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SECONDARY TRAUMA AND/OR POTENTIAL IMPACTS
RELATED TO MILITARY FAMILY MEMBERS

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Social Work

by
Andressa Johnson Young

May 2021

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ABSTRACT

Military members who have experienced combat deployments are at a greater risk for mental health issues. This can often affect the families who are placed in the role of being a buffer for these returning military members. Furthermore, the prevalence of mental health issues within the military community being at an all-time high has created a parallel prevalence for the family members who are impacted by these military members dealing with mental health issues. This research project examined data and information that was collected both from individual military family members and from persons who directly provide supportive services to military members and their families. This data and information was used to help me understand their unique experiences and how they have been impacted by their involvement within the military community. It also helped me identify any displeasures they might have about supportive services being offered or not offered within the military specifically for military family members. The literature review portion of this paper focused on the impacts upon military family members from having a military member with their families, such as the development of stress and mental health issues, military family's role confusion, and increased responsibility for non-deployed parents. The constructivism paradigm was utilized, and I gathered information from face-to-face interviews with six participants to further develop a qualitative analysis. The conducted analysis yielded six major themes within this study: 1) An increased level of stress relating to deployment; 2) Impacts on mental health;

3) Impacts on the family's dynamic; 4) Increased responsibilities for the non-deployed parent; 5) Impacts on personal beliefs; and 6) Impacts on their support system. Based on the common themes found, an action plan was developed to assist with exposing some of the highlighted impacts placed upon military families.

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CHAPTER ONE

ASSESSMENT

Introduction

Chapter one focuses on the assessment portion of this study. The study's research focus is to understand the secondary trauma and/or impact of having a military member within the family's dynamic. The chosen research paradigm for this study is the constructivist approach which will be further discussed throughout this chapter. A literature review has been provided as well. Following the literature review, a theoretical orientation is presented. Ending this section, I will discuss the potential contribution of the study to micro and/or macro social work practice.

Background

Active-duty military members and veterans undergo tremendous amounts of stress and life-threatening events while on deployment in a combat zone (Creech, et al., 2014). Military members are affected by deployment in combat zones because the associated stress can lead to increased risks for psychological and behavioral issues (Creech, et al.). These risk factors of developing psychological and behavioral issues puts active-duty military members and veterans at another risk for self-medicating due to internalizing factors that affect their mental health, such as, their development of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression and anxiety (Wright, et al., 2012).

When taking in account the millions of military members who are currently undergoing stressful factors that influence their mental health, it is important to also take in account the veterans who are no longer serving but are now faced with dealing with the side-effects of war and combat. The U.S. Government Accountability Office (2011) reported that there are about 2.1 million veterans who received treatment for mental health related issues in a five-year span from 2006 through 2010.

Due to the prevalence of military officials and veterans dealing with mental health issues, there is also a need to consider how their families are affected by the emotional and mental disturbance projected from the military members. Most recently, a study that collected data between 2014-2017 on 1.3 million active-duty military members found 54.3% reported being married (Goolsby, 2019). Of those 1.3 million active-duty militaries screened 41.2% reported having at least one child. These rates highlight an area of concern for military family members who are potentially dealing with military members affected by deployment and combat.

In a larger perspective, Gewirtz, et al. (2014) estimated that three million military families have been affected, directly and indirectly, by the military's deployment to war zones such as in Iraq and Afghanistan. Therefore, this study will explore secondary trauma and/or impacts related to military family members who experienced stress and traumatic events during deployment to combat zones. The purpose of this research project is to inquire about the potential

impacts of having a military member within the family's dynamic from the perceptions of those that provide social and mental health services to military members and from the perspective of military family members.

Paradigm and Rationale for Chosen Paradigm

The constructivist approach assumes that there is no separation between the observer and observed and reality is subjective, therefore everyone's input on the topic is valid. According to Morris (2013) the constructivists approach suggests "the only way to understand a human phenomenon is to thoroughly understand the perceptions of those individuals who are engaged in the human phenomenon" (p. 64). In regard to this current study, the "human phenomenon" is the functionality of military families and how they manage the family's dynamic with the added emotional and behavioral issues stemming from the residue that is left behind from having a family member deployed to combat zones. To fully grasp the understanding of the impacts military members put upon their families, I will seek to gain knowledge by engaging and building relationships both with military family members, and with those who provide supportive services to military members and their families. Using the constructivist approach will allow me the ability to gain the understanding about the dynamics of the military families and the presenting themes surrounding their family's dynamic.

By collecting information directly from the source (the military families), I will be better able to understand the issues surrounding them. Furthermore,

collaborating with individuals who directly serve or hold relationships with military members, will help me develop a rich understanding about the different variables that affect the functionality of military families. Therefore, the use of the constructivism paradigm will be optimal for this study because it will allow for input from both those affected secondarily by deployments, as well as those who directly serve military members. Each group will have the opportunity to participate in the conversation and discuss their shared experiences; and this will guide the research. Being able to engage with all the participants jointly (also known as the “hermeneutic dialectic”; Morris, 2013), will provide me with the chance to bring their experiences together with the purpose of finding the commonalities or themes between them. The common themes that are presented throughout the collected data will then be used to create a joint construct that all the participants agree upon. This will be further used as a catalyst to initiate the conversation concerning both actions relevant to communicating the findings of this research, and actions in addressing the potential impacts placed upon military families who had deployments which affected their family’s dynamic.

Literature Review

For the constructivist paradigm, the literature review will be used as one of the constructions. The literature review, along with the military social and mental health providers and the military family members, will construct the hermeneutic

circle. This section reviews literature demonstrating that active-duty military and veteran families who have dealt with deployments to combat zones have unique challenges placed upon them as they try to manage the family's dynamic and keep the family intact.

Military families are often affected, directly and indirectly, from the stress and traumas experienced by the military members. The literature review also discusses the secondary traumas and impacts of having a military family member within the family's dynamic. Military families are challenged with a wide range of effects on the entire family, such as, having to deal with added stress and mental health issues, changes in the family roles, and increased responsibilities for the non-deployed parent before and after deployment. I will also review literature which shows that while military family members are vulnerable with being impacted by their war-veteran family members, intervention can be provided to strengthen the family's dynamic.

