	20.1 16.5, 23.8	17.9 15.4, 20.4	18.1 15.5, 20.7	18.9 17.4, 20.5	17.6 15.7, 19.6	20.3 17.3, 23.4	19.1 16.8, 21.5
CYS	16.5 13.0, 19.9	17.1 15.1, 19.1	14.6 11.5, 17.8	14.4 12.1, 16.6	1.2 0.5, 1.9	21.5 19.8, 23.1	15.3 13.4, 17.1	17.3 14.5, 20.2	15.8 13.7, 18.0
Chaplain or members of military religious or spiritual group	16.9 13.4, 20.4	15.4 13.4, 17.4	13.3 10.2, 16.4	14.9 12.5, 17.3	13.3 10.9, 15.7	16.0 14.5, 17.4	16.4 14.4, 18.3	14.1 11.5, 16.8	14.4 12.3, 16.5
Army FRG	15.9 12.4, 19.4	14.2 12.3, 16.1	14.8 11.5, 18.1	15.0 12.6, 17.3	16.3 13.8, 18.8	14.5 13.0, 15.9	14.7 12.9, 16.6	16.4 13.5, 19.2	14.5 12.4, 16.6
Military employment resources	26.6 22.6, 30.7	6.9 5.5, 8.2	17.3 13.7, 20.8	16.2 13.8, 18.6	17.5 14.9, 20.0	12.6 11.3, 14.0	13.9 12.1, 15.7	14.7 12.0, 17.4	13.6 11.6, 15.7

Table C.3—Continued

Resource	Spouse Employment Status				Presence of Dependent Children		Urbanicity of Installation		
	Unemployed, Looking for Work	Unemployed, Not Looking for Work	Employed Part Time	Employed Full Time	No Dependent Children	Has Dependent Children	Midsized	Rural	Urban
Military education loans or grants	18.2 14.5, 21.9	8.5 7.0, 10.1	12.0 8.9, 15.1	8.1 6.2, 10.0	12.2 9.9, 14.5	9.7 8.5, 10.9	10.1 8.5, 11.7	11.7 9.2, 14.3	10.0 8.1, 11.8
AER	5.4 3.3, 7.6	4.6 3.4, 5.7	4.7 2.7, 6.8	3.6 2.3, 4.9	3.1 1.9, 4.3	5.0 4.1, 6.0	3.7 2.7, 4.8	5.1 3.3, 6.8	5.1 3.8, 6.5

NOTES: $N = 5,667$. Percentages were weighted to be representative of the population. CIs help convey the uncertainty that is found in any estimate. For the 99 percent CIs that we report, if we measured the same variables in the same way from the same population, in 99 percent of those samples, our results would fall within the upper and lower bounds we report. For analyses with larger sample sizes, our estimates can be more precise and our CIs may be quite narrow. If the CIs of two estimates do not overlap, those estimates are sufficiently different that, even taking into account the estimates' uncertainty, the groups can be considered significantly different on that variable at $p < 0.01$ or better. The percentages displayed in this table do not account for other sociodemographic variables included in the regression models reported in Chapter Four, so comparisons between groups should be interpreted with caution.

Table C.4

Percentages and 99 Percent CIs of Military Resources Accessed by Respondents, by Characteristics of the Soldier

