

WHAT STRENGTHS ARE YOU BUILDING IN YOUR MARRIAGE?

**Military life can be stressful for couples.
Building these strengths can help during challenging times:**



Personal Beliefs

Sense of control over your life • Positive outlook about the future • Spirituality, faith, and compassion



Family Communication Skills

Ability to listen and empathize • Discuss ideas calmly • Solve problems effectively • Express feelings openly and honestly

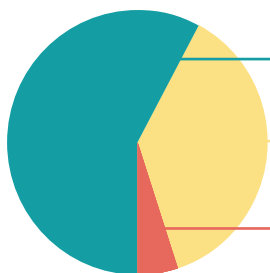


Access to Social Support

Family and friends you can turn to for help
• Others who care for you and make you feel loved

How do military couples view their strengths?

Most service members and their spouses report high levels of the above strengths in their marriage.



58% of couples reported the highest levels across all strengths.

37% of couples reported moderate levels of strengths.

Only **5%** of couples reported the lowest levels across all strengths.
Without important strengths, life stress may take a greater toll on couples.

Couples with the lowest levels of strengths experienced:



Worse mental health



Lower marital relationship quality



Less satisfaction with the military

Ways to build strengths in your marriage

Take an inventory of your personal beliefs:

- Participate in a [survey](#) of your character strengths
- Get involved in spiritual or charitable activities
- Seek out help from a professional when you need it

Work on improving communication in your family:

- Make a plan for staying connected when family members are apart
- Contact your local family service center to participate in a communication skills workshop
- Check out [Military OneSource](#) and sign up for a marriage enrichment weekend

Build your social support network:

- Make a list of family and friends you can turn to for support
- Communicate regularly with your most important friends and family
- Seek out opportunities to connect with others in your community

VIA Institute on Character. (2020). The VIA Character Strengths Survey. Retrieved from <https://www.viacharacter.org/survey/account/register>
Pfleger, J. C., Porter, B., Carballo, C. E., Stander, V. A., & Corry, N. H. (2020). Patterns of strengths in U.S. military couples. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 29, 1249–1263. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-019-01593-4>

For more information, go to <http://www.familycohort.org>

The Millennium Cohort Family Study follows nearly 10,000 spouses of junior military personnel for 21 years to help the Department of Defense understand the needs of families and provide better support.