The Effect of Stress and Mental Health Issues

Active-duty military members and veterans who have experienced deployment to war zones can be affected by the extreme stress and from the possibilities of witnessing traumatic events. During deployments, the service members will potentially experience prolonged durations of stress and life-threatening events that can develop into emotional and behavioral issues. Gewirtz, et al. (2014) note that due to the conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan, military personnel have experienced longer periods of deployments, averaging twelve

months, which can tie into the development of mental health issues such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) for the service members. When the service member returns home from deployment, they can present mental health symptoms, such as isolation, mood dysregulation, and intense psychological distress. These mental health symptoms demonstrated by the service member can create a dysfunctional environment for their spouse and children. Military family members living with a military member struggling with mental health issues can also develop feelings of isolation, loss of trust, severed attachments, neglect and rejection (Kritikos, et al., 2019). As well, Nash and Litz (2013) reported military spouses experiencing secondary traumatization through empathic identification with their veteran spouses who have been diagnosed with PTSD. The spouses of war veterans yielded a connection with their military spouses' PTSD symptoms and their individualized symptoms when tested for PTSD. Finally, the dysfunctional environment created by the war veteran has been shown to impact their children with evidence of increased anxiety, conduct disorder, and depression symptoms (Chandra, et al., (2010).

Military Family's Role Confusion

Nash and Litz (2013) offer the perspective of war veterans whose moral beliefs have been damaged by their own action during the time of deployment; such as having to participate in or witness atrocities, losing a close friend, and acts of killing. A damaged moral belief can affect the military member's psyche; their feelings of failure at preventing those acts of transgression, as well as

feelings of inadequacy as a person for violating their own moral codes, can be transferred into feelings of ineffectiveness as spouse or parent. Their feelings of ineffectiveness at fulfilling the role of a spouse or a parent can cause role confusion within the family dynamic. Furthermore, one of the parents being mentally or physically absent within the family dynamic can potentially cause the other parent to seek out emotional support and guidance from their children. This is the inverse of a healthy family setting, where the role of a parent is characterized by clear generational boundaries with the parent providing support and guidance for children, rather than the other way around. However, in a maladaptive setting, which is commonly found amongst military families, the parent is often dependent upon the child for emotional support which can cause the aforementioned role confusion (Pye & Simpson, 2017). This role confusion can create a dysfunctional family dynamic which can lead to instability, boundary crossing, and other maladaptive behaviors in the children.

Increased Responsibilities for Non-Deployed Parent

During the time-of-service members being deployed, military families frequently report high levels of stress relating to increased responsibilities, which is associated with mood symptoms and adjustment difficulties (Bender, 2008). The spouses of the deployed military members are expected to solely tend to all the household and family's needs. Along with all the responsibilities of their typical familial role, as an adaptation mechanism they must then also assume the family-related responsibilities normally taken on by the currently deployed military

members (O'Neal, et al., 2018). The shift in responsibilities can alter family functioning and affect the adjustment of the military members once they return from deployment. When it is time for military members to reintegrate into the family system, this adjustment can either prevent or support the transition depending upon the potential conflicts that can arise.

In summary, the literature review provided emerging themes about the impact of having a military member who has been deployed to a combat zone. It reflected the ways in which the functionality of the military family can be affected by secondary traumas and mental health issues. Further, the literature addressed family role confusion which can create a dysfunctional home environment, as well as exploring the impact of the additional responsibilities placed upon military spouses.

Outcome of the Research

Nash and Litz (2013) found that military family members may be traumatized by exposure to their war-vet family members and that family members should be considered a vulnerable population. However, when military families participated in interventional programs and attended at least four sessions, researchers found that they would be more likely to finish the program that consisted of psychoeducation, parent training literature, peer support and focus groups (Gewirtz, et al., 2014). Gewirtz, et al. also found that military members and their spouses reported high satisfaction with the provided material, finding it both relevant and useful. The literature review also expounded on the

impacts placed up the spouses and children of military members who have been exposed to combat zones and highlighted the concern for the mental and emotional well-being, so with additional feedback from the key stakeholders (military family members and those providing supportive services to the military community) this will provide the opportunity for a conversation on the topic to be started. Furthermore, this study will allow the key stakeholders to come together to share their experiences, their thoughts, and concerns regarding the topic at hand. The exchange of information between the participants can also give way for the discussion concerning the impacts on military families and offer an understanding about what action needs to be taken to address these impacts.

Theoretical Orientation

Utilizing the constructivist approach assumes that the study will not be guided by a particular theoretical framework but the theoretical framework will be used to influence participants during their development of a joint construction and action plan (Morris, 2013). Thus, the constructivist approach seeks to create change from the participant's engagement in open discussions regarding their thoughts, shared experiences, and concerns- in this current study, regarding the impacts upon the family's dynamic from having a military member within the family. The ideology of having key stakeholders from the military community engaging in discussion can potentially result in the creation of an action plan based on the found data. This concept that individuals can engage in discussion

to promote learned and changed behavior supports the theoretical framework of social learning theory. Thyer (2017) conceptualized the premise for social learning theory to be that “much of our behavior is learned and changeable, knowledge of operant, respondent, and observational learning is used to beneficially modify client behavior”(p. 471). In regards to this study, the social learning theory would be applicable because the discussions of their shared experiences and the impacts placed upon military families is occurring within the military community. Hence, this will give me the opportunity to learn about the unique family’s dynamics that are special to military families that have a family member who has experienced combat deployment. Learning of these dynamics brings forth implications that can be made about how military dynamics are formed based upon the data shared about family member’s interactions and descriptions of their experiences.

Contributions of the Study to Social Work Practice

This study will help develop an understanding of the secondary trauma and/or the potential impacts on the family’s dynamic while having a family member who has been exposed to combat deployment. The data collected through this study will provide a contribution to the social work practice at both the micro and macro level.

At a micro level, the data and information collected pertaining to the focused topic (the possible traumas caused by the residue of combat

deployments) can be helpful for military counselors and mental health practitioners to better understand the unique characteristics and experiences of military families when they are providing services to members of the military community. As well, this study can provide the opportunity for key stakeholders to have that open dialogue within each other and between influential individuals who desire to meet the needs of military families.

In addition, information from the research collected may potentially influence changes within the setting of military service providers. Services and policies can be influenced by this research at the macro level, because the data discusses areas of current and established services that are either limited or non-existent. The data gathered from this study may help service providers identify barriers to services or a realize a need for implementation of an additional service that would enhance the well-being of military family members. Furthermore, information from this study may help those in influential positions of power to promote system changes to meet the needs of the military communities that they serve.

Summary

Chapter one focused on the assessment portion of this study, which covered issues related to secondary trauma and/or impacts on the military family's dynamic; the reasoning for the selection of the constructivist paradigm was explained as well. A literature review was provided as a construct to promote

a discussion on how military families are impacted from having military service members within the family's dynamic. The potential contributions to social work at the micro and macro level were also established.

