

Department of Defense (DoD), Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy (ODASD (MC&FP)).

# Military Family Life Project: Active Duty Spouse Study



**Longitudinal Analyses 2010-2012 | Project Report**

**March 2015**

Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC)



Department of Defense (DoD), Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy (ODASD (MC&FP))

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## Longitudinal Analyses 2010-2012 Project Report

**March 2015**

Report prepared under contract number HDQMWR-12-F-0321.

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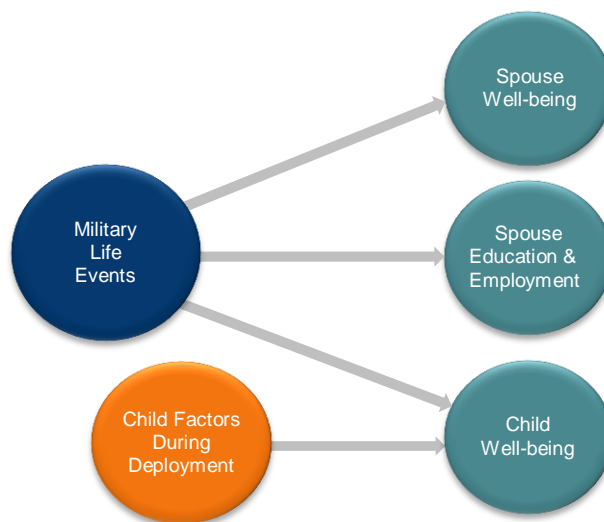
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## Executive Summary

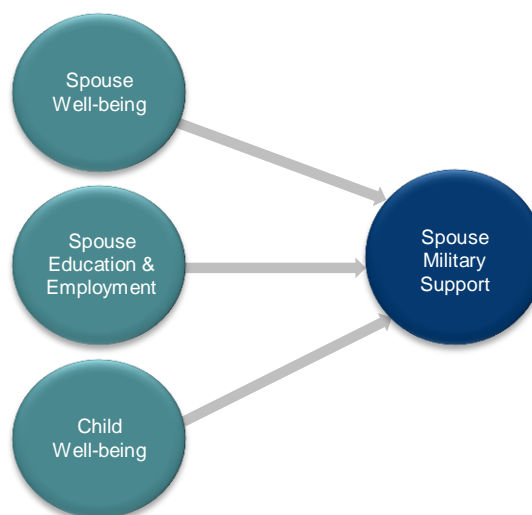
In 2010, the Department of Defense (DoD) began the *Military Family Life Project* (MFLP) to address a critical need: to better understand the impact of military life events on military families. Of particular concern was the impact of multiple deployments over years of combat operations. The MFLP is the first large-scale, representative longitudinal DoD-wide survey of military families. The survey was conducted by the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) in 2010, 2011, and 2012, with a total of 6,412 spouses who completed the survey in all three years.

Given the potential for frequent moves and deployments to disrupt family life, the research was designed to address how military life events impact spouse and child well-being. Further, the research addressed how spouse and child factors impact spousal military satisfaction and support to stay in the military to better understand retention support of the military family. The study examined two sets of related research questions. Research question 1 assessed the impact of military life events (i.e., Permanent Change of Station [PCS] moves and deployments) on spouse well-being, spouse education and employment, and child well-being. Research question 2 assessed the impact of these spouse and child variables on spouse military support, specifically spouse satisfaction with the military way of life and spouse support to stay on active duty.

### Research Question 1: What is the Impact of Military Life Events on Spouses and Children Over Time?



### Research Question 2: What is the Impact of Spouse and Child Factors on Spouse Military Support Over Time?



## Change Over Time Results

The following table summarizes the significant changes in study outcomes from 2010 to 2012.

Decreased Over Time	Increased Over Time
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spouse depressive/anxiety symptoms (-1.7%)</li> <li>Spouse education enrollment (-2.7%)</li> <li>Spouses who are not enrolled in school/ training but would like to be (-9.5%)</li> <li>Spouse satisfaction with the military way of life (-4.0%)</li> <li>Spouse support to stay on active duty (-5.3%)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Child problematic behaviors (2.9%); however, this change is explained by an increase in child age</li> </ul>



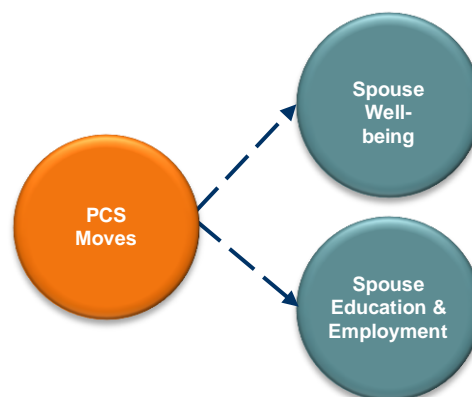
The outcomes that remained stable from 2010 to 2012 include financial condition, financial saving, spouse stress, spouse employment, child problematic attachment, and child reconnection with the Active Duty member.

## Impact of Military Life Events on Spouses and Children Over Time

Research question 1 focused on the impact of military life events on spouse and child outcomes. Significant results of these analyses are summarized below.<sup>1</sup>

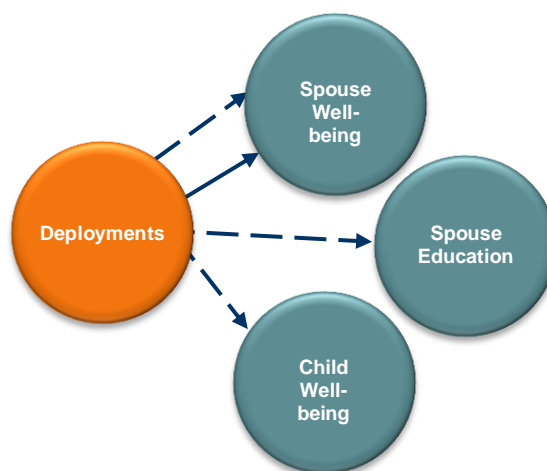
### PCS Moves

- ▶ Experiencing more career PCS moves adversely impacts financial condition and spouse education enrollment.
- ▶ Recent PCS moves have a detrimental impact on financial condition and spouse employment.



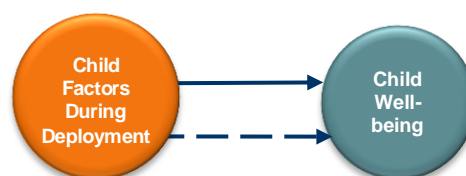
### Deployments

- ▶ Experiencing more career deployments increases spouse depressive/anxiety symptoms and child problematic behaviors and has a detrimental impact on spouse education enrollment.
- ▶ Spending more months away from home adversely impacts child reconnection with the Active Duty member and increases spouse depressive/anxiety symptoms and spouse stress.
- ▶ Recent deployments improve financial saving.
- ▶ Current deployments increase spouse depressive/anxiety symptoms and spouse stress.



### Child Factors During Deployment

- ▶ Children with a better connection with the Active Duty member during deployment have fewer problematic behaviors, less problematic attachment, and a better reconnection with the Active Duty member after deployment.
- ▶ Children with higher levels of problematic behaviors during deployment experience worse reconnection with the Active Duty member after deployment.



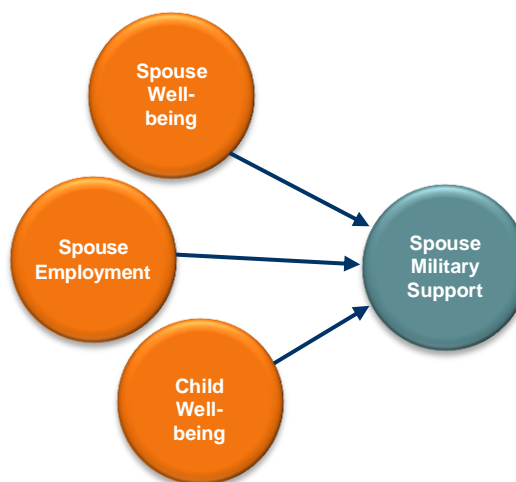
<sup>1</sup> In Executive Summary figures, dashed lines indicate adverse effects, while solid lines indicate beneficial effects.

## Impact of Spouse and Child Factors on Spouse Military Support Over Time

Research question 2 examined the impact of spouse well-being, spouse education and employment, and child well-being on military support (i.e., spouse satisfaction with the military way of life and support to stay on active duty).

### Military Satisfaction

- ▶ Spouses with better financial status have higher military satisfaction, whereas spouses with more depressive/anxiety symptoms and/or more stress have lower military satisfaction.
- ▶ Spouses who become unemployed have lower levels of military satisfaction.
- ▶ Higher levels of child problematic behaviors are associated with lower spouse military satisfaction, and an easy reconnection between child and Active Duty member is associated with higher military satisfaction.



### Support to Stay on Active Duty

- ▶ Better financial status increases support to stay on active duty, while higher levels of depressive/ anxiety symptoms and stress adversely impact support to stay on active duty.
- ▶ Better child reconnection with the Active Duty member after deployment increases spouse support to stay on active duty.

This longitudinal study assessed how military life events, including PCS moves and deployments, affect spouse personal and financial well-being, spouse education and employment, and child well-being, and ultimately, how these spouse and child factors impact spouse support for the military. Study findings have important implications for policy makers as well as others involved in improving quality of life for military families. This study provided scientific evidence that the military lifestyle (e.g., frequent relocations and deployments) disrupts spouse employment and negatively impacts families' financial and emotional well-being. Financial well-being and emotional well-being are both related to spouse support for member retention. The study also found spouses who become unemployed are less satisfied with military life. These findings underscore the importance of the DoD's current efforts to support military spouses in obtaining and sustaining employment after a PCS move.

Another key finding of this study is that a strong connection between children and their deployed Active Duty parent is important to help counter negative impacts on the family. This finding suggests that deployment support programs should emphasize maintaining family communications between deployed Active Duty members and their spouses and children. Finally, the study highlighted the detrimental impact of deployments on spouses' emotional well-being, which emphasizes the importance of programs to counter increased stress levels and to maintain emotional well-being during deployments.

## 1. Introduction and Project Overview

In 2010, the Department of Defense (DoD) began the *Military Family Life Project* (MFLP) to address a critical need: to understand the impact of multiple deployments over years of combat operations on military families. Announced by First Lady Michelle Obama at the National Military Family Association Summit in May of 2010, the MFLP is a landmark longitudinal study developed to assess the well-being of military families. The MFLP is the first large-scale, representative longitudinal DoD-wide survey of military families. The survey was conducted by DMDC in 2010, 2011, and 2012. The MFLP provides an incredibly rich source of data on Active Duty families that augments research from cross-sectional DoD surveys.<sup>2</sup> Because longitudinal studies survey the same people at multiple points in time, they allow for the examination of within-person change while keeping other potential influencing factors constant (e.g., previous experiences, personal characteristics). Conversely, cross-sectional studies that are administered to different people at multiple points in time can only examine average change across groups of individuals. Thus, longitudinal studies are better able to assess changes in relationships between variables over time. The MFLP survey was sponsored by the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy (ODASD (MC&FP)).

The longitudinal analyses conducted as a part of this study focused on how military life events (i.e., Permanent Change of Station [PCS] moves and deployments) impact spouse personal and financial well-being, spouse education and employment, and child well-being. Additionally, the relationships between these outcome variables and spouse military support were examined. This report contains a brief overview of the survey methodology and data analyses followed by detailed descriptions of project findings.

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<sup>2</sup> The Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) conducted cross-sectional surveys of Active Duty spouses in 2006, 2008, and 2012. The 2014 Survey of Active Duty Spouses is being administered from December 2014 through April 2015. The information gathered from this research is an important resource for policy and program assessment and is the only representative DoD-wide data collected from military spouses.



## 2. Methodology

This section provides a description of the topics included in the MFLP survey and an overview of the research questions for this longitudinal study. It also highlights details about the project analysis plan, the overall MFLP survey sample, and the sample used specifically for this longitudinal study.

### MFLP Survey Administration

The MFLP survey was administered to the same set of spouses over a three-year period. The MFLP survey was delivered via both web and paper survey format, and spouses were provided both email and postal reminders about the study to encourage participation. In 2011 and 2012, phone call reminders were added to encourage spouses to participate in the survey.

### Overall MFLP Survey Content

The MFLP survey was a longitudinal survey, designed to follow the same group of Active Duty spouses for three years to examine the impacts of military life events and the well-being of these spouses over time. The MFLP survey gathered information on the following topics:

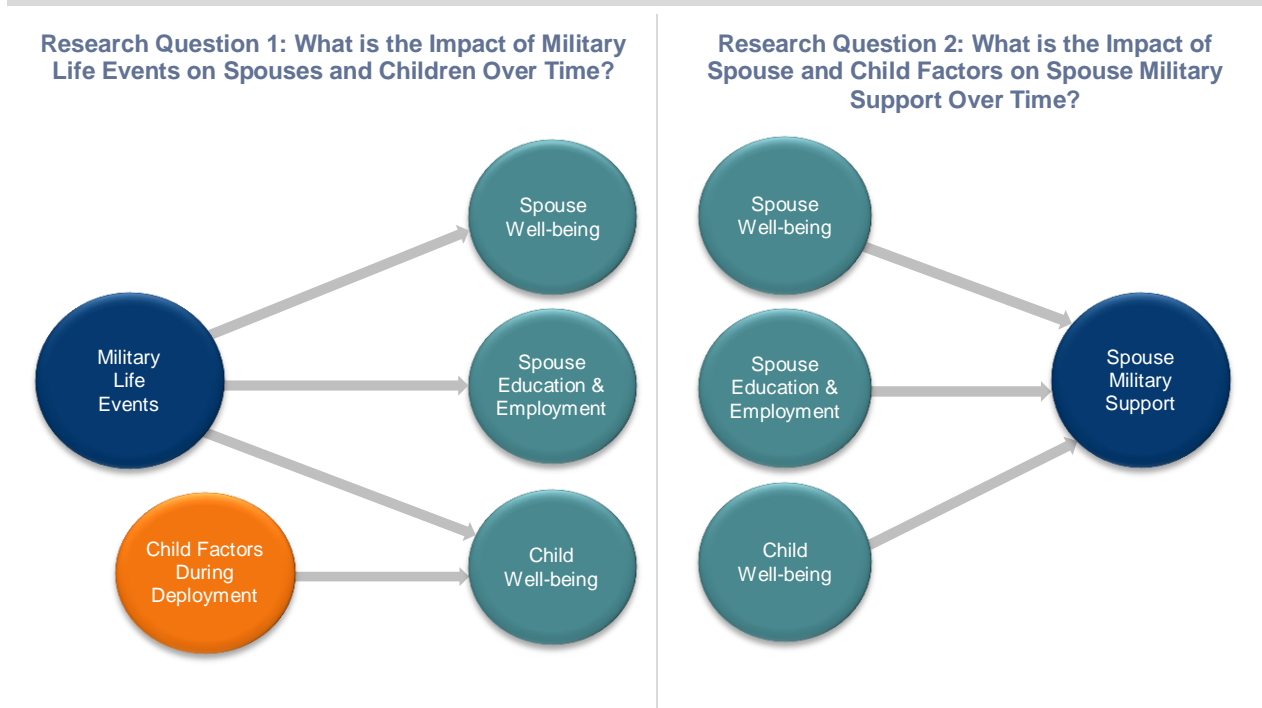
- ▶ Spouse background (e.g., demographics, housing)
- ▶ Education and employment
- ▶ Permanent Change of Station (PCS) moves
- ▶ Spouse's family (e.g., children)
- ▶ Health and well-being
- ▶ Life in the military (e.g., satisfaction, programs and services)
- ▶ Active Duty member deployments
- ▶ Effects of deployments on children
- ▶ Reunion and reintegration
- ▶ Financial well-being

In both 2011 and 2012, the MFLP survey content was updated slightly. As such, there are some items that were asked in 2011 and 2012 but not in 2010. Therefore, for any analyses in this study that include these new variables, only two years of data are analyzed (i.e., 2011 and 2012) since it was not possible to conduct the longitudinal analyses for all three years. Notes are provided in the results section for any analyses where it was not possible to conduct the longitudinal analyses for all three years.

## Research Questions

The research questions for this project sought to examine how military life events impact spouses and children, and in turn, how the experiences of spouses and children impact spouse support for the military. These research questions are provided in Exhibit 2-1. Two main sets of research questions were identified to guide the subsequent analyses; research question 1 examines the impact of military life events (i.e., PCS moves and deployments) on spouse well-being (i.e., financial status, depressive/anxiety symptoms, and stress), spouse education and employment, and child well-being (i.e., problematic behaviors, problematic attachment, and reconnection with the Active Duty member after deployment). Research question 2 focuses on the impact of these spouse and child variables on spouse military support, specifically spouse satisfaction with the military way of life and spouse support to stay on active duty.

**Exhibit 2-1 ■ MFLP Longitudinal Study Research Questions**



The results of this report are organized by military life event so that readers can easily understand the full impact of PCS moves and deployments. The results are presented as follows:

- ▶ What impact do PCS moves have on spouse and child outcomes?
  - Impact of cumulative number of career PCS moves
  - Impact of recent PCS moves

- ▶ What impact do deployments have on spouse and child outcomes?
  - Impact of cumulative number of career deployments
  - Impact of months away from home
  - Impact of recent deployments
  - Impact of current deployments
- ▶ What impact do child factors during deployment have on child well-being?
  - Impact of child connection with Active Duty member
  - Impact of child problematic behaviors during deployment
- ▶ What impact do spouse and child factors have on spouse military support (i.e., spouse satisfaction with the military way of life and spouse support to stay on active duty)?
  - Impact of spouse well-being
  - Impact of spouse education and employment
  - Impact of child well-being

## Data Analyses

Two types of data analyses were conducted for this longitudinal study using SPSS Complex Samples (version 22): change over time and key relationships. These two types of analyses are described below.

### Change Over Time

For every outcome included in this study (i.e., spouse well-being, spouse education and employment, child well-being, spouse satisfaction with the military way of life, and spouse support to stay on active duty), the change in the outcome from 2010-2012 was analyzed using regression. The significance of the overall change from 2010 to 2012 was tested, as well as the significance of the year-to-year change (i.e., 2010 to 2011 and 2011 to 2012).<sup>3</sup> Outcomes that changed significantly over time as well as outcomes that remained stable over the course of the MFLP longitudinal study are described in this report.