Resource	Pay Grade				Soldier Deployed in the Past Year	
	E1–E4	E5–E9	O1–O3	O4+	Not Deployed	Deployed
Military-covered medical provider	38.1 34.4, 41.7	45.0 42.5, 47.4	38.9 34.8, 43.1	47.1 42.3, 51.8	42.8 40.6, 44.9	42.3 39.3, 45.3
Military internet resources or official Army social media	30.4 27.0, 33.9	27.6 25.4, 29.8	32.3 28.3, 36.3	27.3 23.1, 31.5	28.9 26.9, 30.8	28.8 26.1, 31.6
Soldier's chain of command	30.6 27.2, 34.1	20.2 18.2, 22.2	20.1 16.7, 23.5	13.8 10.5, 17.1	21.8 20.0, 23.7	23.7 21.2, 26.3
ACS	22.1 19.0, 25.2	22.0 19.9, 24.0	20.9 17.5, 24.4	16.3 12.8, 19.8	20.8 19.0, 22.5	22.5 20.0, 25.1
Military mental health care provider	19.7 16.7, 22.7	23.7 21.6, 25.8	14.8 11.8, 17.9	17.8 14.2, 21.4	21.3 19.5, 23.1	20.7 18.2, 23.1
Army MWR	14.7 12.1, 17.4	18.9 17.0, 20.8	24.5 20.9, 28.2	22.5 18.6, 26.4	18.3 16.6, 19.9	19.5 17.1, 21.8
CYS	11.4 9.0, 13.8	17.4 15.6, 19.3	17.5 14.3, 20.7	18.4 14.8, 22.0	15.1 13.6, 16.6	17.2 15.0, 19.5
Chaplain or members of military religious or spiritual group	15.9 13.2, 18.7	15.0 13.3, 16.8	15.2 12.2, 18.2	13.6 10.4, 16.8	15.2 13.6, 16.8	15.1 13.0, 17.3
Army FRG	17.0 14.2, 19.8	14.0 12.3, 15.7	17.8 14.6, 21.0	8.1 5.5, 10.6	12.4 11.0, 13.8	19.3 16.9, 21.7
Military employment resources	13.8 11.2, 16.4	13.7 12.0, 15.4	16.6 13.4, 19.8	12.9 9.7, 16.0	14.6 13.1, 16.2	12.7 10.7, 14.7
Military education loans or grants	17.4 14.6, 20.3	9.0 7.6, 10.4	5.7 3.7, 7.7	2.6 1.1, 4.1	9.9 8.6, 11.3	11.2 9.3, 13.2
AER	7.5 5.6, 9.5	4.4 3.4, 5.4	0.6 0.0, 1.3	0.3 0.0, 0.7	4.1 3.2, 5.0	5.0 3.7, 6.4

NOTES: $N = 5,667$. Percentages were weighted to be representative of the population. CIs help convey the uncertainty that is found in any estimate. For the 99 percent CIs that we report, if we measured the same variables in the same way from the same population, in 99 percent of those samples, our results would fall within the upper and lower bounds we report. For analyses with larger sample sizes, our estimates can be more precise and our CIs may be quite narrow. If the CIs of two estimates do not overlap, those estimates are sufficiently different that, even taking into account the estimates' uncertainty, the groups can be considered significantly different on that variable at $p < 0.01$ or better. The percentages displayed in this table do not account for other sociodemographic variables included in the regression models reported in Chapter Four, so comparisons between groups should be interpreted with caution.

Table C.5

Percentages and 99 Percent CIs of Nonmilitary Resources Accessed by Respondents, by Spouse, Family, and Household Characteristics