CHAPTER TWO

ENGAGEMENT

Introduction

In this chapter, I will highlight the use of the social work research method of constructivism. The constructivism paradigm used for this study will give way for further exploration on secondary trauma and/or impacts of having a military member within the family's dynamic, from the perspectives of military social service providers and military family members. Military family members and stakeholders offer valuable information and input from their personal experience, cultural differences, and personal values. Therefore, the use of the research method of constructivism for this topic's purpose will help gather meaningful knowledge that will potentially guide social work practice when addressing secondary trauma related to military family members. Therefore, this section of the study discusses how I engaged with the study sites, the methods used to engage with the selected constructs, and the encountered issues I experienced with areas of the study impacting diversity, ethical and political issues.

Study Sites

The initial steps to locate willing participants included contacting stakeholders and military family members for the purpose of initiating engagement, rather than for the purpose of data collection. I intentionally sought out entities that directly provided social and mental health services to military

members, and also sought out military family members for their individualized perspectives on the topic. I engaged with three gatekeepers at the entities that provide social and mental health services to military families with the intentions of gaining information from individuals who are outside of the military family's dynamic but who are still close enough to offer rich input about military families.

Out of the three social and mental health military support services that I contacted, only one of the agencies was willing to participate within the study. I was familiar with this particular entity and the services they provided prior to this research. I have had previous dealings with this entity due to the services they provide at a community college to military members and their families within the Southern California area. This agency is a Veteran's Resource Center and is utilized as a study site because they provide supportive services to veterans and their dependents while transitioning through college. This agency provides services that enhance military veterans and dependents' academic, career, and personal development.

I initially contacted one of their counselors via email to explore their interest in participating in the research study but was redirected to the Director of Veteran Services (DVS) who oversees the college's Veteran Resource Center, as they hold the authority for approval of participation. During the initial communication with the DVS, I provided the purpose of the study, limits of confidentiality, potential goals for the research's outcome, and discussed how to set up a meeting at the entity, or via video chat, to conduct the interview. The

DVS agreed to participate within this study. However, due to the pandemic, I and the DVS engaged in communication via email and video conferences.

Another construct used for the study included military family members for the purpose of gaining information directly from the source. I was previously a member of the military community and still has access to military family's group forums. I also have associates who are considered military family members. During the time of being part of the military community, I observed and experienced the culture of the military community being one that was open and welcoming to others who belonged to the military community. The culture of the military families has evolved to meet the constant changes that military families have or will experience, such as having to relocate several times to various bases around the world. Through the relocation process, military families quickly create bonds with other military family members for emotional support and sometimes physical support in these unfamiliar places due to being far away from their families and friends. A few unique identifiers associated with the military community include their willingness to create strong bonds in short durations of time, their ability to demonstrate openness to share experiences amongst each other, and a togetherness formed out of their understanding of shared experiences and overcoming challenging times together, such as going through deployments.

For this study, I used the military associates who I had previously established connections with to further recruit and inquire about their willingness

to participate in the research project. The initial contact with all the willing participants was conducted using a social media platform where I was then able to gain further contact information, such as phone numbers and email addresses, for future correspondences. I reached out to a total of eight military family members but only five agreed to participate in the study. I provided those that agreed to participate in the study, the limits of confidentiality, purpose of the study, potential goals for the study's outcome. I also established a scheduled time to meet where privacy would not be a problem and allowed them to select how they felt most comfortable: either a video chat conference or phone call. All but one of the participants agreed for a video chat conference and the other agreed to a phone interview.

Engagement Strategies for Gatekeepers at Research Site

In a constructivism study, engagement with several constructs for the purpose of gaining a richer understanding of the study's topic is essential. Morris (2013) noted that the paradigm of constructivism requires a researcher to develop relationships over time with participants for the purpose of adding information being shared amongst all the participants. Hence, I initially engaged and established rapport with the participants so that the participants felt comfortable with sharing information through the duration of the study. As well, I periodically communicated with participants through email and phone conversations to keep participants engaged, asked follow-up questions, and shared updated information.

I also engaged their associates within the military community to inquire if they are open to sharing their perspectives on how they felt about their family having been impacted by having a military member within the family's dynamic. I shared the limits of confidentiality and the purpose of the study which was to discuss the impacts and possible secondary traumas developed from having a military member who has experienced deployment in a combat zone. In addition, I shared the outcome goal of the research as being to advocate for services to be provided to military family members rather than focusing on solely servicing the military members.

I took a similar stance on plans to engage with military social and mental health providers. Engagement with the service provider initially included communication with the agency's counselor but was later directed to the agency's director. Interactions started with an email to build rapport and to provide a person of contact. Once a person of contact was established, I approached the agency's stakeholder using the same process as with the military family members. I again shared the limits of confidentiality, purpose of the study, potential goals for the research's outcome and duration of time the study would need to take place.

The interactions between the varying constructs and myself included the discussion of the purpose of the study, the benefits of participating in the study, an outline of the study processes, the roles within the study and the exchanging of contact information. I emphasized the benefit of participating in the study to

encourage participants to actively engage. Such benefits include promoting change at both a micro and macro level to potentially get services for military family members or bring awareness that there could be issues that this underrepresented population encounters at a high rate that affects millions of families. Discussions between myself and constructs were conducted either video chat, emails, or phones calls.

Self-Preparation

Trying to gather information or trying to gain access to the military community could create a challenge for civilians due to the lack of security clearance which can be a potential issue for the study. However, previously having been a military spouse helped me with gaining access and helped establish rapport with military family members and with those servicing the military community. Establishing commonalities between myself as the interviewer and the interviewees helped with military family members discussing the commonly stigmatized topic of mental health issues and its role in the dynamic of the military family unit. I prepared for this issue by being sensitive and mindful about the stigmas held about military families, military members receiving mental or social services, the issue of domestic abuse, and the stigmas surrounding military service providers. Also unexpected issues were considered, such as issues that might arise within the interviewing processes for the service providers and military family members. I attempted to mitigate such issues

though revisiting the terms agreed upon at the start of the project and I was open to altering the study if it did not lose the topic's focus.

I collected information from interviewing a military care provider and military family members, and also collected information from comprehensive research that focuses on secondary trauma related to military family members. Although this caused time constraints and affected participants' willingness to complete the interviews, I was mindful of the participants time and collected information around timeframes that worked better for the participants and upheld the proposed timeframe for the duration of the study.

Through the process of analysis, the data collected will not be generalized to the community of military family members, but an observable theme will be generated from the constructivism research method. The observable themes collected from the discussions included sensitive information such as possible mental health issues amongst military family members. Therefore, I put forth effort to ensure participants were provided space for self-disclosure and warmly encouraged and supported participants during their time of sharing. Lastly, the sensitivity regarding collecting personal information from interviewing the military family members and military service provider was taken into consideration. I was careful when approaching families and services providers to ensure they did not feel pressured to be in the study and reminded them throughout the study that their information was to remain confidential.