### Key Relationships

To test the key relationships of interest, each outcome was regressed on all of the proposed predictor variables (e.g., military life factors) simultaneously. Each regression was run in SPSS Complex Samples to determine which of the predictors had a significant relationship with the outcome being examined. Active Duty member rank and year of data collection were not independent from most of the predictors; therefore, analyses held rank constant for each of the key relationships (i.e., comparisons were made only to spouses with an Active Duty member in the

<sup>3</sup> Results are defined as significant at the  $p < .05$ .

same rank). This is important because rank is likely related to many of the variables examined. Additionally, all analyses that included the child well-being variables controlled for child age, as some of the child well-being scales may be related to child age.

Results in the key relationships sections are only reported if they are significant. When reporting results, significant relationships are described as having either a statistically positive or negative relationship. A positive relationship means that as the predictor increases, the outcome also increases; a negative relationship means that as the predictor increases, the outcome decreases. As such, when a positive relationship is reported, it does not necessarily mean that there is a good outcome; rather, it indicates that the predictor and the outcome change in the same direction.

To demonstrate the magnitude of significant key relationships, mean values for the predictor variables are calculated and plotted on bar graphs. For example, current deployments are associated with higher spouse stress levels. After this key finding is described, a bar graph compares the mean stress levels for spouses currently experiencing a deployment and the mean stress levels for spouses not experiencing a deployment. Within bar graphs, specific mean value differences were not tested for significance. Additionally, percentage change over time or percentage differences between mean values on bar charts are presented to compare the magnitude of effects across different relationships. In all cases, percentage change and percentage difference are calculated by subtracting one value from the other and dividing by the range of the scale.

## MFLP Sample

This section provides information on the overall MFLP survey sample and the smaller MFLP sample used specifically for this longitudinal study. The smaller sample is a subset of spouses that responded to all three years of the MFLP survey.

### Overall MFLP Sample

For the 2010 MFLP survey, the target population was spouses of Active Duty members in the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force, up through paygrade O-6. As such, all references to spouses in this report refer to Active Duty spouses. Spouses were ineligible to participate in the survey if they were also an Active Duty member,<sup>4</sup> and Active Duty members were required to have at least six months of military experience at the initiation of the survey period. Spouses of Warrant Officers were excluded from the sample frame;<sup>5</sup> in addition, spouses of National Guard

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<sup>4</sup> Spouses who became an Active Duty member in 2011 or 2012 were retained in the sample, even though they became a dual-military marriage.

<sup>5</sup> Spouses of Active Duty members who became a Warrant Officer in 2011 or 2012 were retained in the sample.

and Reserve members in Active Duty programs were excluded. In 2010, 28,552 eligible spouses responded to the MFLP survey.

Spouses who completed the 2010 MFLP survey were invited to complete the 2011 MFLP survey. To be eligible to participate, the spouses were required to still be married to an Active Duty member of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, or Air Force. Data were collected from 12,355 eligible respondents in the 2011 MFLP survey.

The final year of the longitudinal survey was 2012. Spouses who completed the MFLP survey in both 2010 and 2011 were invited to complete the 2012 MFLP survey. As in 2011, respondents must have remained married to an Active Duty member to be eligible to participate. A total of 6,412 spouses completed all three years of the MFLP survey. Response rates for each wave of the MFLP survey are presented in Exhibit 2-2.

**Exhibit 2-2 ■ MFLP Survey Response Rates by Wave**

	2010	2011	2012
Spouses invited to survey	101,812	28,552	12,355
Spouses who provided completed surveys	28,552	12,335	6,412
Response rate <sup>6</sup>	30%	43%	55%

### Longitudinal MFLP Survey Respondents

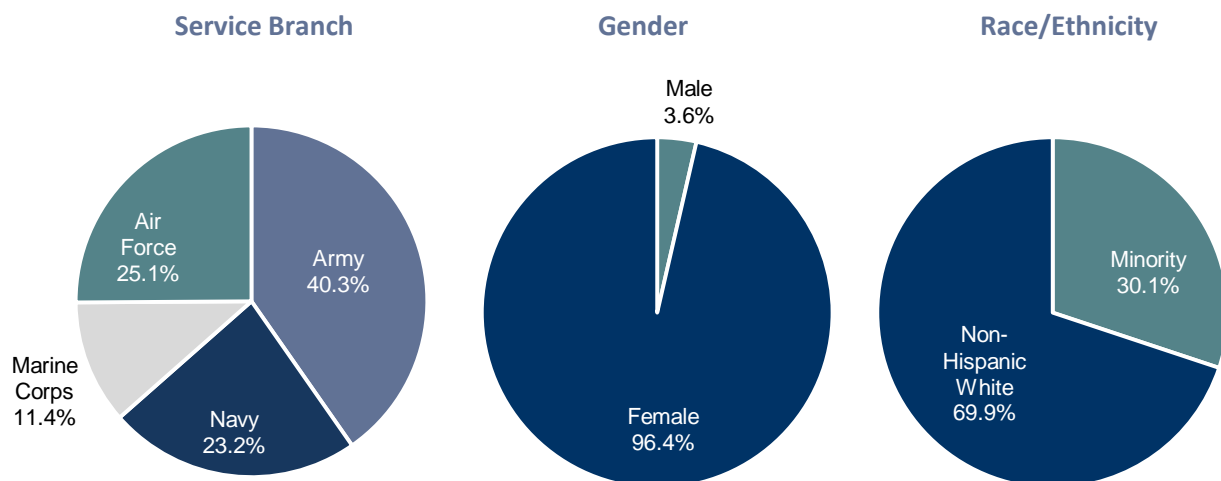
The analyses for this study were based on the respondents who participated in the MFLP spouse survey in all three years (i.e., 2010, 2011, and 2012). The analyses use the longitudinal sampling weights, as well as the stratification (i.e., categorization) and eligibility variables, from 2012. The target of inference is the population of spouses who remained eligible across the three years (i.e., those who remain married to an Active Duty member). Because the sample for the longitudinal study is restricted to spouses who remained married to an Active Duty member and did not add new spouses in 2011 and 2012, the sample for this study may have a restricted range that does not represent the full Active Duty spouse population. For example, spouses with very low military support or well-being may be more likely to divorce, or their spouse may be more likely to separate from the military, and thus would not be included in this study's sample.

In total, 6,412 spouses participated across all three years of the MFLP survey and are included in the sample for this longitudinal study. Spouses were mostly female and the majority reported their race/ethnicity as White, non-Hispanic. Further, participating spouses were more likely to be married to an Active Duty member of the Army, followed by the Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps. Demographic information, including the Service branch of the Active Duty member and the gender and race/ethnicity of the spouses, is provided in Exhibit 2-3. In Exhibit 2-3, minority

<sup>6</sup>Overall weighted response rate for eligible respondents, corrected for non-proportional sampling.

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

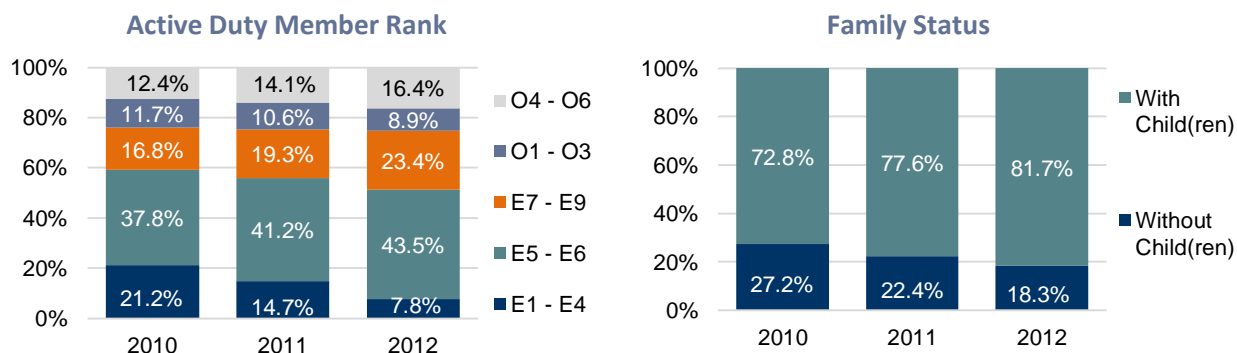
**Exhibit 2-3 ■ Survey Respondent Demographics (2010-2012)**



Note: Results reflect weighted demographic data.

Exhibit 2-4 provides additional demographic information for the sample by year of survey administration, including the rank of the Active Duty members and the percentage of survey participants with children.

**Exhibit 2-4 ■ Additional Survey Respondent Demographics**





### 3. Change Over Time Results

The research questions for this study focused on the impact of two different types of military life events (i.e., PCS moves and deployments) on spouse well-being, spouse education and employment, and child well-being, as well as the impact of these outcomes on spouse satisfaction with the military way of life and spouse support to stay on active duty. The change over time in outcome variables was examined first. Specifically, regression analyses were conducted to detect changes in average levels of the variables across each of the three survey years. The following sections describe outcomes that changed significantly as well as outcomes that remained stable over the course of the MFLP longitudinal study. Using longitudinal data to test for a change over time in the outcomes maximizes the value of this type of data because the change being tested is a “within-person” change rather than a “between-person” change. With cross-sectional data (i.e., data from different people at multiple points in time), it is impossible to know if a change over time is due to a change in the outcome over time or a change in the composition of the study population. However, with longitudinal data we know that differences are due to changes in the outcomes, and that changes are occurring within spouses who have stayed with their Active Duty member for the three years of the study.

#### Outcomes that Changed Significantly Over Time

Of the outcomes examined in this study, seven out of eleven changed significantly over time. The levels of these variables and associated changes over time are described in the following sections.

##### Spouse Depressive/Anxiety Symptoms

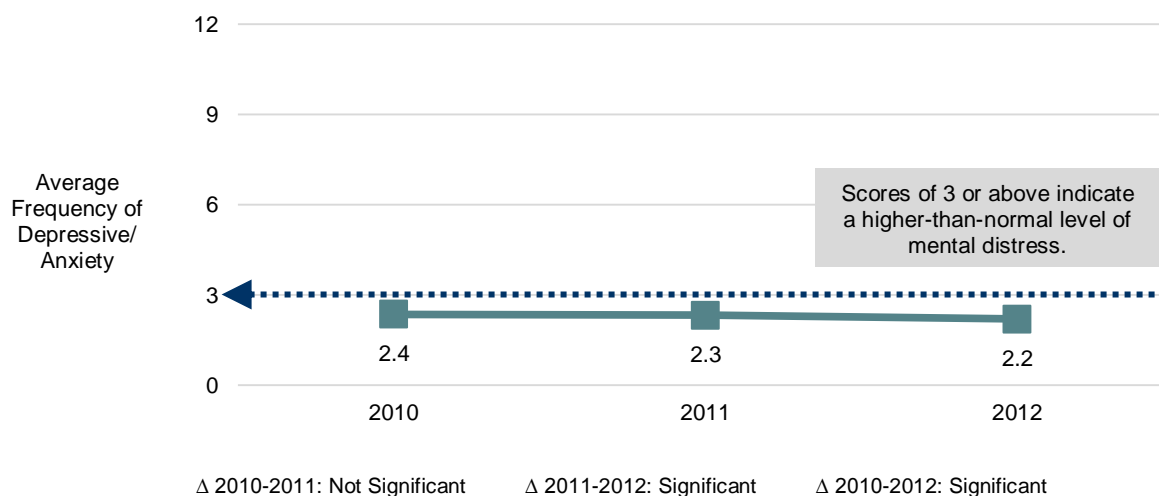
During each year of the MFLP survey, spouses were asked to answer questions regarding depressive/anxiety symptoms that they were currently experiencing or had experienced over the past two weeks. Depressive/anxiety symptoms include having little interest or pleasure in doing things, feeling hopeless or down, having a high level of anxiety or nervousness, or having uncontrolled worrying. These symptoms were measured using an established scale, the Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-4).<sup>7</sup> With this 12-point scale, scores of 3 or above indicate that the respondent has a higher-than-normal level of depressive/anxiety symptoms and should seek additional evaluation from a mental health professional. Spouses, on average, do not report levels of depressive/anxiety symptoms that require further evaluation by a mental health professional. Additionally, relative to the scale, spouse levels of depressive/anxiety

<sup>7</sup> Kroenke, K., Spitzer, R. L., Williams, J. B. W., & Lowe, B. (2009). An ultra-brief screening scale for anxiety and depression: The PHQ-4. *Psychosomatics*, 50, 613-621.

symptoms decreased by 1.7 percent from 2010 to 2012.<sup>8</sup> Exhibit 3-1 displays the change over time for spouse depressive/anxiety symptoms.

### Exhibit 3-1 ■ Change Over Time for Spouse Depressive/Anxiety Symptoms

Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-4): Depressive/anxiety symptoms



### Spouse Education

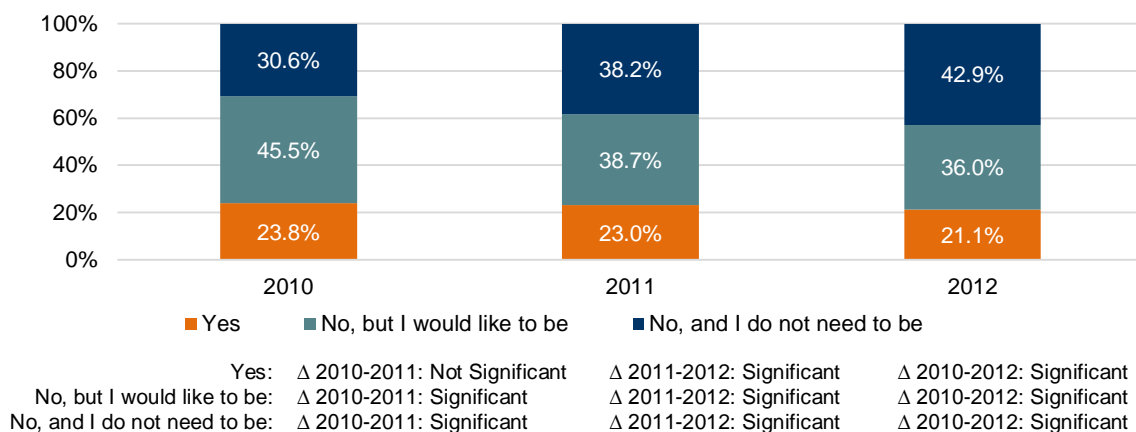
To examine the educational experiences of spouses, the survey respondents were asked if they were currently enrolled in school or training, with the following response options: *Yes*; *No, but I would like to be*; or *No, and I do not need to be*. Results show a decrease over time in the percentage of spouses who are enrolled in school and of spouses who are not enrolled in school but would like to be enrolled. Specifically, there is a decrease of 2.7 percent from 2010 to 2012 in spouses reporting that they are enrolled in school/training, and a 9.5 percent decrease in spouses reporting that they are not enrolled in school or training but would like to be during the same time period. Correspondingly, from 2010 to 2012 there was an increase of 12.3 percent for spouses reporting that they are not enrolled in school, nor do they want to be enrolled. Exhibit 3-2 shows the change over time in spouse reports of their education or training enrollment.

8.9% of spouses earned a degree between 2010 and 2011 and between 2011 and 2012.

<sup>8</sup> Percentage change is calculated by subtracting the smaller value from the larger value and dividing by the range of the scale. Using the change over time in depressive/anxiety symptoms as an example, percent change from 2010 to 2012 was calculated as  $(2.4 - 2.2) / 12 = 0.017$ , or 1.7%.

**Exhibit 3-2 ■ Change Over Time for Spouse Education**

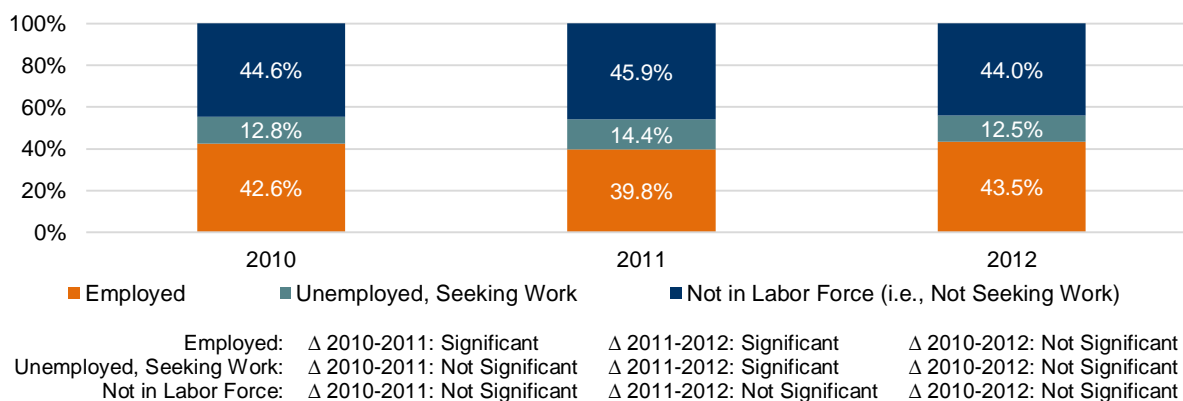
Are you currently enrolled in school/training?

**Spouse Employment**

Spouses were also asked about their employment status on every year of the MFLP survey. Most of the spouses in the labor force reported that they are employed. However, the number of spouses who were employed decreased by 2.8 percent from 2010 to 2011 but then increased by 3.7 percent in 2012. Because of this decrease and then increase in the number of employed spouses, the overall change from 2010 to 2012 in employed spouses is not significant. The number of spouses reporting that they were unemployed and seeking work decreased by 1.9 percent from 2011 to 2012. Finally, the percentage of spouses who were not in the labor force did not change significantly over the three years of the survey. Exhibit 3-3 displays the change over time in spouse employment status across the MFLP study years.