Resource	Spouse Employment Status				Presence of Dependent Children		Urbanicity of Installation		
	Unemployed, Looking for Work	Unemployed, Not Looking for Work	Employed Part Time	Employed Full Time	No Dependent Children	Has Dependent Children	Midsize	Rural	Urban
Personal networks outside the military	49.9 45.2, 54.6	51.2 48.5, 53.9	55.9 51.3, 60.5	52.9 49.6, 56.2	54.0 50.6, 57.4	51.2 49.2, 53.2	52.3 49.7, 54.9	48.7 44.8, 52.6	53.5 50.5, 56.4
Other military spouses known in person	43.9 39.3, 48.5	43.4 40.7, 46.1	45.9 41.3, 50.5	38.9 35.7, 42.1	43.7 40.3, 47.0	42.1 40.1, 44.1	43.7 41.2, 46.3	43.3 39.5, 47.1	40.6 37.7, 43.5
Internet resources	40.9 36.3, 45.5	33.5 31.0, 36.1	35.0 30.6, 39.4	35.1 32.0, 38.3	39.3 36.0, 42.6	33.7 31.7, 35.6	34.5 32.0, 37.0	35.5 31.9, 39.2	36.0 33.1, 38.8
Unofficial social media military networks	29.5 25.2, 33.7	28.6 26.2, 31.1	27.4 23.3, 31.5	26.2 23.3, 29.1	29.4 26.3, 32.5	27.3 25.5, 29.1	27.6 25.3, 29.9	31.1 27.5, 34.7	26.5 23.9, 29.2
Religious or spiritual group or leader	19.1 15.4, 22.7	21.2 19.1, 23.4	18.2 14.7, 21.7	18.5 16.0, 21.1	14.8 12.4, 17.2	21.6 20.0, 23.3	20.4 18.4, 22.5	18.1 15.2, 21.0	19.9 17.5, 22.2
Private clubs, organizations, or recreation or fitness centers	20.2 16.4, 23.9	17.9 15.9, 19.9	20.6 16.9, 24.2	21.0 18.4, 23.7	18.8 16.2, 21.4	19.8 18.2, 21.4	19.7 17.6, 21.7	18.1 15.2, 21.0	20.1 17.8, 22.5
Government or community resources for family services	20.5 16.7, 24.3	16.4 14.3, 18.4	15.3 11.9, 18.6	9.9 7.9, 11.9	8.4 6.5, 10.3	17.5 15.9, 19.1	14.6 12.7, 16.5	16.2 13.3, 19.1	14.8 12.7, 17.0
Private medical provider	12.7 9.6, 15.8	11.2 9.5, 12.9	12.6 9.6, 15.7	15.5 13.1, 17.9	12.3 10.0, 14.5	13.0 11.6, 14.3	12.3 10.6, 14.0	12.0 9.5, 14.6	13.8 11.8, 15.8
Private mental health care provider	8.7 6.1, 11.3	10.2 8.6, 11.8	11.0 8.1, 13.9	14.0 11.7, 16.3	10.9 8.7, 13.0	11.3 10.0, 12.6	11.3 9.6, 12.9	9.6 7.3, 11.9	12.0 10.0, 13.9

Table C.5—Continued

Resource	Spouse Employment Status				Presence of Dependent Children		Urbanicity of Installation		
	Unemployed, Looking for Work	Unemployed, Not Looking for Work	Employed Part Time	Employed Full Time	No Dependent Children	Has Dependent Children	Midsized	Rural	Urban
Private off-post childcare	9.2 6.6, 11.8	8.9 7.4, 10.5	12.7 9.7, 15.7	13.8 11.5, 16.0	0.7 0.2, 1.3	14.9 13.5, 16.4	11.1 9.5, 12.8	9.1 7.0, 11.3	11.9 10.0, 13.8
Civilian employer	6.4 4.0, 8.7	2.4 1.6, 3.3	12.0 9.0, 15.0	20.5 17.8, 23.1	12.5 10.3, 14.8	8.3 7.2, 9.4	9.0 7.5, 10.5	9.7 7.5, 12.0	9.8 8.0, 11.6

NOTES: $N = 5,667$. Percentages were weighted to be representative of the population. CIs help convey the uncertainty that is found in any estimate. For the 99 percent CIs that we report, if we measured the same variables in the same way from the same population, in 99 percent of those samples, our results would fall within the upper and lower bounds we report. For analyses with larger sample sizes, our estimates can be more precise and our CIs may be quite narrow. If the CIs of two estimates do not overlap, those estimates are sufficiently different that, even taking into account the estimates' uncertainty, the groups can be considered significantly different on that variable at $p < 0.01$ or better. The percentages displayed in this table do not account for other sociodemographic variables included in the regression models reported in Chapter Four, so comparisons between groups should be interpreted with caution.