Diversity Issues

Collecting information from social and mental health service providers and military family members allows for a diverse perspective on the topic of secondary traumas and/or the impacts related to military family members, given that insight on the topic can come from military personnel, civilians, and military family members. However, 65% of military officials are men and around 60% of military personnel are white (Parker, et al., 2017). Thus, the information provided, and its cultural influence, will be limited on diversity when interviewing military family members. However, the issue of diversity in family structure and childrearing, as well as the difference in norms about appropriate behavior, may vary. The social and mental health providers may also offer their perspective from a professional or clinical view while the military family members may offer their perspective from systematic upbringing. I utilized cultural sensitivity when approaching these differences in opinions and attempted to demonstrate unbiased attitudes when the interviews were conducted. I also acknowledged and was mindful about the diversity and any stereotypes associated with the military community. For the constructivist, diversity issues that presented themselves within the study were discussed and addressed.

Ethical Issues

Primarily, I emphasized to the participants that participation in the study was voluntary and the participant had the option to withdraw from the study at any point. Participants were also informed if they choose to withdraw from the

study there would be no consequences for doing so. As well, I anticipated encountering ethical issues of anonymity and confidentiality. I sought to establish at the beginning of the study an understanding with the participants about the limitations surrounding confidentiality, such as with data coding disposal and sharing data information. There were measures taken to ensure confidentiality to protect the interest and well-being of the participants by not recording any identifiable information and storing the notes and audio recordings that were taken during the interview in a secure area with limited access. Furthermore, an informed consent was provided which addressed the purpose of the study, the possible duration of expected procedures, any concerns, and the potential harms and benefits from participating in the study. Participants were given the option to move on from a question or topic that made them feel uncomfortable about responding. The data collected in the study was coded to hide identities, therefore sharing the findings allowed for confidentiality for the participants. Once the data was transcribed, the audio recording was deleted from the recording device.

Political Issues

For this study, each of the participants was informed prior to data collection about the differences in perceived power. Each participant was made aware about perceived power and that regardless of their title or influence, each construct was equally weighted. Other potential political issues that were anticipated to stem from the topic of this research concerned political views

toward the government. The possible negative political views towards the government surrounding government services for the military community can be stemmed from shared constructs perspectives on the services provided to assist with mental health issues. Given that each construct is equally important, the agreed joint construction was used to provide a control for individuals' strong political influence within the study.

The Role of Technology

Technology was used to communicate with the study's participants. I utilized emails, virtual meetings, and cell phones to primarily collect all the data. Technology issues such as miscommunication can arise within the study, thus I was mindful while communicating. I also discussed and came to an agreement with each individual participating within the study about their guidelines for using technology and this was discussed within the initial engagement.

Summary

Within this section of the study, I discussed the plan for engaging potential research sites, the selection of the study participants and how I self-prepared for the study. Concerns for potential diversity, ethical and political issues were covered along with how those issues could be resolved.

CHAPTER THREE

IMPLEMENTATION

Introduction

Chapter three focuses on the processes of implementation that was conducted for this study. I chose to conduct interviews as one of the primary sources of data collection because interviews are the most important form of data collection for the constructivism paradigm (Morris, 2013). Therefore, interviews were conducted to inquire about the possible impact of having a military member within the family dynamic and will be discussed in this chapter. In addition, this chapter covers how those that participated in the study were selected based on their affiliation with the military community. Hence, this chapter addresses the potential study participants, how those participants were selected, how data was gathered and recorded, how the data was analyzed, the process of termination, and a dissemination plan for how the study's findings will be communicated.

Study Participants

The collected data originated from either military family members or entities who are connected to military members and their families; this allowed me to maintain focus on the research topic. Collecting information and data directly from military-associated stakeholders strengthened the opportunity for findings that may help the practice of social work when serving the military community, because the information collected will go towards addressing

potential impacts resulting from having a military family. Thus, I collected participants from an internet site that directly serves military members and their families. I also collected from individuals who identify as military spouses.

I have previously utilized the services of the Southern California entity which participated in this study. This entity is a Veteran Resource Center that serves diverse military members and their families by providing services that enhance military veterans and dependents' academic, career, and personal development. The Veteran Resource Center serves more than 1400 veteran students and their dependents. For the interview, the Veteran Resource Director was used and this participant self-identified as a Caucasian male.

For the second construct used for this study, military family members were used. There were a total of five military spouses used for this study. Of those five participants, all identified as female. Three participants identified themselves as African American, once identified themselves as Caucasian, and one identified as Mixed Race. Each construct included in this study offered a rich and unique perspective on the topic of secondary traumas and/or potential impacts derived from having a military member within the family dynamic.

Selection of Participants

According to Morris (2013), there are fifteen types of purposive research sampling and two of those sampling types (maximum variation and snowball sampling) are best used for the constructivism research paradigm. First, this study used maximum variation which "identifies the diversity of experiences with

a social phenomenon and gives in depth descriptions of unique cases (Morris, 2013, p. 124).” I used maximum variation by sampling military family members and a military social service provider. I also conducted maximum variation through the intentional method of interviewing constructs from individuals with varying characteristics and those that are both within and out of the military community. The intentional method of interviewing individuals that are within and out the military community allowed participants to vary in race and ethnic group, age group, geographical area, socioeconomic status, and political beliefs. I also utilized the method of snowballing to collect data. Snowballing “is a way of understanding and utilizing the networks between key people in relation to the study focus (Morris, 2013, p. 125).” Hence, I asked military family members after the interview if they “know someone that differs in opinion regarding how military members affect a family dynamic and are willing to participate in the study?” Utilizing both methods of research sampling, I was able to capture diverse perspectives from individuals who had an interest in the topic or historical background relating to the topic.

Both methods were used with the willing participants through the forms of engagement and communication. Additionally, I used other relevant information, such as peer review journals, information found on the internet, and relevant text that regarded this study’s focus.

Data Gathering

Through the process of data collection, I gathered qualitative data either through video chats, phone calls, emails or through video group conference calls. The study's focus topic was inquiries about secondary traumas and/or the possible impacts of having a military family member within the family dynamic. Thus, the preconstructed questions were topic focused and when the conversation was moving away from the topic I attempted to lead it back to the focus of the study. Morris (2013) stated that the constructivist researcher is the data-gathering instrument, rather than the questions that are on the paper. Thus, I made it a goal to initially try to enter the interviews with starter questions to get the conversation started while abstaining from any preconceived notions. I conducted the interviews by asking descriptive questions, structured questions and contrasting questions. Descriptive questions are overarching questions, such as, "what is your daily experience with the military community?". Structured questions expand on the topic of the study, such as, "since you are a military spouse, do you see yourself being impacted by your military significant other?". Contrast questions assist with the development of criteria for inclusion or exclusion for a category, such as, "is there anything about working with the military community that makes you feel like additional services need to be provided to military families?". Appendix A lists example questions that were asked during the interviews.