**Exhibit 3-3 ■ Change Over Time for Spouse Employment**

Employment Status

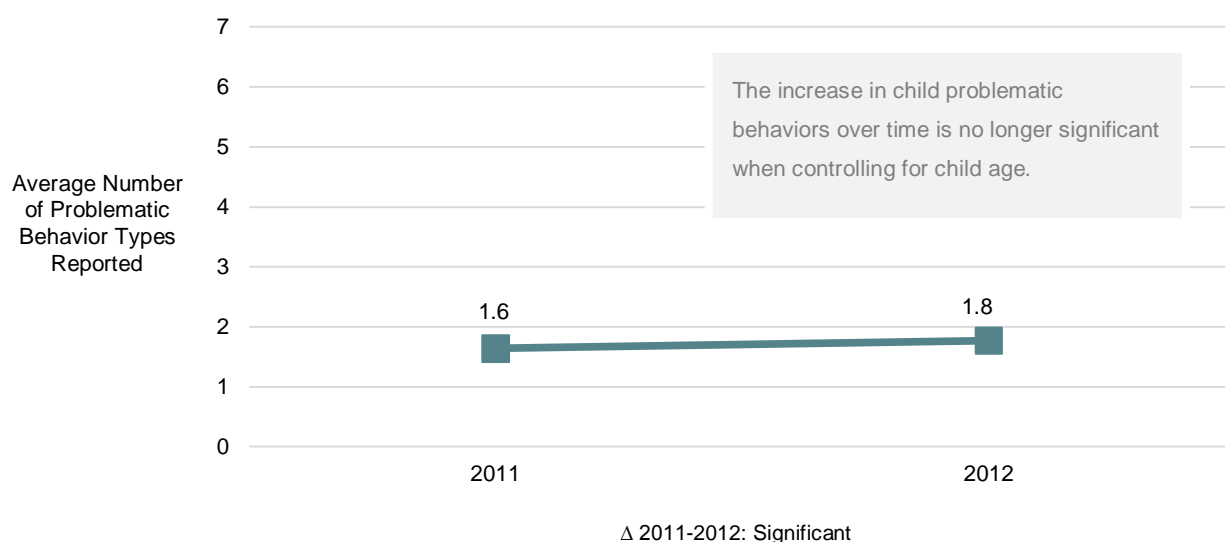


## Child Problematic Behaviors

In both 2011 and 2012, survey participants with a child between the ages of 0 and 18 living in the household were asked to identify a focal child, the child in the household whose birth month is closest to the spouse's birth month. The average age of focal children was 7.8 years at the time of the first survey in 2010, and 51.2% of these children were male and 48.8% were female. Spouses were asked to report if the child displayed seven different behaviors in the past 12 months. These child problematic behaviors include issues such as academic problems, behavior problems at home or school, anger, and lack of responsibility. The total number of behaviors reported was combined to form the child problematic behaviors scale. Survey results show a 2.9 percent increase in the number of child problematic behaviors reported from 2011 to 2012. Because some of the behaviors included in this scale can only be exhibited by older children (e.g., behavior problems at school), a follow-up analysis was conducted controlling for child age. The increase in child problematic behaviors over time is no longer significant when controlling for child age, indicating that the increase in child problematic behaviors over time is due, in part, to the referenced children getting older and becoming school-aged. Exhibit 3-4 provides a visual depiction of the change in child problematic behaviors over time.

### Exhibit 3-4 ■ Change Over Time for Child Problematic Behaviors

Child Behavior Checklist: Behavior in past 12 months

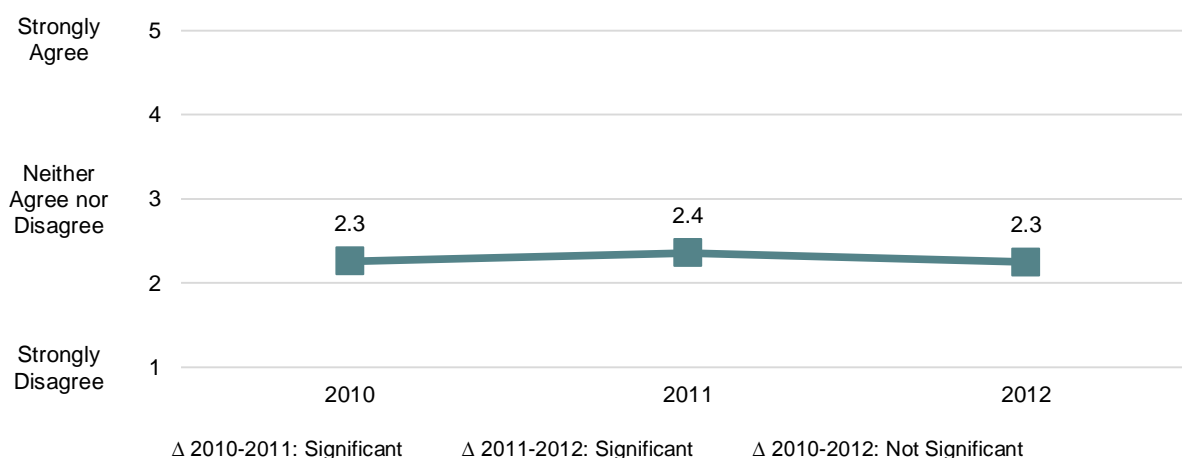


## Child Problematic Attachment

The Attachment Behavior Index (AQSI),<sup>9</sup> which is a measure of a child's insecurity during the past four weeks, was used to measure child problematic attachment in all three years of the MFLP survey. Child problematic attachment includes issues such as being more clingy or "baby-like", being less willing to try new things, being demanding or impatient, or being afraid of doing normal things in the previous four weeks. On average, parents reported that their children display low levels of problematic attachment. Results of the longitudinal study show that children's problematic attachment increased by 2.5 percent from 2010 to 2011 and then decreased by 2.5 percent from 2011 to 2012. Exhibit 3-5 displays these problematic attachment changes over time.

### Exhibit 3-5 ■ Change Over Time for Child Problematic Attachment

Attachment Behavior Index: Measure of insecurity during the last four weeks



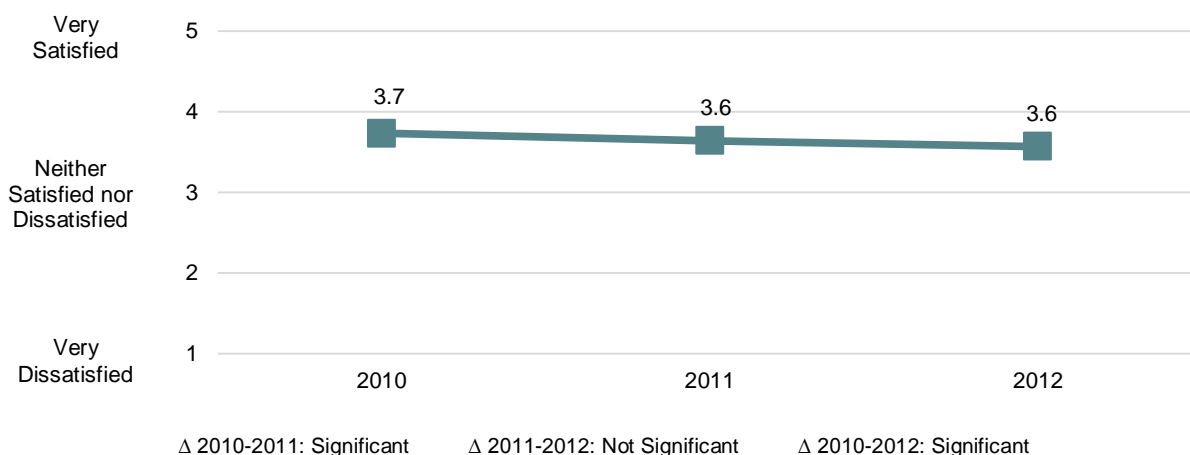
## Spouse Satisfaction with the Military Way of Life

In the MFLP survey, spouses were asked each year to indicate how satisfied they were overall with the military way of life. On average, spouses are satisfied with the military way of life; however, spouses' satisfaction with the military way of life declined 4.0 percent from 2010 to 2012. The change over time in spouse satisfaction with the military way of life is displayed in Exhibit 3-6.

<sup>9</sup> Waters, E., Vaughn, B., Posada, G., & Kondo-Ikemura, K. (1995). Caregiving, cultural, and cognitive perspectives on secure-base behavior and working models: New growing points of attachment theory and research. *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development*, 60 (2-3, Serial No. 244).

**Exhibit 3-6 ■ Change Over Time for Spouse Satisfaction with the Military Way of Life**

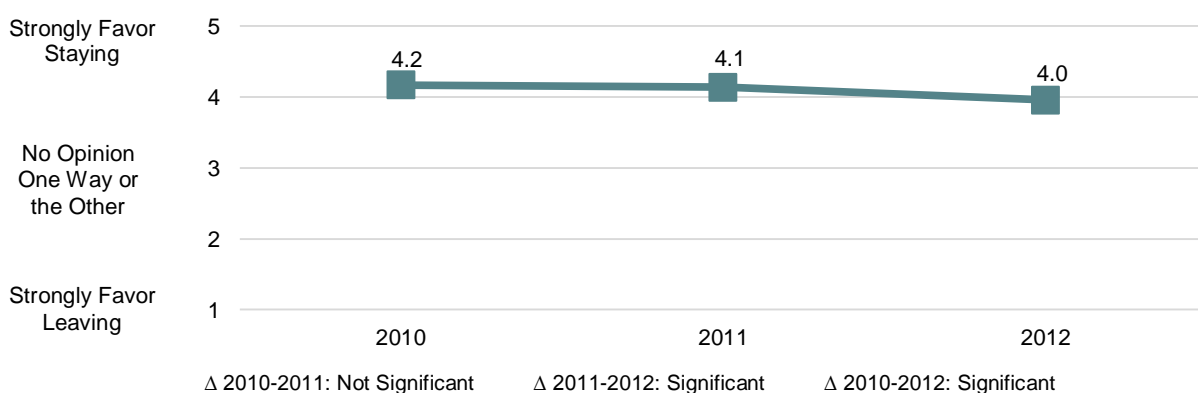
Overall, how satisfied are you with the military way of life?

**Spouse Support to Stay on Active Duty**

For each year of the MFLP survey, respondents were asked if they thought their spouse should stay on or leave active duty. Most spouses who completed the MFLP survey indicated that they favor their Active Duty member staying on active duty, but there was a decline in spouses' support to stay on active duty from 2010 to 2012. Spouse ratings for support to stay on active duty decreased by 5.3 percent over the course of the study; however, despite this decrease, the average level of support to stay on active duty is fairly high overall, with 76.3 percent of spouses indicating that they somewhat favor or strongly favor their spouse staying. The change over time for spouse support to stay on active duty is shown in Exhibit 3-7.

**Exhibit 3-7 ■ Change Over Time for Spouse Support to Stay on Active Duty**

Do you think your spouse should stay on or leave active duty?





## Outcomes that Remained Stable Over Time

Other important outcomes were also examined that did not show a significant change across the MFLP survey years. These variables that remained stable over time include the following:

- ▶ Financial Condition (across time 66.5% of spouses indicated that they are financially comfortable and secure or are able to make ends meet without much difficulty)
- ▶ Financial Saving (across time 70.5% of spouses save regularly by putting money aside each month, and 74.5% have \$500 or more in emergency savings)
- ▶ Spouse Stress (across time 35.7% of spouses indicated that they have about the same level of stress as usual, and 38.2% of spouses indicated that they have more stress than usual)
- ▶ Child Reconnection (across time 67.3% of spouses noted their child had a very easy or easy reconnection with the Active Duty member parent following a deployment)

In summary, the majority of spouse and child outcomes examined either displayed a significant average change for the better or remained unchanged. Specifically, depressive/anxiety symptoms decreased, the percentage of employed spouses increased, and the percentage of spouses who want to be enrolled in school/training but are not decreased). Further, financial factors and spouse stress stayed consistent across the three years of the MFLP survey. Conversely, the spouse military support outcomes (i.e., spouse satisfaction with the military way of life and support to stay on active duty) decreased on average across the MFLP survey years.

## 4. Impact of Military Life Events on Spouses and Children Over Time

In addition to the change over time analyses, key relationships of interest were also examined in this study. Research question 1 focused on the impact of military life events on spouse and child outcomes. Specifically, we examined the impact of two military life events, PCS moves and deployments, on spouse well-being, spouse education and employment, and child well-being over time. Additionally, the impact of child factors during deployments (i.e., child connection with Active Duty member parent during deployment and child problematic behaviors during deployment) were considered for their impact on the child well-being outcomes. Results in this chapter are only reported if they are significant.

### Impact of PCS Moves on Spouse and Child Outcomes Over Time

Both the recentness and the cumulative effect of PCS moves over the course of a career have the potential to impact outcomes for spouses and children of Active Duty members. Accordingly, to examine these potential impacts, PCS moves were operationalized, or defined, in two distinct ways:

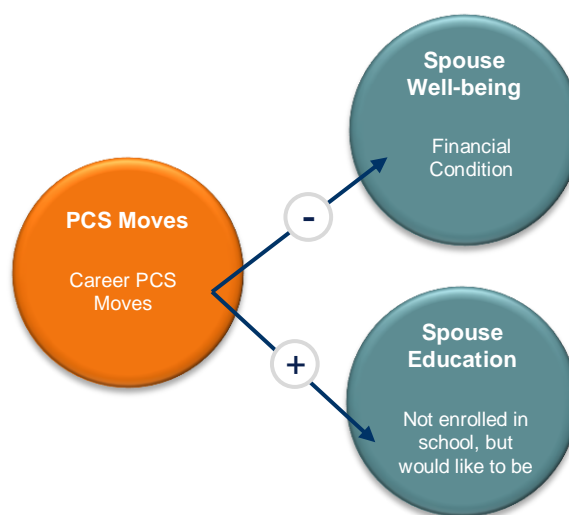
- ▶ Cumulative number of career PCS moves
- ▶ Recent PCS move (i.e., whether the spouse has experienced a PCS move within the past 12 months)

The significant outcomes of each aspect of PCS moves are described in the following sections.

#### Cumulative Number of Career PCS Moves

PCS moves were first examined in terms of the number of career PCS moves. Specifically, the MFLP survey asks how many times the *spouse* has experienced a PCS move over the length of the Active Duty member's career. Spouses reported an average of 2.70 career PCS moves over time. Analyses found that the number of career PCS moves impacts two spousal outcomes, financial condition and spouse education (see Exhibit 4-1). Further, over time the number of career PCS moves

**Exhibit 4-1 ■ Significant Effects of Number of Career PCS Moves on Outcomes Over Time**

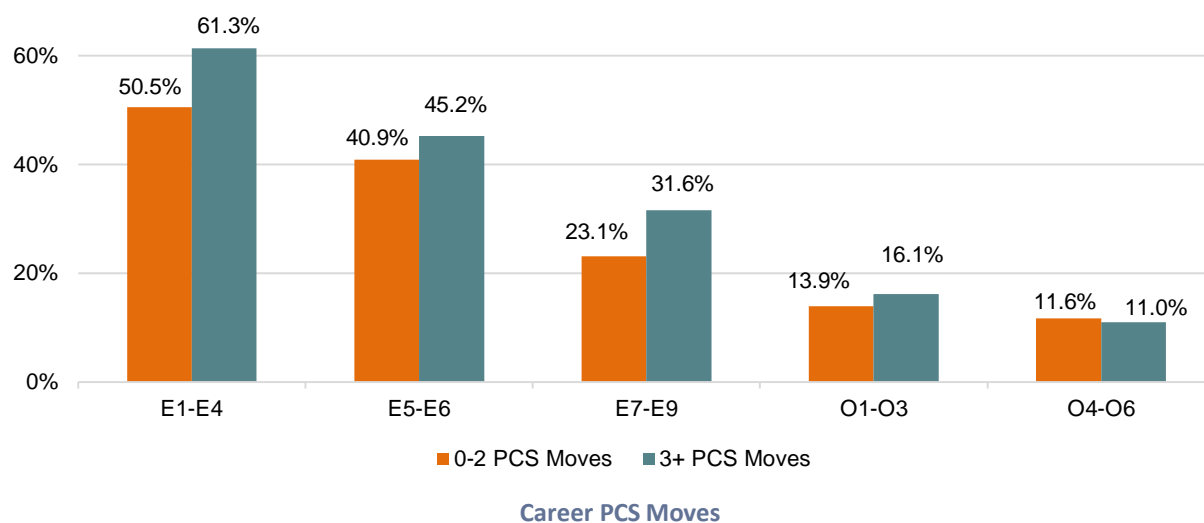


does not impact financial saving, depressive/anxiety symptoms, spouse stress, spouse employment, or any of the child well-being factors that were examined.

The MFLP survey asked spouses to describe their family's financial condition, and the overall results revealed that only a small percentage of spouses report a very poor financial condition. Specifically, across time only 1.7 percent of spouses indicated they are *in over [their] heads* financially, whereas 66.5 percent of spouses indicated that they are either *able to make ends meet* or *very comfortable and secure* financially. However, the analysis did reveal that the number of career PCS moves negatively impacts spouse financial condition, as spouses with more career PCS moves report worse financial conditions. Exhibit 4-2 displays the percentage of spouses who report at least occasional financial difficulty in making ends meet, separated by rank and number of career PCS moves. The number of career PCS moves is split at the median (median = 3 PCS moves) to show the difference between spouses reporting a low versus high number of career PCS moves.<sup>10</sup> Overall, 33.5% of spouses reported that they have *occasional [financial] difficulty*, find it *tough to make ends meet*, or are *in over [their] heads* financially. As can be seen in this figure, across most ranks, spouses with more career PCS moves are more likely to report at least occasional financial difficulty than those with fewer career PCS moves.

#### Exhibit 4-2 ■ Financial Condition (At Least Occasional Difficulty) by Number of Career PCS Moves and Rank Over Time

Which best describes the financial condition of you and your spouse? Responses: *Occasional difficulty, Tough to make ends meet, or In over our heads*



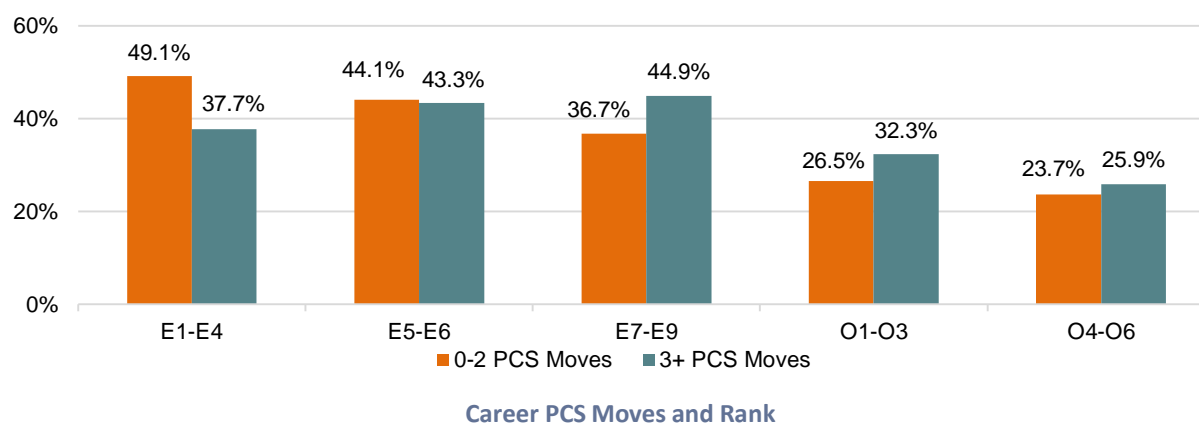
<sup>10</sup> A median split separates the top half of responses on a scale from the bottom half, creating two equal-sized groups: a high group and a low group. Median splits are used in this report to clearly depict significant relationships with continuous predictor variables.