Table C.6
Percentages and 99 Percent CIs of Nonmilitary Resources Accessed by Respondents, by Characteristics of the Soldier

Resource	Pay Grade				Soldier Deployed in the Past Year	
	E1–E4	E5–E9	O1–O3	O4+	Not Deployed	Deployed
Personal networks outside the military	47.3 43.6, 51.1	52.2 49.7, 54.6	60.7 56.5, 64.8	56.9 52.2, 61.6	51.1 48.9, 53.3	54.3 51.3, 57.3
Other military spouses known in person	38.7 35.0, 42.4	41.1 38.7, 43.6	53.8 49.5, 58.0	48.5 43.7, 53.2	41.4 39.2, 43.5	44.7 41.7, 47.7
Internet resources	35.5 31.9, 39.0	34.7 32.4, 37.0	37.0 32.9, 41.2	36.5 32.0, 41.1	35.5 33.4, 37.5	35.0 32.2, 37.9
Unofficial social media military networks	28.3 25.0, 31.7	26.6 24.4, 28.7	32.3 28.3, 36.3	29.1 24.9, 33.4	28.1 26.1, 30.0	27.6 24.9, 30.2
Religious or spiritual group or leader	16.8 14.0, 19.6	18.9 17.0, 20.8	27.2 23.4, 31.0	23.7 19.6, 27.7	19.3 17.6, 21.0	20.4 18.0, 22.9
Private clubs, organizations, or recreation or fitness centers	14.6 11.9, 17.2	19.0 17.1, 21.0	28.4 24.5, 32.2	26.7 22.5, 30.8	19.4 17.7, 21.0	19.8 17.4, 22.2
Government or community resources for family services	20.6 17.5, 23.6	14.4 12.7, 16.1	9.3 6.9, 11.8	8.2 5.6, 10.7	14.6 13.0, 16.1	15.7 13.5, 17.9
Private medical provider	11.9 9.4, 14.3	13.2 11.5, 14.8	12.8 9.9, 15.7	13.2 10.0, 16.4	12.7 11.2, 14.1	13.2 11.1, 15.2
Private mental health care provider	9.6 7.4, 11.8	12.3 10.7, 14.0	9.9 7.3, 12.4	10.8 7.9, 13.8	10.7 9.4, 12.1	12.0 10.1, 14.0
Private off-post childcare	8.3 6.2, 10.4	11.1 9.6, 12.6	13.5 10.5, 16.4	15.0 11.6, 18.4	10.1 8.8, 11.4	12.4 10.5, 14.4
Civilian employer	9.1 6.9, 11.2	9.5 8.0, 10.9	12.9 10.1, 15.8	6.9 4.5, 9.3	8.9 7.7, 10.2	10.7 8.8, 12.6

NOTES: $N = 5,667$. Percentages were weighted to be representative of the population. CIs help convey the uncertainty that is found in any estimate. For the 99 percent CIs that we report, if we measured the same variables in the same way from the same population, in 99 percent of those samples, our results would fall within the upper and lower bounds we report. For analyses with larger sample sizes, our estimates can be more precise and our CIs may be quite narrow. If the CIs of two estimates do not overlap, those estimates are sufficiently different that, even taking into account the estimates' uncertainty, the groups can be considered significantly different on that variable at $p < 0.01$ or better. The percentages displayed in this table do not account for other sociodemographic variables included in the regression models reported in Chapter Four, so comparisons between groups should be interpreted with caution.

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Army families face not only challenges affecting all families but also those related to military service; the latter challenges may create new problems or exacerbate existing problems. The Army has recognized these unique challenges and implemented programs and services to help Army families and Army spouses, in particular. The authors of this report describe the results of the unique survey approach to understanding Army family program use through the lens of a problem-solving process.

In the survey, completed by more than 8,500 Army spouses, participants received a list of specific challenges within nine problem domains, and spouses were asked to prioritize which two top problem domains contained the most significant problems they faced in the past year; what their top needs were for each problem; which resources, if any, they had contacted to meet the needs; and whether using those resources met their needs. Finally, respondents were asked about three specific outcomes—experience of stress, general attitudes toward the Army, and support for the soldier spouse remaining in the Army—and the authors analyzed the association between the problem-solving process and these three outcomes.

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