Phases of Data Collection

Phase 1: Individual Interviews

The first phase involved making the necessary preparations and formulating questions prior to the interviews. Once gaining permission from the participant to proceed with the study, I began with a series of preliminary questions that were used for the purpose of gaining an understanding of the interviewees' familiarity with, and perception of, the research topic. These preliminary questions addressed the interviewees' experiences, opinion/values, feelings, background, and knowledge surrounding the dynamics of a military family. In addition, these preliminary questions included collecting details about the participant's demographics such as the race, age, family size, housing, and income.

The questions asked regarding the study topic were open-ended questions which allowed for an open dialogue to take place between me and the participant; this also allowed the interviewee to lead the conversation. At the beginning of the interview where the questions were focused on the subject matter, I inquired about background knowledge relating to the military connections and involvement with military families. The questions were general and broad enough for the purpose of establishing rapport and keeping the interviewee at ease. As well, each participant was provided through email a copy of the informed consent which addressed the limits of confidentiality and expectations for the study.

The next step during the interviews focused on asking direct questions relating to the impact on the family's dynamic from having a military family member. The focused questions were significant in this study because these questions elicited valuable information pertaining to the research topic. Once the significant questions were conducted each interview was then ended. The process of ending the interview involved me asking questions that gave the suggestion that the interview was coming to a close. For example, I would ask "if there was anything of significance relating to study that I forgot to ask?" or "was there anything you like to add to the study?" I then concluded the interview and gathered all the information to later follow-up with the interviewee about the validity of their transcribed interview. The constructivist approach also required that I share information collected from one interviewee with the next interviewee.

Phase 2: Group Meetings

After I allowed the interviewees the opportunity to guide the conversation relating to the topic and informed the interviewee of previous feedback from the other participants, I then asked if they would recommend anyone with an opposing perspective that might want to be included in the study. After all participants were interviewed, I would have brought all the participants together for the hermeneutic dialectic circle to develop the joint construction, but this could not be done; due to the COVID-19 pandemic all the participants could not come together. The hermeneutic dialectic would have allowed the participants to come together to discuss the study's topic and engage in rich dialogue. This would

have also given the opportunity for the participants to hear each other's thoughts, concerns, and allow them to reflect on their thoughts. As well, the group would have also been able to address areas of agreement, areas of disagreement, or shared their concerns regarding the joint construction. Through this process, the group would have reviewed and finalized the joint construction, forming a hermeneutic dialectic. Then following the finalization of the joint construction, the group would have been able to discuss the next step of creating an action plan. Instead, to conclude the data collection process, I finalized the collected information from the interviews and agreed to send a final report to all the group members which they could review and decide if they would like to include additional information or change anything included in the report.

Phase 3: Creating an Action Plan

The joint construction was finalized by myself, and the group members were able to reflect on what further actions needed to take place. During this stage, I encouraged and empowered members of the joint construction through email exchange to assist with formulating an action plan and carrying out the action plan. I also suggested to the group about the possibility of campaigning the findings on a social media webpage in hopes to reach a larger audience. An action plan was produced from this method; the group suggested I deliver and present the findings to a military counseling center.

Data Recording

To maintain focus on keeping the fidelity of the data recording, I aimed to keep a balance with keeping the interviewees comfortable and between keeping the fidelity. Therefore, I used audio or video recordings which tend to be easily ignored once time has gone by. It was imperative for me to inform the participants of the strengths and drawbacks from audio and video recorded interviews and remind them of their rights to withdraw at any time. The audio recordings were used to ensure that the significant and finite details about the information being collected were not missed. Notes were also taken during the interview. I used critical incident reporting to assist with recalling the key facets of the interviewee's construction. Notes during the interview were used to record important observable characteristics, such as, documents, artifacts, time of day, facial expressions, and any other crucial details about the setting for the interview. Through the interview processes, I recorded the notes taken during the interview in a journal. The journal was used as a recording device to keep record of data collected from each interview and the record of the research processes.

Data Analysis

The purpose of the study was to gain a comprehensive description about the individualized perspectives on the impact of having a family member within the family's dynamic. Thus, I utilized the constructivism approach to engage with the military community and associated stakeholders to further develop the focus

of the study. The development of the focus of the study prompted participants to discuss their perspectives on the impact of having a military member within the family dynamic. With the information gained from the interviews regarding the study's focus, I was able to gather common themes found from the interviews that were discussed and utilized for further analysis. Therefore, for the purpose of the constructivism approach to carry out the study, I utilized it as the main sources for data collection and analysis. In addition, Morris (2013) states that the research method approach of constructivism entails the researcher being used as the interview data-gathering instrument rather than the questions that are formulated in relation to the topic of the study. Thus, receiving subjective feedback from participants during their interviews allowed me to find common themes to code and link the codes through axial coding.

To further highlight the process of formulating codes, I then evaluated the questions that were used to build a summary data on the emerging constructions. However, I carried out a more formalized process of analysis than Morris (2013) and Lincoln and Guba (1985) offered. They note that the evaluation process starts with identifying the units of information from the narrative descriptions; for example, one such unit in my study was "added stress due to the military member's deployment". These units of information must contain two characteristics: first, they must be relevant to the research site and focus; second, that information needs to be able to stand alone without needing additional information (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Like the example previously

stated, the different constructs can express themes relating to impact such as, “added stress from the military member’s deployment.” However, this theme may vary in the way it is expressed by the participants; such as one member may discuss the stress from having to be the sole parent and another member may express feelings about stress being added from not having the emotional/physical support due to the military member being away for deployment. The units of information were then recorded separately in the data processing by their differences in identifying information, such as in the type of data source (i.e., literature, documents, or interview), and the time and place the data was collected. Then the units were created and grouped by similar characteristics for categorization. Regarding the study’s topic, the units varied from “increased stress relating to deployment,” “impacts on the family dynamic,” or “increased responsibilities due to military members being away on deployment.” Further evaluation consisted of me evaluating the units to find units that match by those mentioned characteristics so they can be categorized. The categories were then built and strengthened with enriching information from those units that shared similarities in information. Thus, building the units into categories allowed me to develop criteria for inclusion of a unit that can result in the further naming of each category (name coding). The criteria formulated gave way to the justification for the created categories beyond the perception of information being gathered by one's intuition.