Experiencing more career PCS moves may also inhibit spouses' ability to pursue an education. The MFLP survey differentiated participants who are not enrolled in school or training based on whether or not they actually wanted to be enrolled in school or training. Because the goal of this study is to understand whether military factors negatively impact spouse and family outcomes, our analyses focused on participants who indicated they were not enrolled in school/training, but wanted to be (i.e., something was preventing the spouse from being enrolled). Overall, 40.1% of spouses indicated that they would like to be enrolled in school/training but were not enrolled (45.5% in 2010, 38.7% in 2011, and 36.0% in 2012). Holding rank constant, spouses who have experienced more career PCS moves are more likely to report that they are not enrolled in school/training but would like to be enrolled in comparison to spouses with fewer career PCS moves. Specifically, for ranks E7 and above, spouses who have experienced three or more career PCS moves are more likely to report that they are not enrolled in school but would like to be enrolled in comparison to spouses who experienced two or fewer career PCS moves. This finding does not hold true for spouses with an Active Duty member whose rank is E1 – E6. This is likely because very few Active Duty members at these ranks have experienced a high number of career PCS moves. Exhibit 4-3 highlights this finding across the rank groupings.

Of spouses who want to be enrolled in school but are not, 27.7% report that PCS moves prevent them from attending school/training.

**Exhibit 4-3 ■ Percentage of Respondents Selecting *No, but I would like to be in School/Training* by Number of Career PCS Moves and Rank Over Time**

Are you currently enrolled in school/training? Response: *No, but I would like to be in school/training*

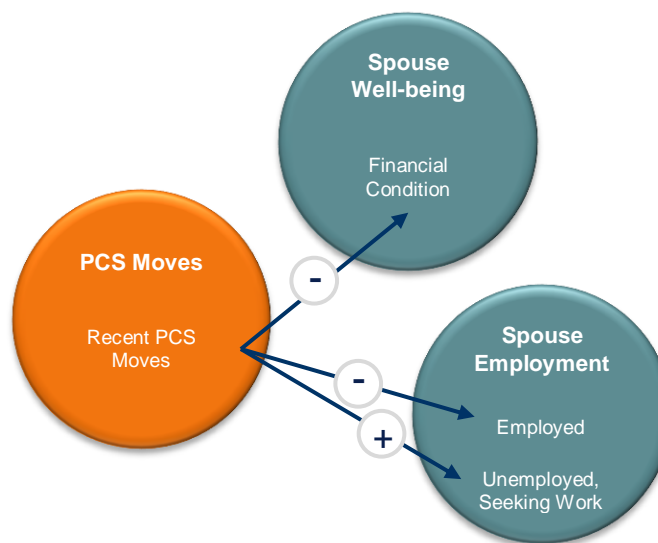


## Recent PCS Moves

The impact of recent PCS moves (i.e., whether a spouse has experienced a PCS move within the past 12 months) on spouse and child outcomes was also examined. Recent PCS moves impact two spousal outcomes, financial condition and spouse employment (see Exhibit 4-4). Recent PCS moves over time do not impact financial saving, spouse depressive/anxiety symptoms, spouse stress, or any of the child outcomes examined.

Overall, a much higher proportion of spouses are employed than unemployed and seeking work, with an average of 42.0 percent of spouses employed and 13.2 percent of spouses unemployed and seeking work across the MFLP study years. Recent PCS moves negatively impact spouse employment. Controlling for rank, spouses with a recent PCS move are 14.4 percent less likely to be employed and 9.9 percent more likely to be unemployed and seeking work compared to spouses who have not made a recent PCS move (see Exhibit 4-5).

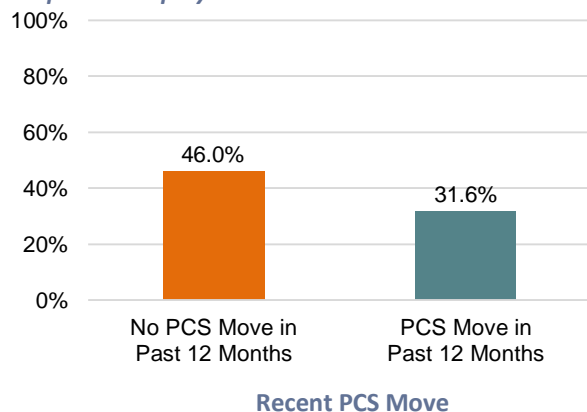
**Exhibit 4-4 ■ Significant Effects of Recent PCS Moves on Outcomes Over Time**



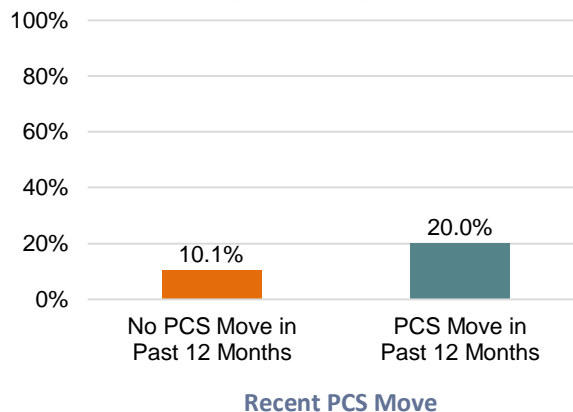
**Exhibit 4-5 ■ Spouse Employment by Recent PCS Moves Over Time**

### Employment Status

#### Response: Employed



#### Response: Unemployed, Seeking Work

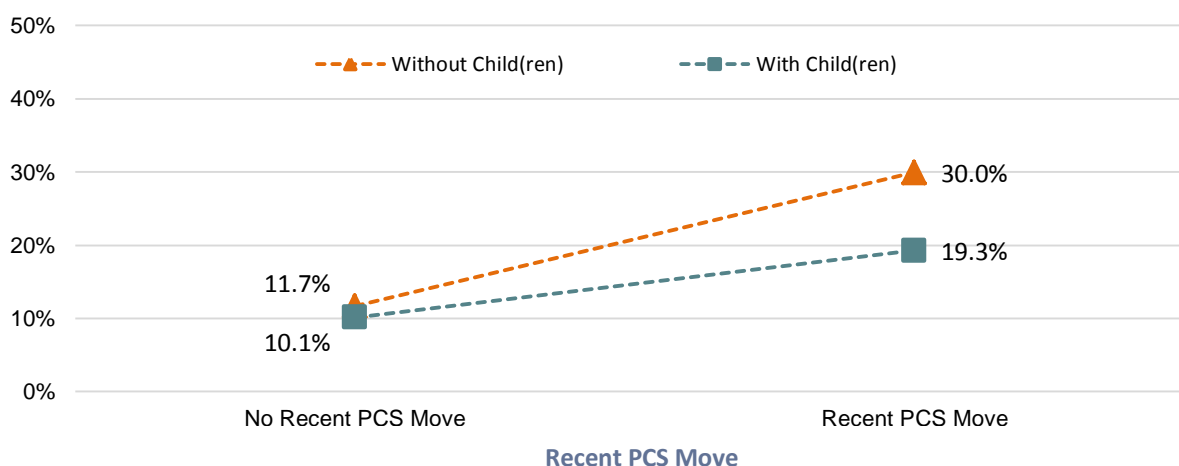


Additionally, whether a spouse has children impacts the effect a recent PCS move has on spouse employment. Specifically, for those *without* a recent PCS move, spouses with children and spouses without children have a similar likelihood of being unemployed and seeking work, but for those *with* a recent PCS move, spouses without children are 10.7 percent more likely to be unemployed and seeking work than spouses with children (see Exhibit 4-6).

Regardless of PCS moves, spouses with children are less likely to be in the labor force (50.4% in labor force) than spouses without children (73.3% in labor force).

**Exhibit 4-6 ■ Unemployed, Seeking Work by Recent PCS Move and Presence of Children Over Time**

Probability of being unemployed, seeking work

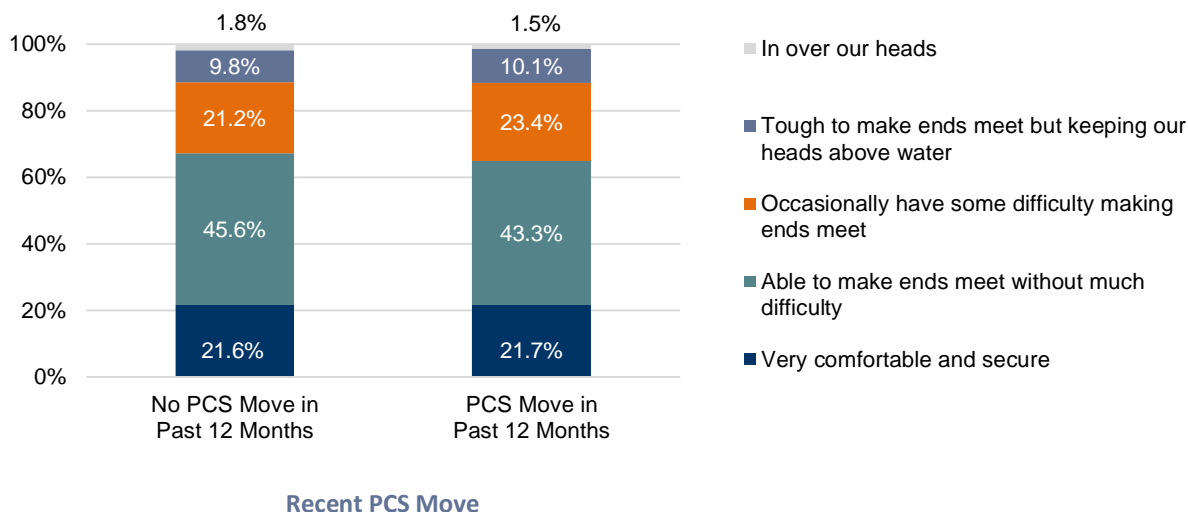


Spouse financial condition is the second spouse factor impacted by recent PCS moves. Similar to findings for career PCS moves, having a recent PCS move negatively impacts spouse financial condition. Of spouses who have made a recent PCS move, 35.0 percent reported at least occasional difficulty making ends meet, compared to 32.8 percent for those who have not made a recent PCS move (see Exhibit 4-7).



**Exhibit 4-7 ■ Financial Condition by Recent PCS Move Over Time**

Which best describes the financial condition of you and your spouse?



However, this relationship between recent PCS moves and worse financial condition is partially mediated, or explained, by higher levels of unemployment following a recent PCS move. Recent PCS moves negatively impact financial condition partly because spouses with a recent PCS move are more likely to be unemployed and seeking work. In other words, spouses with a recent PCS move are more likely to be unemployed and seeking work, which in turn is related to a worse financial condition. This mediated relationship is displayed in Exhibit 4-8.

**Exhibit 4-8 ■ Unemployment Partially Explains Relationship between Recent PCS Moves and Financial Condition Over Time**

## Impact of Deployments on Spouse and Child Outcomes Over Time

In addition to PCS moves, deployments are another military life event that can impact spouses and children of Active Duty members. Various aspects of an Active Duty member's deployment could influence important spousal and family outcomes. For example, the amount of time spent away from home on a deployment may have a different impact than the number of deployments that a spouse experiences. As such, four different measures of deployments were examined:

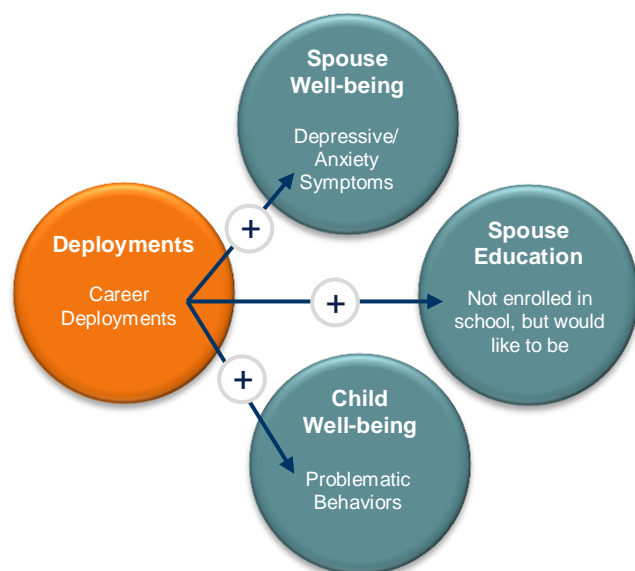
- ▶ Cumulative number of career deployments
- ▶ Recent deployment
- ▶ Number of months away from home
- ▶ Current deployment

The significant outcomes of each of these aspects of deployment are described in the following sections.

### Cumulative Number of Career Deployments

Deployments were first examined using the cumulative number of deployments that occurred over the Active Duty member's career. Overall, spouses reported an average of 4.8 deployments of 30 or more consecutive days. This sum of career deployments is related to several outcomes, including positive relationships with spouse depressive/anxiety symptoms, not being enrolled in school when the spouse would like to be enrolled, and child problematic behaviors (see Exhibit 4-9).

**Exhibit 4-9 ■ Significant Effects of Number of Career Deployments on Outcomes Over Time**



Of the spouse well-being outcomes examined in this study, the number of career deployments over time is only related to depressive/anxiety symptoms, which include having little interest, feelings of hopelessness, high anxiety, and uncontrolled worrying. The impact of career deployments over time on depressive/anxiety symptoms can be seen in Exhibit 4-10, which depicts the average depressive/anxiety symptoms scale scores (PHQ-4 scale) for spouses with three or fewer deployments versus spouses with four or more deployments. This separation is based on a median split (median number of career deployments = 3). Spouses who have experienced four or more

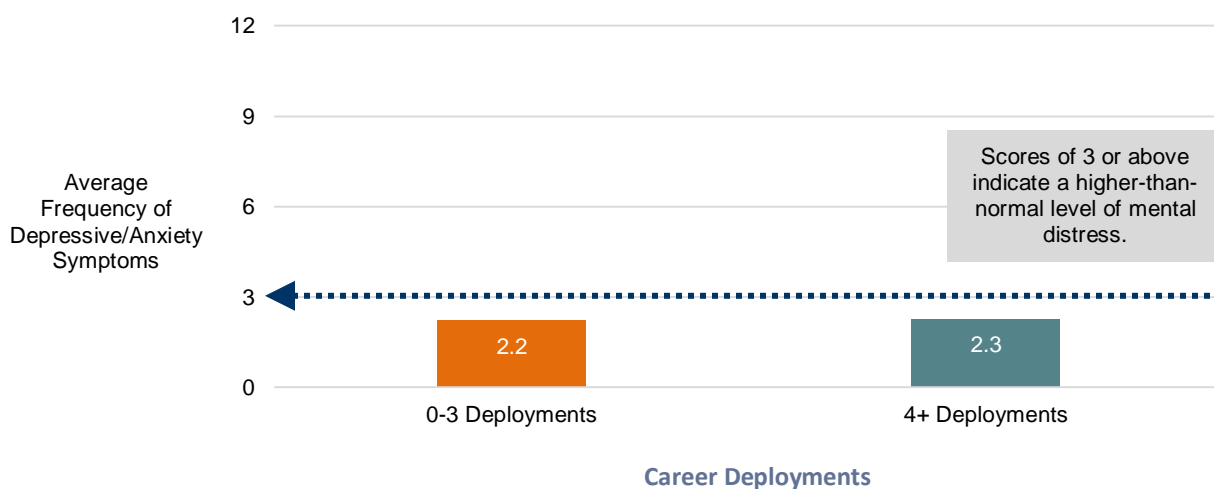
deployments report 0.8 percent more frequent depressive/anxiety symptoms than spouses who have experienced three or fewer deployments. However, it should be noted that the average

scores for depressive/anxiety symptoms (2.2 for 0-3 deployments and 2.3 for 4 or more deployments) fall below the threshold score of 3 that would indicate a need for further screening by a mental health professional. There are no relationships supported between number of career deployments and financial condition, financial saving, and stress over time.

Spouses who report better financial condition, saving regularly, or having savings of \$500 or more report fewer depressive/ anxiety symptoms.

#### Exhibit 4-10 ■ Spouse Depressive/Anxiety Symptoms by Number of Career Deployments Over Time

Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-4): Depressive/anxiety symptoms



Of spouses who want to be enrolled in school but are not, 41% report that their spouse's deployments prevent them from attending school/training.

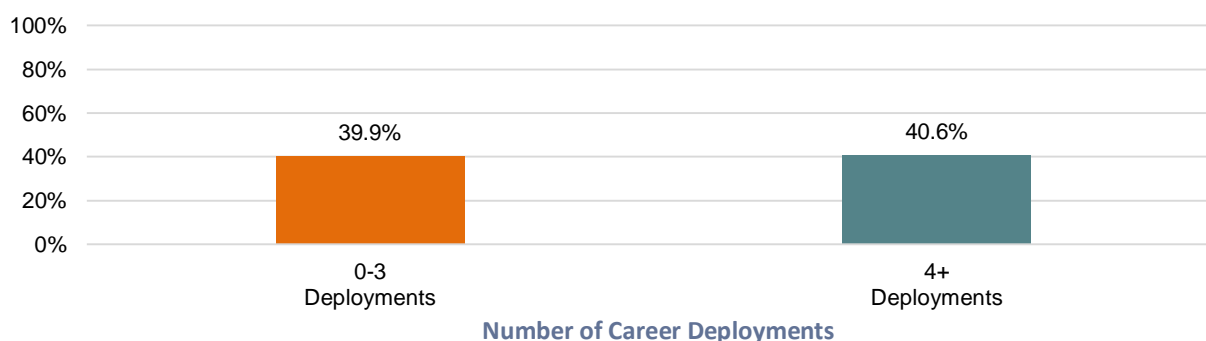
The number of career deployments also impacts spouses' ability to pursue an education. As previously described, the MFLP survey differentiated participants who are not enrolled in school or training based on whether or not they actually wanted to be enrolled in school or training. Spouses who have experienced four or more career deployments are more likely to report they are *not enrolled in school, but would like to be* enrolled in school or training

than spouses who experienced three or fewer career deployments. Exhibit 4-11 displays the percentage of respondents who indicated that they would like to be enrolled in school or training but currently are not, separated by the median number of career deployments (median = 3 deployments). This exhibit demonstrates that a considerable number of spouses (approximately 40%), on average, are not enrolled in school but would like to be, and that spouses who have experienced more than three career deployments are slightly more likely to report that they

were not enrolled but wanted to be. No relationship was supported between number of career deployments and spouse employment over time.