The created categories (also referred to as “codes”), were then evaluated for relationships that could be found between the categories. Those relationships presented during the evaluation process offered a link between the categories and helped build a more complete construction, which is known as “axial coding”. For example, “increased responsibilities due to a military member’s absence” can be related to the “added stress” the military family member may express. Therefore, finding the links between categories surrounding the impact of having a military member within the family’s dynamic helped create a more complete picture of the topic. In addition, having categories such as, “experiences with military members”, “cultural influences and military families”, “functions of the military family’s dynamic”, and “assessment of the military members and family dynamic” were bridged together to give a larger perspective on the research’s focus compared to the categories being tallied by repeated relationship. These items of information were used as a basis for future questions and helped guide in the data source examination process for the creation of the joint construction.

Ongoing evaluation of each interview or social artifact (online brochures or pamphlets from the constructs) continued to take place throughout the study. I used qualitative analysis procedures to further compose collected data into a shared construction. I was the key person to compare individual’s constructions after units, categories and a joint construction was finalized. The formulated joint construction produced an interpretation of the data and created an action plan.

The action plan addresses the potential secondary trauma and/or impacts of having a military member within the family dynamic.

Termination and Follow Up

According to Morris (2013), termination is initiated as the part of the member check meeting where all participants come to an agreement which forms the joint construction. Thus, the study concluded once the group agreed upon a joint construction and agreed to terminate the study. As well, the group formulated an action plan on how further communication would take place and talked about the steps needed to carry out that action plan. The termination process required the participants to take responsibility over the project with little interaction from myself. Although the group members discussed the possibilities of formulating a social media webpage designed to encourage military families to come together and share their experience, and of presenting the research findings to a military counseling center, I will no longer participate and the group members will decide on future plans of action. I encouraged the group members to build a relationship and share their knowledge between each other so that they can implement future actions of the project.

Concluding the study detailed the final constructivist report given to all the members of the study. The final report included the initial research focus, detailed description of research sites, description of the final hermeneutic dialectic circle, description of the qualitative sources, description of the units and

categories, and a plan for action. Finalizing the termination consisted of me empowering the participants to implement the action plan and encouraging them to stay connected. Overall, the goal for termination was to have the group of participants to transition into a collaborative group that utilizes strategies to impact the community.

Communication of Findings and Dissemination Plan

The dissemination plan is significant to the termination and follow-up part of a research study. When utilizing the constructivist paradigm, the findings are reported during the phase of the study where members check in during the hermeneutic dialectic. However, each participant was not able to meet in-person due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, each of the participants was notified through email of the findings and was provided a detailed constructivist report outlining the research accomplishments. As well, members were given additional details of the selection of participants, study sites, method for data gathering and analysis, the units of constructions, and as previously mentioned the final report.

For the dissemination plan, I have exhausted all efforts to encourage the group members to act in their suggested action plan and remind them of the benefits that can derive from the findings, such as that the study's findings can help with therapeutic inventions for military family members.

As well, this study is going to be published at the California State University, San Bernardino's Scholarworks website and disseminated at the

School of Social Work's research symposium which will be taking place at the end of the 2020-2021 academic year.

Summary

This section of the study covered the implementation portion. I described the study's participants, the process of selecting participants, the data gathering and phases of data collection, and how data was recorded and analyzed. This constructivist study was terminated following each participant gave their final statement acknowledging the termination and received the final research report. I disengaged from the study but will be available to the members for further questions. The goal for the study was to gain the understanding of the impacts of having a military family member so further intervention can be provided either at the micro or macro level.

CHAPTER FOUR

EVALUATION

Introduction

This portion of the study focuses on the analysis of the data collected from the interviews. There were a total of 6 participants who agreed to participate within the study. The participant's ages ranged from 30 years old to 55 years old. Three of the participants identified as African American, two identified as Caucasian, and one identified as Mixed Race. There were five female participants and one male participant. In significance to this study's topic, two of the participants were in dual-military marriages, which meant that both spouses concurrently served within a military branch, and four participants were the spouses of a military member. Amongst the participants, the range between military community involvement was between eight years and 30 years. All the participants acknowledged that their spouse had served one or more deployments to a combat area. Therefore, participants were knowledgeable and held an understanding of potential impacts on the family's dynamic relating to combat deployments.

Data Analysis

In the data analysis section, I will discuss the major themes that emerged from the participant's interviews. The significant responses found within the

interviews focused on the study's topic relating to the secondary trauma and/or impacts of having a military member within the family dynamic. The significant themes that emerged included the following: An increased level of stress relating to deployment, impacts on mental health, impacts on the family's dynamic, increased responsibilities for the non-deployed parent, impacts on personal beliefs, and impacts on their support system.

Increased Level of Stress Relating to Deployment

A noteworthy amount of focus on stress was discussed often throughout the participants' interviews. The participants remarked on the overarching impact that stress had on their lives and on their family's dynamic. One participant openly acknowledged seeing the association between stress from the military and on home life. This participant stated,

But once we moved away and stopped going to church things started getting a little rocky. And then he got so stressed from being in the military that kind of stuff carried over to home life. We started experiencing marital issues and dealing with anger and stuff like that (Participant #4, October 26, 2020).

Several of the participants noted that not hearing from their spouse during their deployment caused stress. An example of this was noted when Participant #1 stated:

We had one mission where we lost an entire recon team, five guys on one mission, one IED, and we lost two or three after that over some weeks

after that. And just the uncertainty, knowing that my husband was outside the wire every single day of that deployment, and not knowing if he was going to come home or not really impacted me (Participant #1, October 11, 2020).

Participant #5 also stated,

Once again, having lived the lifestyle and worked with countless others who too have deployed repeatedly. I must say the first deployment is the hardest and has the most effect on the military member and their family.

The fear of the unknown and things to come is the hardest part for everyone (Participant #5, October 29, 2020).

All the participants understood and reflected on how there was a substantial amount of stress that was caused from the exposure of being around their military spouse.

Impacts on Mental Health

Mental health problems are a significant issue within the military community. Symptoms or presentations of mental health issues were identified as a common theme within the interviews. Participants often pointed out specific presentations of mental health issues that they were experiencing or observed. Participant #1 stated, “I really was struggling with depression while my husband was deployed” and “Several years later, my husband has come a long way, but he really struggles with PTSD and obstructive sleep apnea and some other things that have come along with his service.” (Participant #1, October 11, 2020).

Along with the issues that the spouses noted experiencing, they were also often the buffer for their spouses who were dealing with mental and behavioral health issues. Such as in the statement, “There's periods of time where he got very physically abusive, and I don't know if that was because of the military. But yeah, it could be due to mental health because he had some PTSD” (Participant #3, October 26, 2020).

Another example, Participant #2 stated, “I have to see how it'll be traumatic. They leave and they come back. And it's like you are married to a new person” (Participant #2, October 25, 2020).

It was also noted by a couple of participants that their children experience impacts on their mental health well-being. One participant stated, “Military children do seem to be a little more emotional and maybe it's because either their mom and dad aren't there and it's not by their choice, they know that their mom or dad is deployed” (Participant #4, October 26, 2020).

Another participant highlighted the point that one member of the family deciding to not resolve their mental health issues can result in affecting the whole family. This participant stated, “The need for self-help or mental self-help to be specific is one facet of the drawbacks to having a military member in your family” (Participant #5, October 29, 2020). Overall, the most participants reported experiencing or witnessing symptoms and presentations of mental health issues.

Impacts on the Family Dynamic

The participants' discussions of how their families were affected varied on their personal beliefs and cultural differences. Most participants acknowledged that they had experienced an impact on their family's unit but their perceptions about their experiences altered how they viewed and responded to the study's topic. One participant stated,

I can't attest to other people, but I know my children really don't know their dad that well. He doesn't really know how to relate to them as people, he treats them like Marines. That's the only way he really knows how to deal with people, his social skills are kind of off anyway, and he has a tough time relating to them as children. He sees them as his Marines. Do this, clean your room, pick up your stuff, go here, do your homework and give orders (Participant #3, October 26, 2020).

This participant reflected on the impact of having their family interactions altered, while another participant gave an extensive description of their view on how the choices of a military member can potentially impact their whole family dynamic. Participant #4 stated,

And then, I mean, even like infidelity, DUI or domestic violence, I feel like stuff like that really impacts a military family because you as a wife, you want it to stop and you want to get help. But at the same time, you don't want your husband, who you may or may not get into trouble and possibly kicked out. So, you keep quiet or you lie about it to protect them. You're

putting that person before yourself. And then in your head you feel like you're putting your family's well-being because they get into trouble. What if they get kicked out? Then they lose their income and that impacts the whole family (Participant #4, October 26, 2020).

This participant spoke about the choice's family members must make and the dysfunction that is often hidden to keep their family intact.

However, a few of the participants spoke of an increase of resiliency being built within the family dynamic and a strength in the bonds amongst family members. For example, "The longer the deployment continues the more independent the other members of the family become. The family will grow stronger and braver as time marches on" (Participant #5, October 29, 2020). There were several strengths mentioned that positively impacted the family's dynamic, such as, participants found an increase of resiliency in their children, increased adaptability, and a sense of independence found within the family members.

Increased Responsibilities for Non-Deployed Parent

Each of the participants relayed that they had an increase in responsibilities when their spouse was deployed. Some of the participants noted that age played a significant role in challenges they faced in dealing with increased responsibilities from having a spouse away on a military assignment. Participant #1 stated,

I was forced to do everything by myself at twenty-five. I had to step up to take over all these additional responsibilities; pay all the bills, took care of the rent, took care of calling USAA when I needed to send them documents saying that I was the person taking care of everything while he was gone (Participant #1, October 11, 2020).

Further highlighting the additional responsibilities taken on, “It's harder on you as a spouse because not only are you taking on additional roles as being a parent, but you're also still trying to create that structure for your kids. Spouses have to multitask” (Participant #3, October 26, 2020). Most of the participants mentioned that they were left taking care of their family's finances, being a sole parent, and household responsibilities. A couple of the participants mentioned that they often felt like a single parent.

Impacts on Personal Beliefs

At least two of the participants mentioned that their personal beliefs were impacted because of having a military member within the family dynamic. These participants expressed their beliefs of self were altered.

Rough as it's been I feel like as a spouse, that my whole identity is taken away. It is pretty much how they treat it as a spouse, no matter how much schooling you have as a spouse, it is pretty much just put on the back burner (Participant #2, October 25, 2020).

The feelings of self-worth appeared to be in question for the couple of participants that felt their personal beliefs were impacted. As well, it was

observed that military spouses' beliefs about self-appeared to be altered.

Participant #6 exemplified this through their statement,

For the military they're giving that attitude that they're supposed to be bigger, they're supposed to be stronger, they can't be weak. They can't show signs of weakness. So, it's common within the military community to not ask for help or take the help (Participant #6, October 30, 2020).

Impacts on Support System

Most of the participants expressed gratitude regarding the impacts on their support system with that being the direct result of being separated from their spouse who is away on deployment. Participants shared how members of the military community come together to support each other and easily connect because of understanding what the other is experiencing. For example, Participant #1 stated, "I think the highlights for me were getting to meet and connect to so many really cool people from all over the U.S. I think the most awesome part about being in the military is that" (Interview #1, October 11, 2020).

Another participant noted that,

I will say the benefit of it is that one of the nice things was that military spouses can be supportive. And you get to meet a lot of other military people who want to go through the same thing that you go through maybe and you can have that, you can have that relationship with them. And it's sometimes it's nice that you can meet other families and you can have

maybe more of a social interaction, barbecues and birthday parties and Friday nights and stuff like that (Participant #3, October 26, 2020).

There were mentioned drawbacks of being separated from a spouse and often being in a new city or town and away from extended family.

I feel like a lot of times you're alone as a single parent and without having family around for support, you learn to just adapt and make friends wherever you go and create your own holidays and memories because of that. You can become best friends with a stranger within a week (Participant #4, October 26, 2020).

It was commonly said within the study's participants that they felt a loss of support when being separated from their spouse but having the support of others from the military community helps with feeling supported. Even one participant referred to their military supportive friends as a "pseudo" family.

Summary

The study allowed for discussion to take place between the military family members and a director of a Veterans Resource Center regarding the impacts placed upon the family's dynamic from having a military family member. Most of the participants agreed that their family's dynamic was impacted. Details about their family's impacts included topics such as, stress, mental health issues, their family's dynamic, increased responsibilities due to spouse's separation, changes

in personal beliefs, and on their support system. Participants noted that they were strengths and weaknesses associated with being impacted.

CHAPTER FIVE

TERMINATION AND FOLLOW UP

Introduction

In this section of the study, I will detail the termination process. This section will allow me to give an overview of the research project completed with members of the military community and with a member serving the military community. In addition, this section of the study details the ongoing relationship between myself and participants. Please note that changes in the relationships between myself and the participants may have changed since the study project was conducted. Furthermore, the goal for this study is to inquire about the potential impacts of having a military member within the family dynamic from the perceptions of those that provide social and mental health services to military members and from the perspective of military family members.