**Exhibit 4-11 ■ Percentage of Respondents Selecting *No, But I Would Like to be in School/Training* Regarding Current School Enrollment by Number of Career Deployments Over Time**

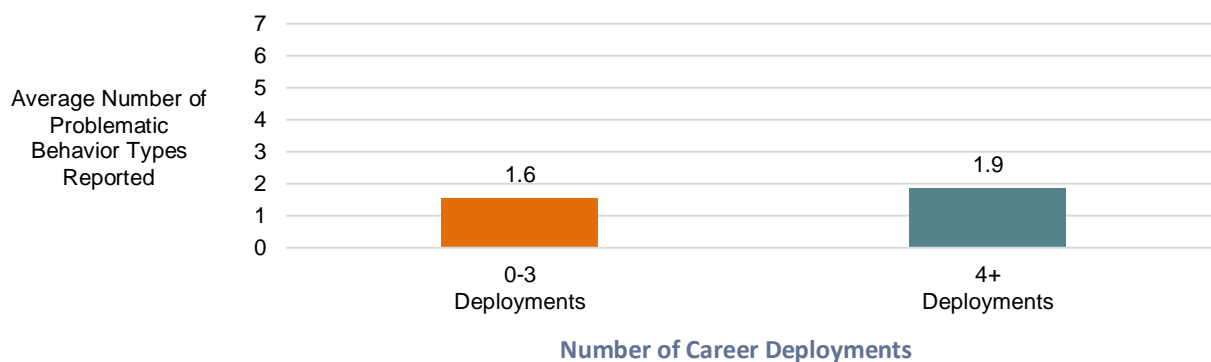
Are you currently enrolled in school/training? *Response: No, but I would like to be in school/training*



Finally, the number of career deployments is positively related to child problematic behaviors, meaning that spouses who have experienced more career deployments report higher levels of child problematic behaviors than those with fewer career deployments. Problematic child behaviors include issues such as academic problems, behavior problems at home or school, anger, and a lack of responsibility. Exhibit 4-12 shows the number of child problematic behaviors displayed over the past 12 months, separated by median number of career deployments. This exhibit demonstrates that spouses who have experienced four or more deployments report 4.3 percent higher levels of child problematic behaviors than those who have experienced three or fewer deployments.

**Exhibit 4-12 ■ Child Problematic Behaviors by Number of Career Deployments Over Time**

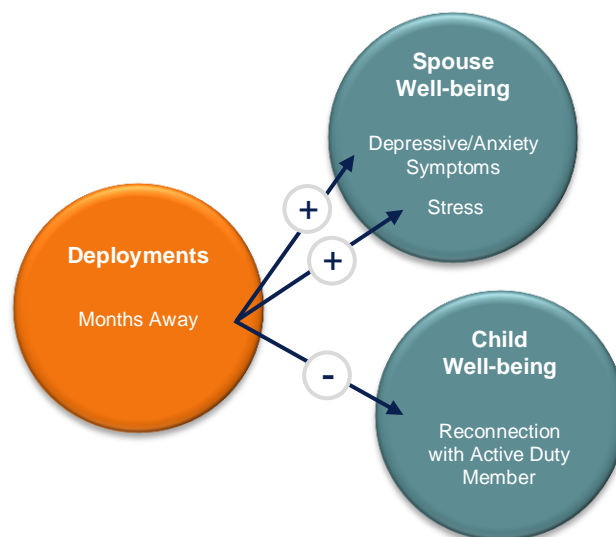
Child Behavior Checklist: Behavior in past 12 months



## Number of Months Away From Home<sup>11</sup>

Another aspect of deployments that was examined is the amount of time spent away from home since 2008 by the Active Duty member because of military duties such as deployments, training, field exercises, or other activities. In 2012, spouses reported their Active Duty member had spent an average of 11.4 months away from home since 2008. The number of months away from home is related to two spouse well-being outcomes (i.e., depressive/anxiety symptoms and stress) and one child well-being outcome (i.e., child reconnection with the Active Duty member following a deployment). These relationships are displayed in Exhibit 4-13. Months away was not related to spouse financial variables, spouse education and employment, child problematic behaviors, or problematic attachment over time.

**Exhibit 4-13 ■ Significant Effects of Months Away on Outcomes Over Time**



Months away is positively related to spouse depressive/anxiety symptoms, such that the more months an Active Duty member is away from home for military duties, the higher the levels of depressive/anxiety symptoms reported by spouses. Exhibit 4-14 displays the average depressive/anxiety symptoms separated by the median number of months away from home since 2008. Spouses who experienced an Active Duty member being away for more than 8 months since 2008 report 2.5 percent more frequent depressive/anxiety symptoms on the PHQ-4 scale than spouses who experienced 8 or fewer months away, although average levels of depressive/anxiety symptoms for both groups still fall below the level requiring further screening from a mental health professional, which is a score of 3 or above.

<sup>11</sup> The number of months away was only assessed on the 2011 and 2012 MFLP surveys; therefore, the results in this section reflect data from only these two years.

**Exhibit 4-14 ■ Spouse Depressive/Anxiety Symptoms by Months Away Over Time**

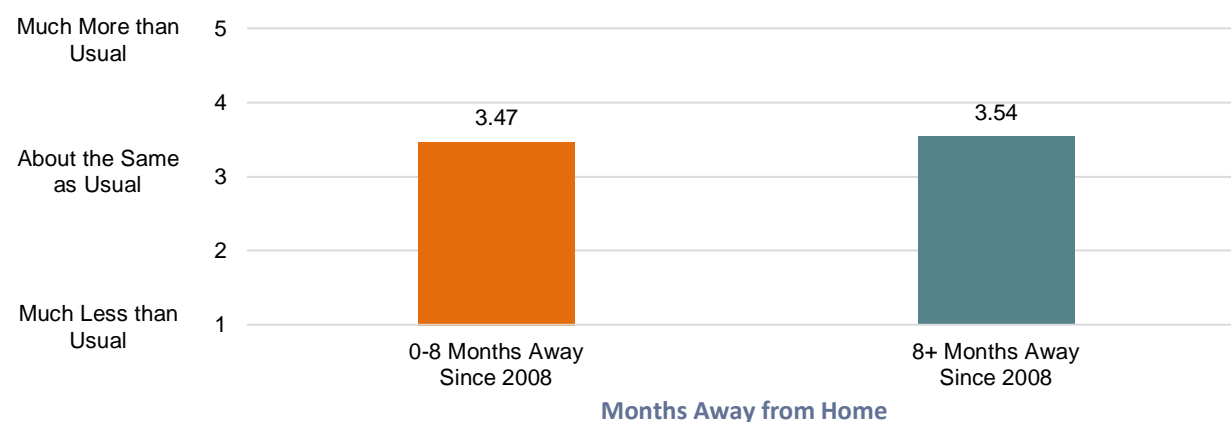
Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-4): Depressive/anxiety symptoms



Stress is another spouse well-being outcome that is related to months away. In each of the MFLP survey waves, spouses were asked how they would rate the current level of stress in their personal life. As with depressive/anxiety symptoms, there is a positive relationship between months away and spouse stress, such that higher levels of stress are reported when an Active Duty member is away from home for military duties for a longer period of time. Specifically, spouses who had an Active Duty member away from home for more than 8 months since 2008 report 1.8 percent more stress than spouses with 8 or fewer months away. This comparison can be seen in Exhibit 4-15.

**Exhibit 4-15 ■ Spouse Stress by Months Away Over Time**

Overall, how would you rate the current level of stress in your personal life?

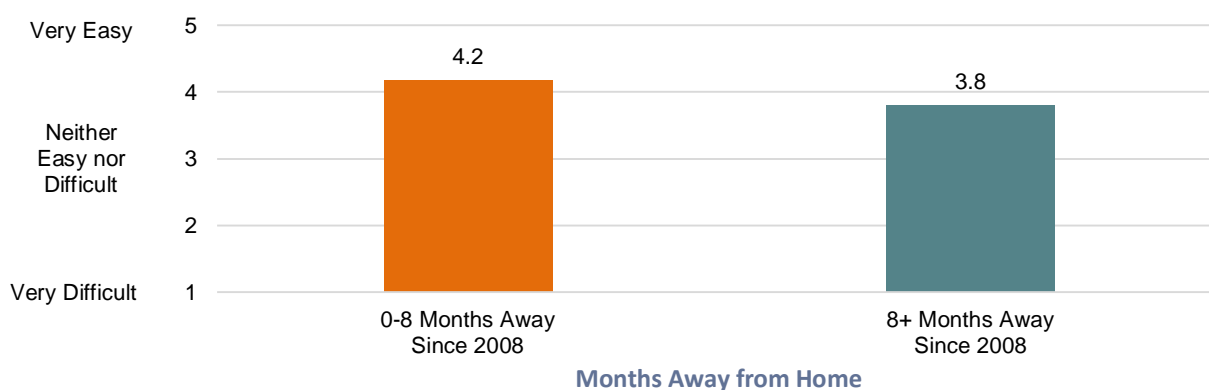




The final outcome related to months away is child reconnection with their Active Duty member parent following a deployment. On average, children experience an easy reconnection with their Active Duty member parent upon return from deployment; however, the more months an Active Duty member parent is away from home, the more difficult the reconnection their children experience. Exhibit 4-16 shows that spouses who experienced an Active Duty member being away from home for more than 8 months since 2008 report that their children have 10.0 percent more difficulty reconnecting with their Active Duty member parent than spouses who have experienced 8 or fewer months away since 2008 (median = 8.2 months).

#### Exhibit 4-16 ■ Child Reconnection with Active Duty Member Parent by Months Away Over Time

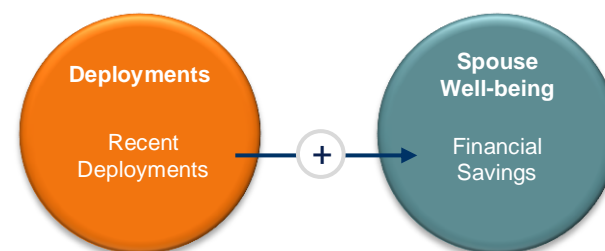
Which of the following describes your spouse's reconnection with your child(ren) after he/she most recently returned home from deployment?



#### Recent Deployment

Next, the impact of recent deployments on spouse and child outcomes was examined. Recent deployments were defined as the Active Duty member being on deployment for at least 30 consecutive days within the past 12 months. Across the study years, 25% of spouses reported that they had experienced a deployment within the past 12 months (23.6% in 2010, 26.0% in 2011, and 25.5% in 2012). Of the spouse and child outcomes examined in this study, only one was related to recent deployments over time; there is a positive relationship between recent deployments and spouse reports of financial saving. This relationship is displayed in Exhibit 4-17. No other spouse well-being outcomes (i.e., financial condition, depressive/anxiety symptoms, and stress) are related to recent deployments

#### Exhibit 4-17 ■ Significant Effects of Recent Deployments on Outcomes Over Time

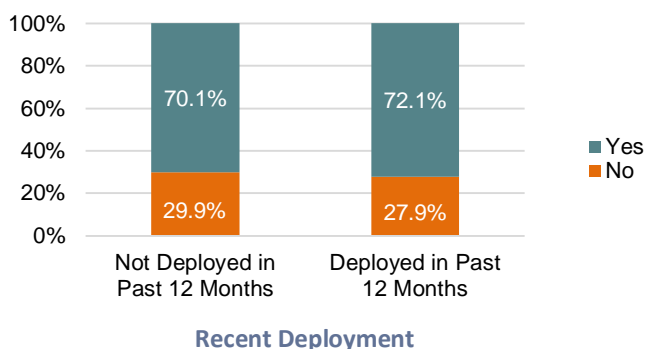


over time. Spouse education and employment, as well as the child well-being outcomes, are also not related to recent deployments over time.

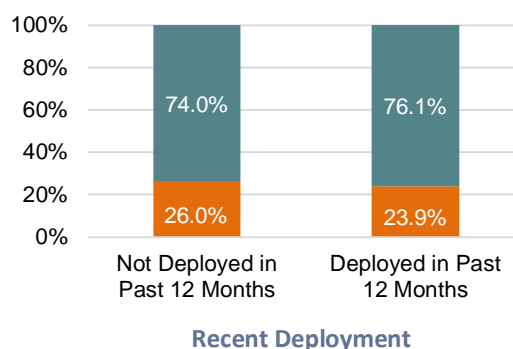
Financial saving was examined by asking spouses whether they save money regularly each month as well as whether they have \$500 or more in emergency savings. Spouses who have experienced a deployment in the past 12 months are more likely to save regularly each month and are more likely to have emergency savings of \$500 or more compared to those who have not experienced a recent deployment. These results are depicted in Exhibit 4-18. As can be seen in this exhibit, a greater percentage (approximately 2% higher) of spouses who experienced a recent deployment report they save regularly each month and/or have \$500 or more in emergency savings than spouses who have not experienced a recent deployment.

**Exhibit 4-18 ■ Financial Saving by Recent Deployment Over Time**

Do you save regularly by putting money aside each month?



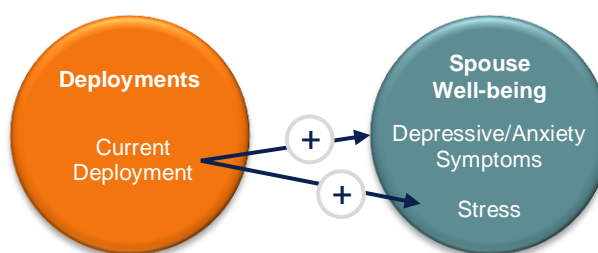
Do you have \$500 or more in emergency savings?



## Current Deployment

The final measure of deployments examined was whether spouses were currently experiencing a deployment. Overall, 35.4% of spouses reported that they were currently experiencing a deployment; however, this number was far higher in 2010 (78.3% in 2010, 17.5% in 2011, and 10.7% in 2012). Current deployments are associated with increases in two spouse well-being outcomes: spouse depressive/anxiety symptoms and spouse stress (see Exhibit 4-19).

**Exhibit 4-19 ■ Significant Effects of Current Deployments on Outcomes Over Time**

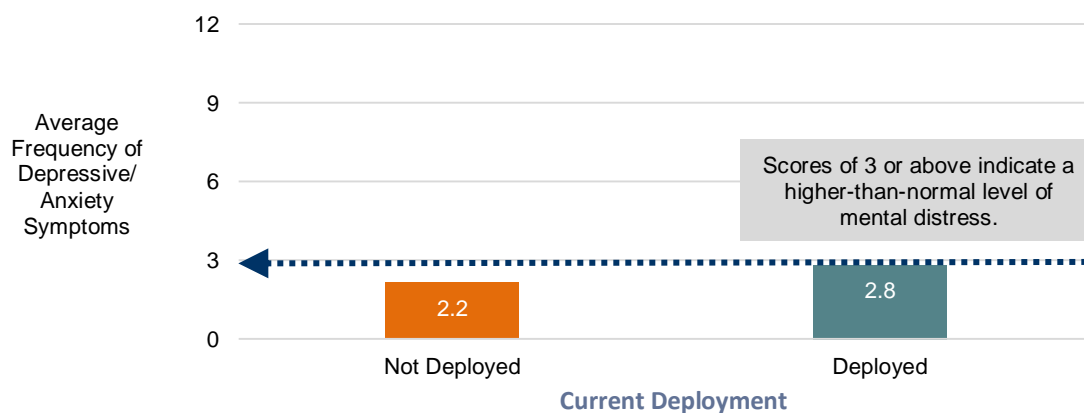


Current deployments are not related to any of the financial well-being outcomes, spouse education and employment, or any of the child well-being outcomes over time.

Current deployments are positively related to depressive/anxiety symptoms, meaning that spouses experiencing a current deployment report higher levels of depressive/anxiety symptoms compared to those not experiencing a current deployment. Exhibit 4-20 shows that spouses currently experiencing a deployment report 5.0 percent more frequent depressive/anxiety symptoms than spouses not experiencing a deployment. While the level of depressive/anxiety symptoms for spouses experiencing a current deployment approach the level requiring further evaluation regarding their symptoms, on average these spouses still report depressive/anxiety symptoms that fall below the clinical evaluation threshold, a score of 3, for depressive/anxiety symptoms.

#### Exhibit 4-20 ■ Spouse Depressive/Anxiety Symptoms by Current Deployment Over Time

Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-4): Depressive/anxiety symptoms

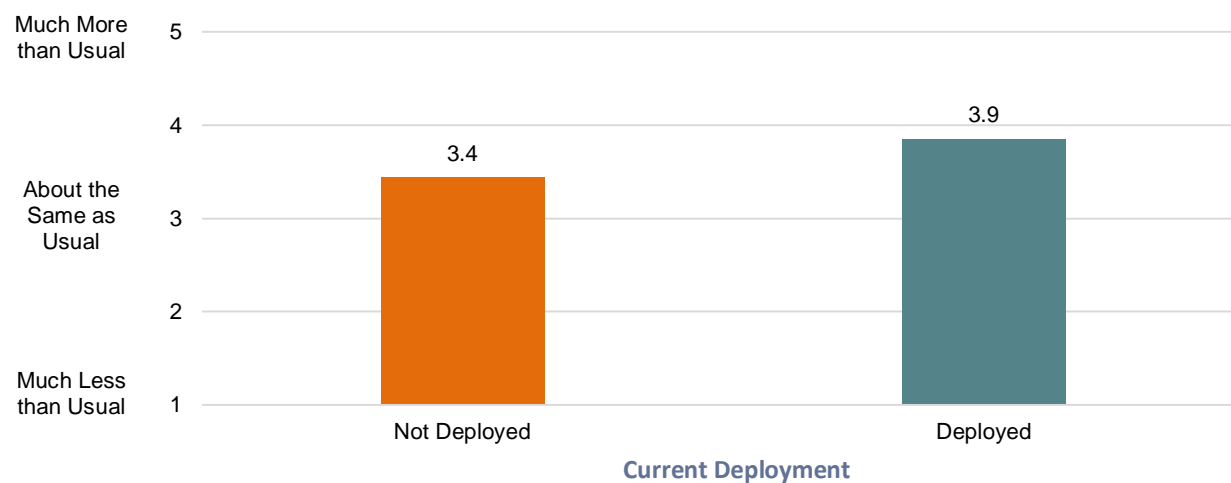


Similar to depressive/anxiety symptoms, experiencing a current deployment is also positively related to spouse stress levels. Spouses experiencing a current deployment report 12.5 percent higher levels of stress compared to those not experiencing a current deployment. In fact, 71.7 percent of spouses with an Active Duty member currently deployed reported more stress than usual, whereas only 49.4 percent of spouses without a current deployment reported more stress than usual. The impact of current deployments on spouse stress is depicted in Exhibit 4-21, which breaks out stress scores for spouses who are not currently experiencing a deployment versus those who are experiencing a deployment.

Spouses who report a better financial condition, saving regularly, or having savings of \$500 or more experience lower levels of stress.

**Exhibit 4-21 ■ Spouse Stress by Current Deployment Over Time**

Overall, how would you rate the current level of stress in your personal life?



### Impact of Child Factors During Deployment on Child Well-Being Over Time

In addition to examining the frequency and duration of PCS moves and deployment, two child factors during deployment were examined as predictors of child well-being:

- ▶ Child connection with Active Duty member during deployment
- ▶ Child problematic behaviors during deployment

The significant outcomes of each of these aspects of deployment are described in the following sections.

#### Child Connection with Active Duty Member

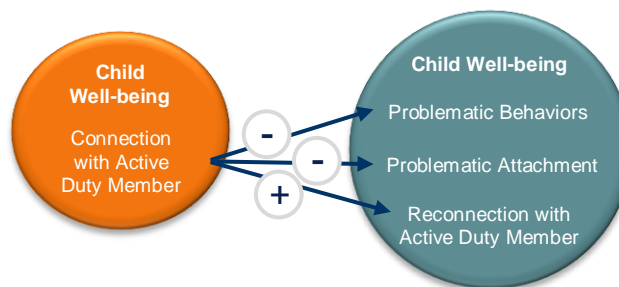
The impact of a child's connection with their Active Duty member parent during deployment was studied for its impact on child problematic behaviors, child problematic attachment, and child reconnection with the Active Duty member following a deployment. Each of these child well-being factors is related to connection with the Active Duty member during a deployment (see Exhibit 4-22). Connection with the Active Duty member has a negative relationship with child problematic behaviors and child problematic attachment, and it has a positive relationship with reconnection with the Active Duty member following a deployment. In other words, children who stay connected to the Active Duty member during deployment display fewer prob-

Spouses with a better connection to their Active Duty member are more likely to report a better connection between their child and the Active Duty member parent.

lematic behaviors, lower problematic attachment, and have a better reconnection with the Active Duty member after deployment. Each of these relationships is described further in the following sections.

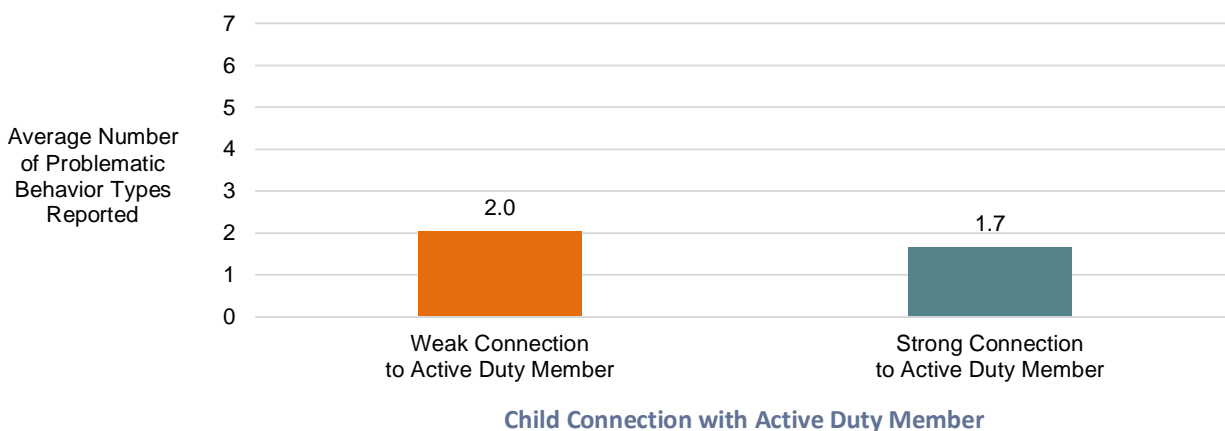
Children with a stronger connection to their Active Duty member parent during a deployment have 4.3 percent fewer problematic behaviors (e.g., academic problems, behavior problems at home or school, anger, lack of responsibility) than those with weaker connections to the Active Duty member (see Exhibit 4-23).

**Exhibit 4-22 ■ Impact of Child Connection with Active Duty Member on Child Well-being Over Time**



**Exhibit 4-23 ■ Child Problematic Behaviors by Connection with Active Duty Member Over Time**

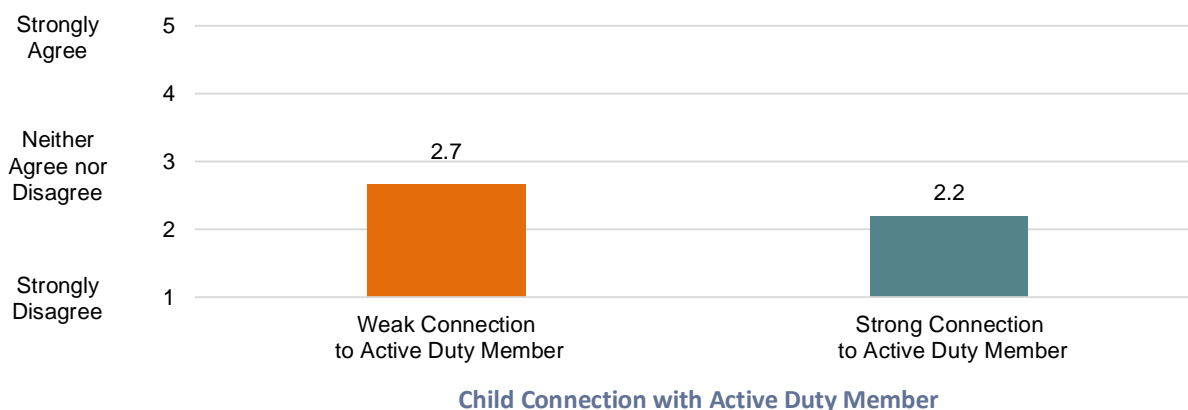
Child Behavior Checklist: Behavior in past 12 months



In addition to child problematic behaviors, child connection with the Active Duty member during deployment is negatively related to child problematic attachment. Children with a better connection with the Active Duty member during deployment show 12.5 percent lower problematic attachment than do those with a weaker connection. Exhibit 4-24 displays the Attachment Behavior Index scores separated by the median score (median = 4) for connection to the Active Duty member.

**Exhibit 4-24 ■ Child Problematic Attachment by Connection with Active Duty Member Over Time**

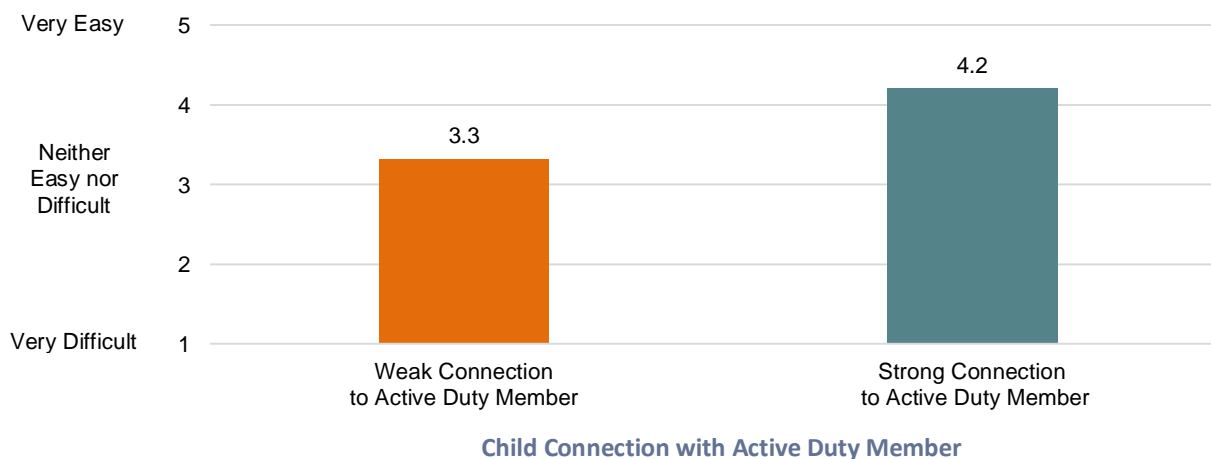
Attachment Behavior Index: Measure of insecurity during the last four weeks



Finally, child connection with the Active Duty member during deployment is positively related to child reconnection after deployment. Children with a better connection with their Active Duty member parent during deployment experience a 22.5 percent easier reconnection with the Active Duty member parent after deployment than children with a weaker connection to their Active Duty member parent during deployment. Differences in ease of reconnection following a deployment for children with a weak versus a strong connection to the Active Duty member are shown in Exhibit 4-25.

**Exhibit 4-25 ■ Reconnection with Active Duty Member by Connection with Active Duty Member Over Time**

Which of the following describes your spouse's reconnection with your child(ren) after he/she most recently returned home from deployment?



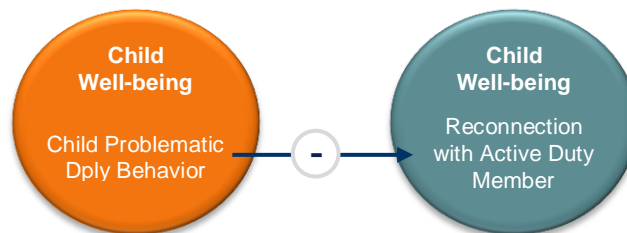
### Child Problematic Deployment Behaviors

Child problematic behaviors during deployment were also examined as a predictor of child reconnection with their Active Duty member parent following a deployment.<sup>12</sup>

Problematic behaviors that children display during a deployment include behaviors such as academic problems at school, behavior problems at home and school, or having anger about their parent's military requirements. These behaviors during a deployment negatively impact reconnection with the Active Duty member parent following a deployment (see Exhibit 4-26).

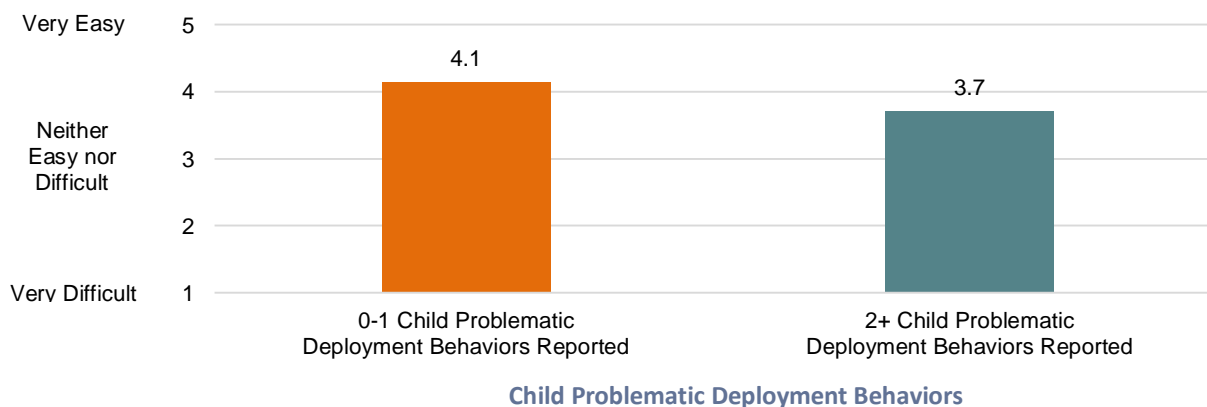
As can be seen in Exhibit 4-27, children who exhibit two or more types of problematic behaviors during deployment have 10.0 percent more difficulty reconnecting with their Active Duty member parent after deployment than do children displaying fewer problematic behaviors during their parent's deployment. The median number of child problematic deployment behaviors is 1, which was used for the median split in this exhibit.

**Exhibit 4-26 ■ Impact of Child Problematic Behaviors on Child Reconnection with Active Duty Member Over Time**



**Exhibit 4-27 ■ Active Duty Member/Child Reconnection by Child Problematic Deployment Behaviors Over Time**

Which of the following describes your spouse's reconnection with your child(ren) after he/she most recently returned home from deployment?



<sup>12</sup> Child problematic deployment behavior was only examined as a predictor of reconnection with the Active Duty member parent and not examined as a predictor of other child well-being outcomes.



## 5. Impact of Spouse and Child Factors on Spouse Military Support Over Time

Research question 2 examined the impact of spouse and child factors on spouse satisfaction with the military way of life and support to stay on active duty. Specifically, analyses examined the outcomes included in the previous sections as predictors of spouse military support. Results for factors influencing satisfaction with the military way of life and support to stay on active duty are described in the next sections.

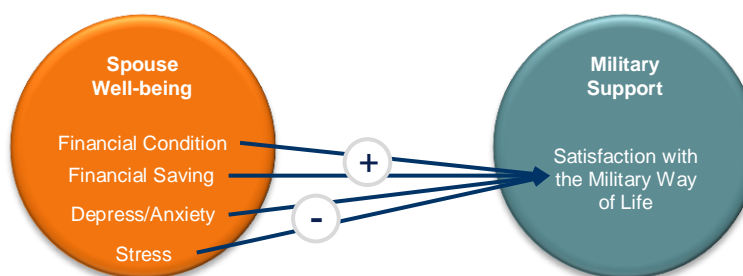
### Impact of Spouse and Child Factors on Spouse Satisfaction with the Military Way of Life Over Time

The following sections describe the impact that spouse well-being (i.e., financial condition, financial saving, depressive/anxiety symptoms, and stress), spouse education and employment, and child well-being (i.e., child problematic behaviors, child problematic attachment, and reconnection with Active Duty member) have on spouse satisfaction with the military way of life.

#### Spouse Well-being

Each of the four spouse well-being factors has an impact on spouse satisfaction with the military way of life over time. Both of the spouse well-being factors related to finances (i.e., financial condition and financial saving) have a positive impact on satisfaction with the military way of life, whereas both depressive/anxiety symptoms and spouse stress have a negative impact on satisfaction with the military way of life. These relationships are shown in Exhibit 5-1.

**Exhibit 5-1 ■ Impact of Spouse Well-being on Satisfaction with the Military Way of Life Over Time**

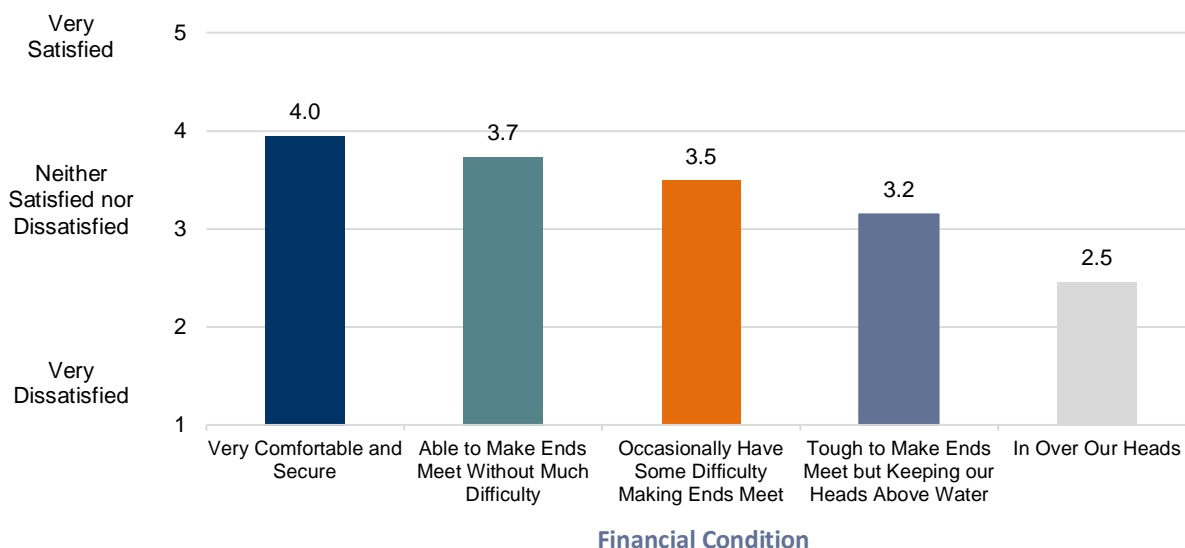


When examining the impact of financial condition on satisfaction with the military way of life, analyses included both the initial level of financial condition (with response options ranging from *in over our heads* to *very comfortable and secure*) as well as changes experienced in financial condition over the course of the longitudinal study. Results show that spouses with better financial conditions report higher satisfaction with the military way of life, and that improvements in financial condition positively impact satisfaction with the military way of life. As can be seen in Exhibit 5-2, spouses who report better financial conditions report being more satisfied

with the military way of life than do those who report worse financial conditions. Specifically, spouses who indicate they are financially *very comfortable and secure* report 37.5 percent higher satisfaction with the military way of life than spouses who report that they are financially *in over [their] heads*.

#### Exhibit 5-2 ■ Satisfaction with the Military Way of Life by Financial Condition Over Time

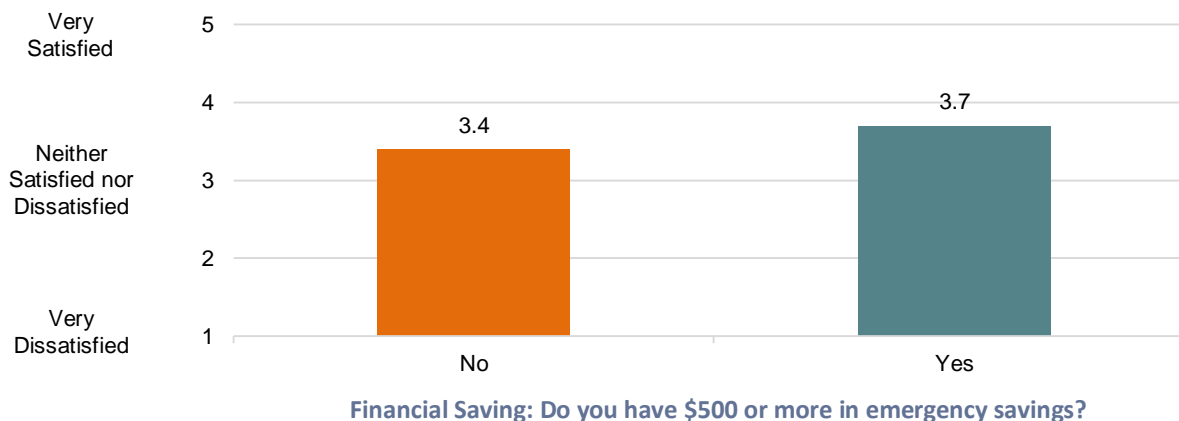
Overall, how satisfied are you with the military way of life?