Termination of Study

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, terminating with the study's participants face-to-face was not possible. Therefore, I conducted the termination of the study with each participant through either video conference, email, or phone conversation. The method of termination was determined by the participant and based on their preference. Participants were given the opportunity to share the experiences and form relationships during the email exchanges that were used as check-in meetings. I gave the last report to the participants, allowed them to

reflect on these findings, and encouraged them to continue working with each other to implement the action plan. Participants were also debriefed and given my contact information for necessary follow-up questions.

Communications of Findings to Study Site and Participants

Each of the participants were provided (through email exchange) with a final report that detailed what the participant could do if they had any questions pertaining to the findings of the report. They were also provided with my contact information. The report also gave the participants an overview of the study's focus, the research site used for the study, participants involved in the study, the units categorized, the final agreed-upon joint construction, and a description of the action plan. Lastly, the participants were informed that they could request the final report from me once it was completed.

Ongoing Relationships with Study Participants

As noted earlier, I recruited some participants from pre-established relationships that were developed during the time I was a part of the military community. Thus, the developed relationships between myself and most of the participants were successfully established. As well, I was able to successfully establish working relationships with the remaining participants. I will continue open communication with the participants and offer any assistance as needed.

Dissemination Plan

The findings of this study and action plan were provided to each participant. I encouraged participants to implement the action plan and continue

to communicate with each other for the purpose of sharing the findings of the study through a social media platform. The purpose of social media use would be helpful in highlighting the need for military resources to be directed towards military families. This would also allow other members of the military community the chance to bring exposure to the impacts related to having a military member within the family dynamic. As well, this study is going to be published at the California State University, San Bernardino's Scholarworks website and disseminated at the School of Social Work's research symposium which will be taking place at the end of the 2021-2011 academic year.

Summary

This research project gave the opportunity for military family members and those servicing the military community the chance to share their thoughts, experiences, and concerns regarding the secondary and/or potential impacts of having a military member within the family. Participants were able to reflect on the experiences and thoughts after I finalized the joint construction and shared it with the participants. All the participants expressed within their interviews that they have felt impacted from having a military family member. As well, the Director of Veterans Resource Center agreed with both experiencing impacts while serving within the military and from being informed about some of the impacts while servicing military members and their families.

Each of the participants were provided the findings produced from the collected data through an email with the final report attached. As well, participants were given my contact information and informed if they had questions and wanted a copy of the final report then they can request. I will keep communication open with the participants for all necessary information or questions.

APPENDIX A
DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

Sample Starting Questions-Military Support Agencies

1. What has been your role in providing services to military families?
2. What has been your general experience with the military community?
3. What is your perspective on the potential impact(s) from having a military member within the family dynamic?
4. What is your perspective on how deployment affects the family unit?
5. Is there anything about working with the military community that might make you feel like additional services should to be provided to the military community?
6. Do you think there are specific factors that are special to the military community that might impact a family dynamic? If so, what are those factors?
7. Do you feel that the needs for military families are being met? If not, how can their needs be met?
8. What made you participate in the study?
9. What are some strengths from having a military family member within the family dynamic?
10. What are some drawbacks from having a military family member within the family dynamic?
11. What should we do to address any of these issues?
12. Is there anything that I failed to mention that you would like to include in the study?

Developed by Andressa Young, 2020)

Sample Starting Questions-Military Family Members

1. How long have you been part of the military community?
2. How has your experience been since you have been part of the military community?
3. How have you seen yourself being impacted by having a military member within the family dynamic?
4. How have you seen your family being impacted by having a military member within the family dynamic?
5. What is your perspective on how deployment affects the family unit?
6. Do you think there are specific factors that are special to the military community that might impact a family dynamic? If so, what are those factors?
7. Do you feel that the needs for military families are being met? If not, how can their needs be met?
8. What made you participate in the study?
9. What are some strengths from having a military family member within the family dynamic?
10. What are some drawbacks from having a military family member within the family dynamic?
11. What should we do to address any of these issues?
12. Is there anything that I failed to mention that you would like to include in the study?

(Developed by Andressa Young, 2020)

APPENDIX B
INFORMED CONSENT

INFORMED CONSENT

The study in which you are asked to participate is designed to investigate the potential impacts and possible secondary traumas in relations to having a military member within the family dynamic. The study is being conducted by Andressa Young, a graduate student, under the supervision of Dr. Brooklyn Levine-Sapozhnikov, Adjunct Professor in the School of Social Work at California State University, San Bernardino (CSUSB). The study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board at CSUSB.

PURPOSE: The purpose of the study is to gain the perspectives from those that are providing social and mental health services to the military members and their families and military family members on the potential impacts on the family dynamic from having a military member within the family.

DESCRIPTION: Participants will be interviewed on study’s topic which will focus on the participant’s perspective on how military members effect their family’s dynamic.

PARTICIPATION: Your participation in the study is totally voluntary. You can refuse to participate in the study or discontinue your participation at any time without any consequences.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Your responses will remain confidential and data will be reported in group form only.

DURATION: It will take 30 to 60 minutes to complete the interview.

RISKS: Although not anticipated, there may be some discomfort in answering some of the questions. You are not required to answer and can skip the question or end your participation.

BENEFITS: There will not be any direct benefits to the participants.

CONTACT: If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to contact Dr. Brooklyn Levine-Sapozhnikov at (909) 537-5238.

RESULTS: Results of the study can be obtained from the Pfau Library ScholarWorks database (<http://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/>) at California State University, San Bernardino after July 2022.

***** I agree to have this interview be audio recorded: _____ YES _____ NO

I understand that I must be 18 years of age or older to participate in your study, have read and understand the consent document and agree to participate in your study.

_____ Place an X mark here

_____ Date

APPENDIX C
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

IRB #: IRB-FY2020-287

Title: Secondary Trauma and/or Potential Impacts Related to Military Family

Members Creation Date: 3-15-2020 End Date:

Status: **Approved**

Principal Investigator: Andressa Young

Review Board: Main IRB Designated Reviewers for School of Social Work

Sponsor:

Study History

Submission Type	Initial	Review Type	Exempt	Decision	Exempt
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Key Study Contacts

Member	Brooklyn Sapozhnikov	Role	Co-Principal Investigator	Contact	brooklyn.sapozhnikov@csusb.edu
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Member	Andressa Young	Role	Principal Investigator	Contact	006125531@coyote.csusb.edu
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Member	Andressa Young	Role	Primary Contact	Contact	006125531@coyote.csusb.edu
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