Like financial condition, having emergency savings of \$500 or more is positively related to satisfaction with the military way of life; however, saving regularly each month is not related to satisfaction scores. Spouses with \$500 or more in emergency savings report 7.5 percent higher satisfaction with the military way of life than spouses without these savings levels. Exhibit 5-3 shows satisfaction levels for spouses who report having \$500 or more in emergency savings versus those who do not have these savings. While having emergency savings available impacts spouse satisfaction with the military way of life, securing or losing emergency savings does not influence this satisfaction.

**Exhibit 5-3 ■ Satisfaction with the Military Way of Life by Financial Saving Over Time**

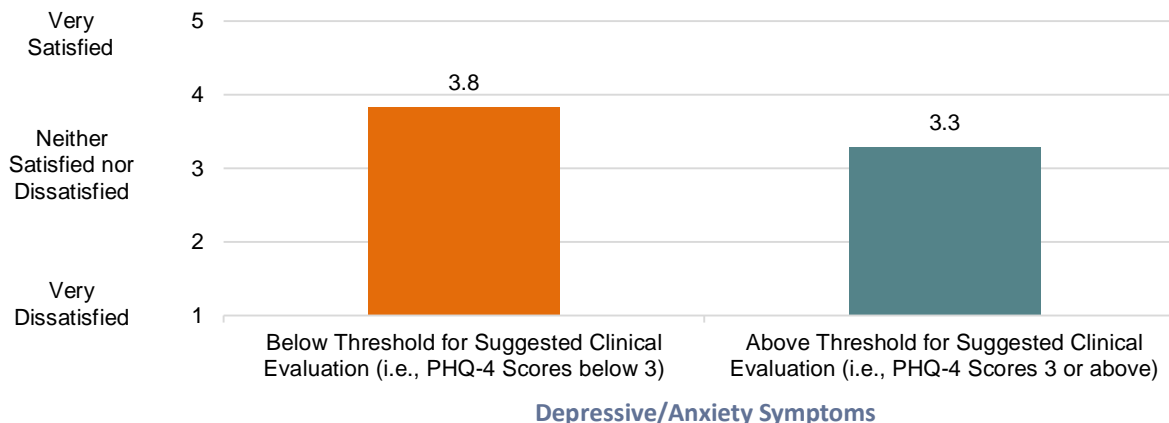
Overall, how satisfied are you with the military way of life?



Another spouse well-being factor that impacts satisfaction with the military way of life is spouse depressive/anxiety symptoms. Spouses with higher levels of depressive/anxiety symptoms report 12.5 percent lower satisfaction with the military way of life. Additionally, when there are increases in depressive/anxiety symptoms over time, satisfaction with the military way of life is negatively impacted. Exhibit 5-4 shows ratings of satisfaction with the military way of life separated by spouses below and above the clinical PHQ-4 threshold for suggesting further evaluation (i.e., Score  $\geq 3$ ).

**Exhibit 5-4 ■ Satisfaction with the Military Way of Life by Depressive/Anxiety Symptoms Over Time**

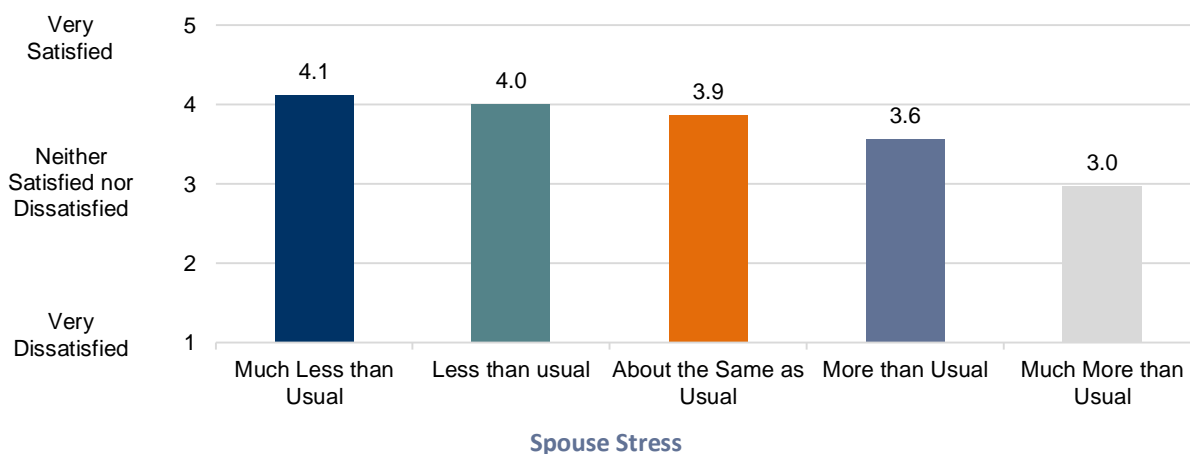
Overall, how satisfied are you with the military way of life?



As with depressive/anxiety symptoms, stress has a negative impact on satisfaction with the military way of life, such that spouses with higher levels of stress report lower satisfaction with the military way of life. Additionally, increases in stress negatively influence satisfaction with the military way of life. Exhibit 5-5 shows scores on satisfaction with the military way of life for spouses over time. As can be seen in this exhibit, higher levels of stress are related to lower reports of satisfaction with the military way of life; spouses with *much more than usual* stress levels report 27.5 percent lower satisfaction with the military way of life than those with *much less than usual* stress levels.

**Exhibit 5-5 ■ Satisfaction with the Military Way of Life by Spouse Stress Over Time**

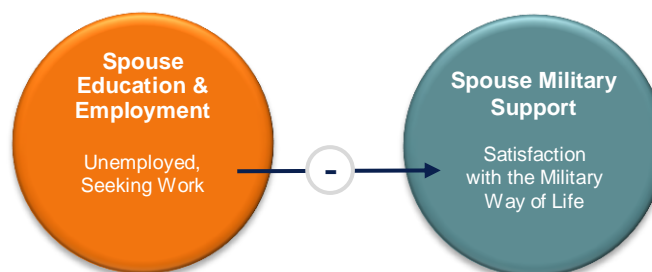
Overall, how satisfied are you with the military way of life?



### Spouse Education and Employment

Next, spouse education and employment were examined for their impact on satisfaction with the military way of life. Being unemployed and seeking work has a negative impact on satisfaction with the military way of life, but no relationship is supported between spouses' education status and satisfaction with the military way of life over time (see Exhibit 5-6).

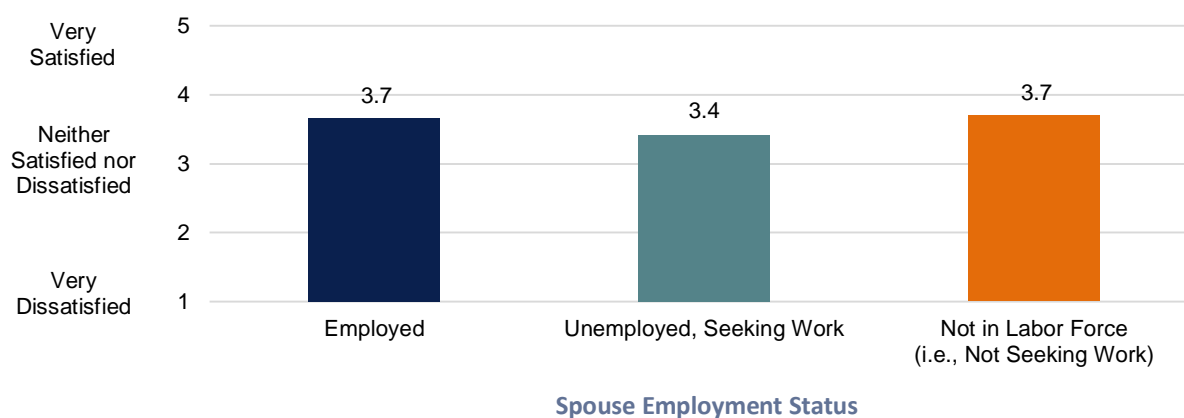
**Exhibit 5-6 ■ Impact of Spouse Education and Employment on Satisfaction with the Military Way of Life Over Time**



To further understand the impact of unemployment on satisfaction with the military way of life, both initial employment status and any changes in employment were examined. Results show that initial employment status (i.e., whether a spouse is unemployed and seeking work at the beginning of the MFLP study) does not influence satisfaction with the military way of life. However, spouses who were employed in 2010 and became unemployed in 2011 or 2012 experienced a decrease in their levels of satisfaction with the military way of life. Exhibit 5-7 shows the levels of satisfaction with the military way of life by spouse employment status over the course of the MFLP survey. Spouses who are unemployed and seeking work are 7.5 percent less satisfied with the military way of life than spouses who are employed or not in the labor force.

**Exhibit 5-7 ■ Satisfaction with the Military Way of Life by Spouse Employment Status Over Time**

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

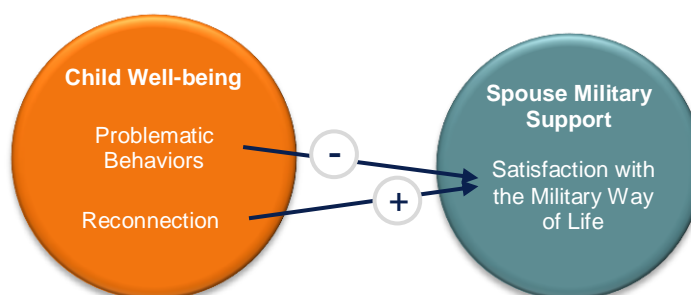


## Child Well-being

Finally, the impact of each of the child well-being factors on spouse satisfaction with the military way of life was examined. Two of the three child behaviors examined have an impact on satisfaction with the military way of life; child problematic behaviors are negatively related to spouse satisfaction with the military way of life over time, whereas child

reconnection with their Active Duty member parent after deployment is positively related to spouse satisfaction with the military way of life over time (see Exhibit 5-8). Child problematic attachment does not impact spouse satisfaction with the military way of life over time.

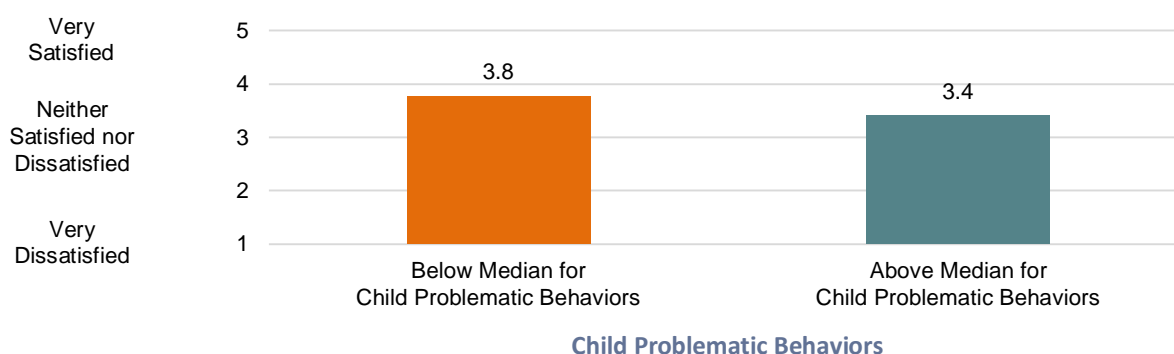
**Exhibit 5-8 ■ Impact of Child Well-being on Satisfaction with the Military Way of Life Over Time**



Spouses who report two or more child problematic behaviors (i.e., the number of behaviors above the median) are 10.0 percent less satisfied with the military way of life than spouses who report one or fewer problematic behaviors (i.e., below median; see Exhibit 5-9). Additionally, when a child's problematic behaviors increase from year to year, satisfaction with the military way of life decreases further.

**Exhibit 5-9 ■ Satisfaction with the Military Way of Life by Child Problematic Behaviors Over Time**

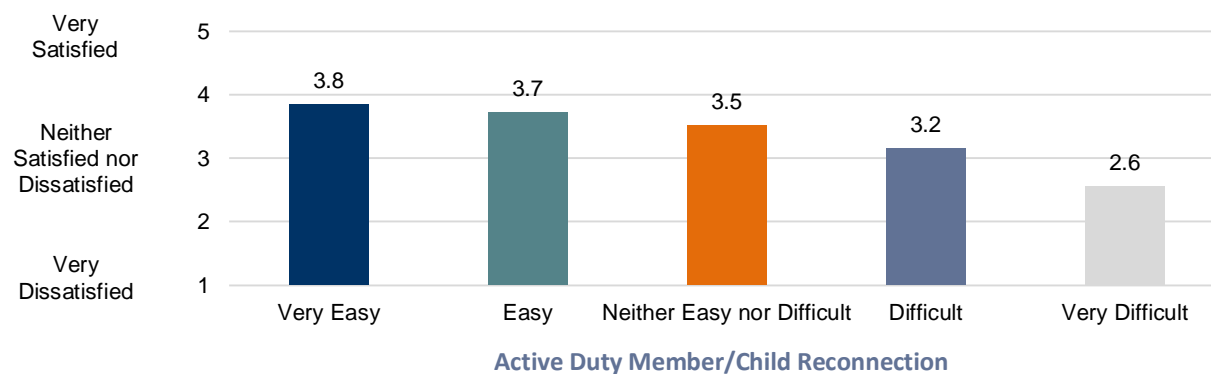
Overall, how satisfied are you with the military way of life?



The second child well-being factor that impacts satisfaction with the military way of life is child reconnection with their Active Duty member parent after deployment. Spouses who report a very easy reconnection between the Active Duty member and child after deployment report 30.0 percent higher satisfaction with the military way of life than spouses who report a very difficult reconnection. Levels of satisfaction with the military way of life, separated by ease of reconnection for children, are shown in Exhibit 5-10.

**Exhibit 5-10 ■ Satisfaction with the Military Way of Life by Active Duty Member/Child Reconnection Over Time**

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



## Impact of Spouse and Child Factors on Spouse Support to Stay on Active Duty Over Time

The final set of analyses conducted examined the impact of spouse and child factors on spouse support for their Active Duty member to stay on active duty. As with the relationships examining predictors of spouse satisfaction with the military way of life, spouse well-being (i.e., financial condition, financial saving, depressive/anxiety symptoms, and stress), spouse education and employment, and child well-being (i.e., child problematic behaviors, child problematic attachment, and reconnection with Active Duty member) were considered for their impact on support to stay on active duty. The following sections in this report describe the spouse and child factors that influence spouse support to stay on active duty.

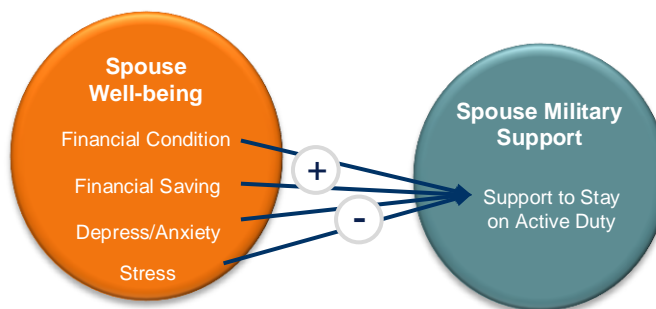
Spouses who are more satisfied with the military way of life are more likely to support their spouse staying on Active Duty.

### Spouse Well-being

A similar pattern of results were found for support to stay on active duty as were found for spouse satisfaction with the military way of life: the spouse well-being factors related to finances (i.e., financial condition and financial saving) are positively related to spouse support to stay on active duty, whereas both depressive/anxiety symptoms and spouse stress are negatively related to spouse support to stay on active duty. Exhibit 5-11 displays these relationships.

When analyzing the relationship between financial condition and support to stay on active duty, results found that spouses with better financial condition report higher support to stay on active duty than spouses who report a more difficult financial situation. As can be seen in Exhibit 5-12, spouses who indicate they are financially *very comfortable and secure* report 20.0 percent higher support to stay on active duty than spouses who report that they are financially *in over [their] heads*. Further, increases in financial condition result in increases in spouses' level of support for their Active Duty member to stay on active duty.

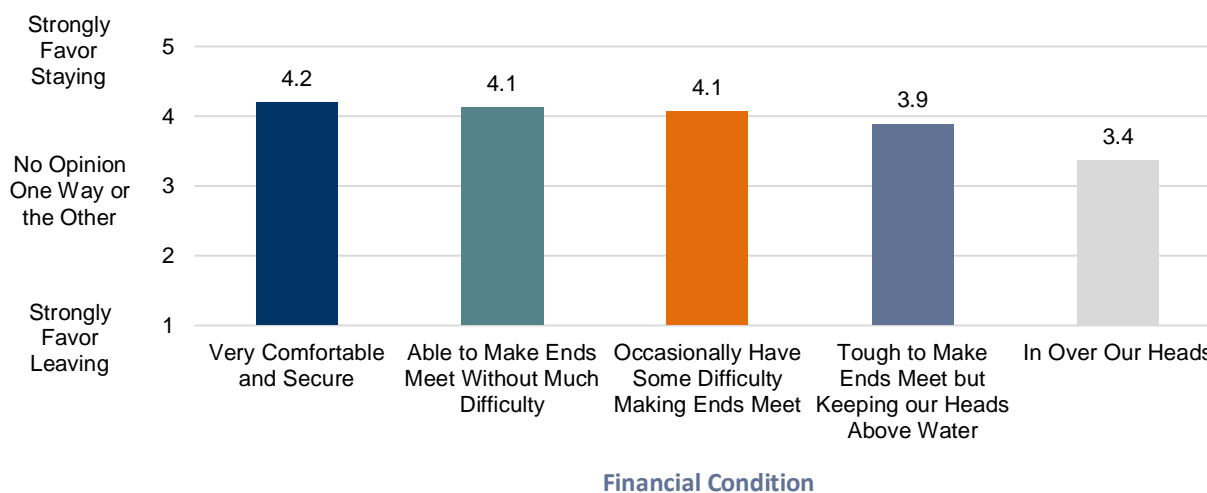
**Exhibit 5-11 ■ Impact of Spouse Well-being on Support to Stay on Active Duty Over Time**





**Exhibit 5-12 ■ Support to Stay on Active Duty by Financial Condition Over Time**

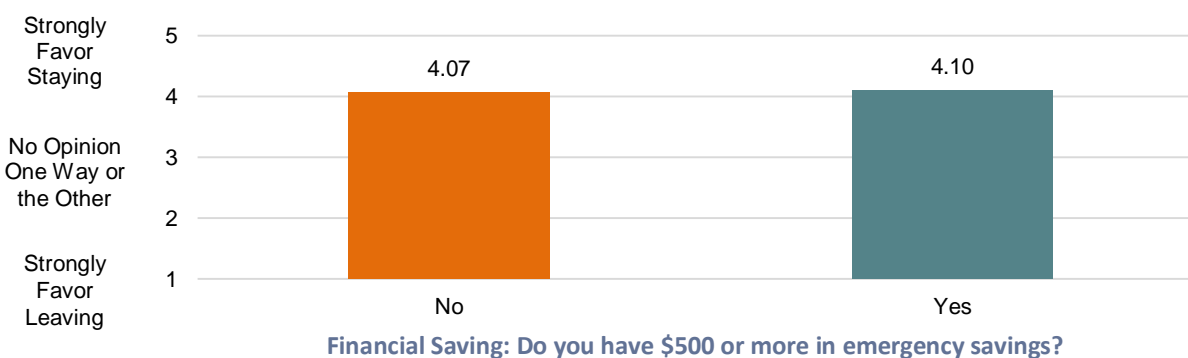
Do you think your spouse should stay on or leave active duty?



In addition to financial condition, financial saving also impacts support to stay on active duty. Similar to the results for spouse satisfaction with the military way of life, having emergency savings of \$500 or more is positively related to support to stay on active duty; however, saving regularly each month is not related to support to stay. Spouses who indicate that they have \$500 or more in emergency savings report 0.8 percent higher support to stay on active duty than spouses without \$500 or more in savings (see Exhibit 5-13). While having emergency savings does increase support to stay on active duty, securing or losing these savings over time does not impact spouse support to stay.

**Exhibit 5-13 ■ Support to Stay on Active Duty by Financial Saving Over Time**

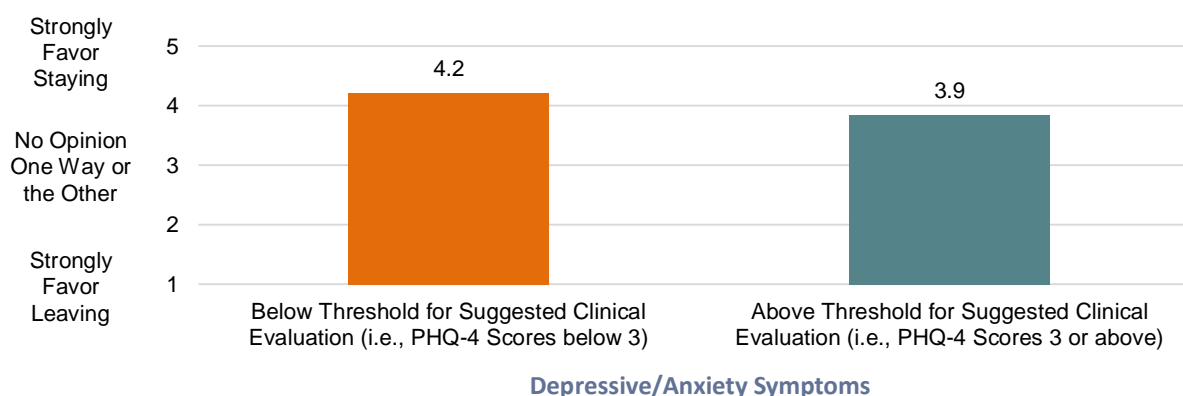
Do you think your spouse should stay on or leave active duty?



Spouses with higher levels of depressive/anxiety symptoms report lower support to stay on active duty, and increases in depressive/anxiety symptoms negatively impact support to stay on active duty. Exhibit 5-14 displays the level of support to stay on active duty for spouses with depressive/anxiety symptoms scores on the PHQ-4 that do not indicate a need for further clinical evaluation versus those with higher levels of depressive/anxiety symptoms whose scores indicate they should seek further evaluation from a mental health professional. Spouse support to stay on active duty is 7.5 percent lower for those with more frequent depressive/anxiety symptoms than those with less frequent depressive/anxiety symptoms.

**Exhibit 5-14 ■ Support to Stay on Active Duty by Depressive/Anxiety Symptoms Over Time**

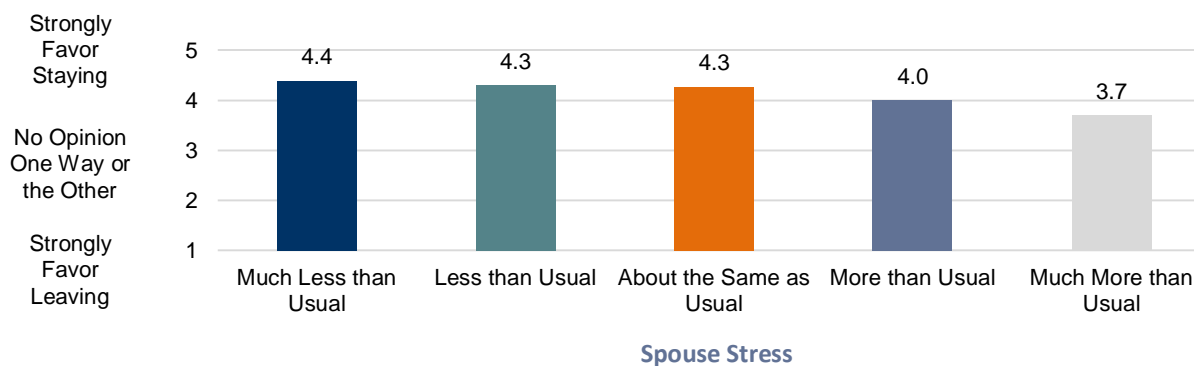
Do you think your spouse should stay on or leave active duty?



The final spouse well-being factor examined as a predictor of spouse support to stay on active duty was spouse stress. As displayed in Exhibit 5-15, spouses with *much more stress than usual* report 17.5 percent lower support to stay on active duty than those spouses with *much less stress than usual*. Additionally, increases in spouse stress negatively impact support to stay on active duty.

**Exhibit 5-15 ■ Support to Stay on Active Duty by Spouse Stress Over Time**

Do you think your spouse should stay on or leave active duty?



## Spouse Education and Employment

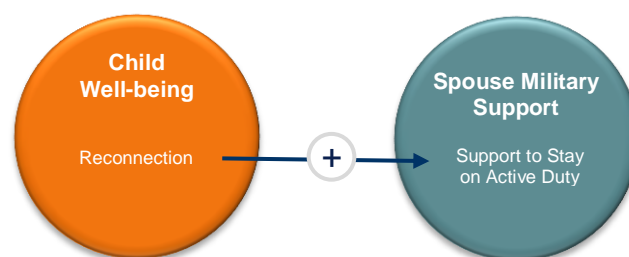
No relationships are supported between spouses' education or employment status and support to stay on active duty over time. Further, becoming unable to be enrolled in school/training or becoming unemployed over the course of the MFLP longitudinal survey did not impact spouse support to stay on active duty.

## Child Well-being

Finally, the impact of child well-being on spouse support to stay on active duty was examined. Only one of the child well-being factors is related to support to stay on active duty: child reconnection with Active Duty member parent following a deployment has a positive impact on spouse support to stay on active duty.

This relationship is displayed in Exhibit 5-16. Neither child problematic behaviors nor problematic attachment are related to spouse support to stay on active duty over time.

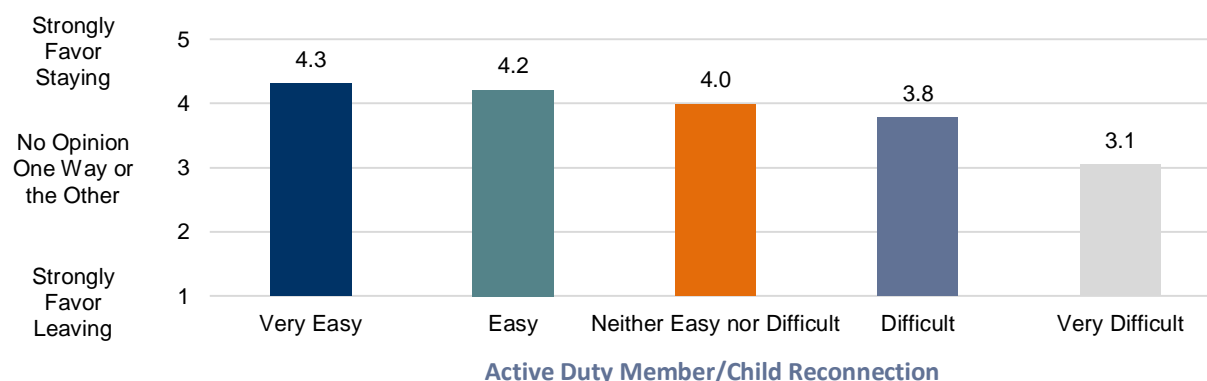
**Exhibit 5-16 ■ Impact of Child Well-being on Support to Stay on Active Duty Over Time**



Child reconnection with the Active Duty member after deployment positively impacts spouse support to stay on active duty, with very difficult reconnections most strongly predicting lower support to stay on active duty. Spouses who report a very easy reconnection between the Active Duty member and child after deployment report 30.0 percent higher support to stay on active duty than spouses who report a very difficult reconnection. Levels of support to stay on active duty by the ease of child reconnection with their Active Duty member parent following a deployment are depicted in Exhibit 5-17.

**Exhibit 5-17 ■ Support to Stay on Active Duty by Active Duty Member/Child Reconnection Over Time**

Do you think your spouse should stay on or leave active duty?



## 6. Summary of Project Findings

The MFLP study and associated survey were designed to fill an important need in military family research, to understand the impact of multiple deployments over years of combat operations on military families. The purpose of this specific report was to assess how military life events, including PCS moves and deployments, affect spouse personal and financial well-being, spouse education and employment, and child well-being, and ultimately to determine the impact of these spouse and child factors on spouse support for the military. Study findings have important implications for policy makers as well as others involved in the improvement of quality of life for military families.

While this study provides valuable information for policy makers and individuals interested in outcomes for military families, there are some limitations to the findings. First, the cumulative number of deployments over the Active Duty members' career is included as a predictor; however, some of these deployments could have occurred before the spouse and Active Duty member married or had children, meaning that the spouse or children did not experience all of the deployments. Additionally, on the MFLP survey spouses were asked to provide information about behaviors for only one focal child, the child with the birth month closest to the spouse. As such, there may be other children in the family who display different behaviors than the focal child.

Overall, study findings show that PCS moves and deployments impact spouse and child outcomes, but the outcomes influenced by these two military life events differ. Specifically, PCS moves, conceptualized as either career PCS moves or having a recent (within the past 12 months) PCS move, have a detrimental impact on three spouse outcomes:

- ▶ Spouse financial condition
- ▶ Spouse ability to pursue an education when desired
- ▶ Spouse employment

However, over time PCS moves do not impact the other three spouse well-being outcomes (i.e., financial saving, depressive/anxiety symptoms, and stress) or the child well-being outcomes examined.

Conversely, deployments (operationalized as career deployments, number of months away from home, having a recent deployment, and having a current deployment) have a detrimental impact on the following outcomes:

- ▶ Spouse depressive/anxiety symptoms
- ▶ Spouse stress
- ▶ Spouse education
- ▶ Child problematic behaviors
- ▶ Child reconnection with the Active Duty member following a deployment

Additionally, having a recent deployment beneficially impacts the following outcome:

► Spouse financial saving

In summary, PCS moves negatively impact spouses' abilities to be employed or enroll in school, which have an indirect detrimental impact on their financial condition. Deployments also negatively impact spouses' abilities to enroll in school when desired, and also have a detrimental impact on spouse mental well-being (i.e., depressive/anxiety symptoms and stress) and child well-being (i.e., problematic behaviors and reconnection).

Similar spouse and child factors impact both spouse satisfaction with the military way of life and spouse support to stay on active duty. Specifically, financial condition and financial saving both have a positive impact on satisfaction with the military way of life and support to stay on active duty, whereas spouse depressive/anxiety symptoms and stress have a negative impact on the two spouse military support outcomes. Similarly, when the child has an easy reconnection with the Active Duty member parent following a deployment, spouse satisfaction with the military way of life and spouse support to stay on active duty are positively impacted. Additionally, being unemployed and seeking work and having a child who displays more problematic behaviors negatively impact spouse satisfaction with the military way of life.

### Implications of Study Findings

This longitudinal study assessed how military life events, including PCS moves and deployments, affect spouse personal and financial well-being, spouse education and employment, and child well-being, and ultimately, how these spouse and child factors impact spouse support for the military. Study findings have important implications for policy makers as well as others involved in improving quality of life for military families. This study provided scientific evidence that the military lifestyle (e.g., frequent relocations and deployments) disrupts spouse employment and negatively impacts families' financial and emotional well-being. Financial well-being and emotional well-being are both related to spouse support for member retention. The study also found spouses who become unemployed are less satisfied with military life. These findings underscore the importance of the DoD's current efforts to support military spouses in obtaining and sustaining employment after a PCS move.

Another key finding of this study is that a strong connection between children and their deployed Active Duty parent is important to help counter negative impacts on the family. This finding suggests that deployment support programs should emphasize maintaining family communications between deployed Active Duty members and their spouses and children. Finally, the study highlighted the detrimental impact of deployments on spouses' emotional well-being, which emphasizes the importance of programs to counter increased stress levels and to maintain emotional well-being during deployments.

## 7. Appendix: Analysis Summary, Statistical Support for Project Analyses, and Survey Item Text

While results in this report are organized by military life event, it should be noted that the analyses examining key relationships in this study were conducted by regressing each dependent variable (i.e., outcome) onto all of the independent variables (i.e., predictor variables) simultaneously to determine which variables have a significant impact. This approach was taken in order to examine the unique variance accounted for by each predictor. The analyses were conducted using data across all three years of the MFLP survey with SPSS Complex Samples statistical software. Because the deployment variable of months away was only measured in two of the three study years, it is only included in analyses for which it was identified as a significant predictor so as to not limit the study timeframe for unrelated variables.

This appendix first provides statistical support for all key relationship analyses described in this report. Results are presented as unstandardized regression coefficients (B) from each regression equation analyzed. The notes for each results table indicate the variables that were controlled for in the analyses as well as other information relevant to the interpretation of these findings. Next, this appendix includes a table that displays the correlation coefficients (r) for supplemental results presented in the report. Finally, this appendix provides the question text for all MFLP survey items used in this study.

### Key Relationships: Spouse Well-Being <sup>13</sup>

Dependent Variable <sup>14</sup>	Independent Variables	Coefficient (B)
Financial Condition <sup>15,16</sup>	Career Deployments	-.01
	Recent Deployments	.04
	Current Deployment	-.05
	Career PCS Moves	-.04*
	Recent PCS Move	-.17*
Financial Saving: Saving Regularly <sup>17</sup>	Career Deployments	.00
	Recent Deployments	.14*
	Current Deployment	.07
	Career PCS Moves	-.04
	Recent PCS Move	-.08
Financial Saving: Emergency Savings of \$500 or more <sup>18</sup>	Career Deployments	.01
	Recent Deployments	.16*
	Current Deployment	-.03
	Career PCS Moves	-.03
	Recent PCS Move	.03

\*Significant at  $p < .05$  level

<sup>13</sup> All regression procedures controlled for military paygrade (5 levels) and year (2010, 2011, and 2012).

<sup>14</sup> The presence of children does not moderate any significant direct relationships between military life events (i.e., career deployments, months away, and current deployment) and the dependent variables measured in this table.

<sup>15</sup> The relationship between months away since 2008 and financial condition is not significant. Thus, it was not included in these results since months away since 2008 was not measured in 2010.

<sup>16</sup> Because of the way the ordinal regression was set up, a negative B value indicates a negative impact on financial condition, despite the original variable scale being 1 = *Very comfortable and secure* to 5 = *In over our heads*.

<sup>17</sup> The relationship between months away since 2008 and financial saving is not significant. Thus, it was not included in these results since months away since 2008 was not measured in 2010.

<sup>18</sup> See note 13.

Key Relationships: Spouse Well-Being<sup>19</sup>

Dependent Variable <sup>20</sup>	Independent Variables	Coefficient (B)
Depressive/Anxiety Symptoms <sup>21</sup>	Career Deployments	.01*
	Recent Deployments	.00
	Months Away Since 2008	.02*
	Current Deployment	.51*
	Career PCS Moves	.01
	Recent PCS Move	-.05
Stress <sup>22</sup>	Career Deployments	.01
	Recent Deployments	-.08
	Months Away Since 2008	.01*
	Current Deployment	.75*
	Career PCS Moves	.01
	Recent PCS Move	-.02

\*Significant at  $p < .05$  levelKey Relationships: Spouse Education and Employment<sup>23</sup>

Dependent Variable <sup>24</sup>	Independent Variables	Coefficient (B)
Currently Enrolled in School/Training <sup>25,26</sup>	Career Deployments	-.01
	Recent Deployments	-.00
	Current Deployment	-.10
	Career PCS Moves	.01
	Recent PCS Move	-.07
Not Currently Enrolled in School/Training, but Would Like to Be <sup>27,28</sup>	Career Deployments	.01*
	Recent Deployments	.01
	Current Deployment	.03
	Career PCS Moves	.05*
	Recent PCS Moves	.08
Employment (Employed) <sup>29,30</sup>	Career Deployments	.01
	Recent Deployments	-.09
	Current Deployment	-.03
	Career PCS Moves	-.03
	Recent PCS Move	-.57*
Employment (Unemployed, Seeking Work) <sup>31,32,33</sup>	Career Deployments	.00
	Recent Deployments	.02
	Current Deployment	-.08
	Career PCS Moves	.00
	Recent PCS Move	.88*

\*Significant at  $p < .05$  level<sup>19</sup> All regression procedures controlled for military paygrade (5 levels) and year (2010, 2011, and 2012).<sup>20</sup> The presence of children does not moderate any significant direct relationships between military life events (i.e., career deployments, months away, and current deployment) and the dependent variables measured in this table.<sup>21</sup> Results reflect data from 2011 and 2012 only since data used to create months away since 2008 were not collected in 2010.<sup>22</sup> See note 19.<sup>23</sup> All regression procedures controlled for military paygrade (5 levels) and year (2010, 2011, and 2012).<sup>24</sup> The presence of children does not moderate any significant direct relationships between military life events (i.e., career PCS moves and career deployments) and spouse education or spouse employment.<sup>25</sup> The relationship between months away since 2008 and spouse education is not significant. Thus, it was not included in these results since months away since 2008 was not measured in 2010.<sup>26</sup> Reference Category: Not currently enrolled in school/training.<sup>27</sup> See note 23.<sup>28</sup> Reference categories: 1) Currently enrolled in school/training; 2) Not currently enrolled in school/training, and doesn't need to be.<sup>29</sup> Reference category: *Not employed*.<sup>30</sup> See note 26.<sup>31</sup> Reference category: *Employed*.<sup>32</sup> See note 26.<sup>33</sup> The presence of children moderates the direct relationship between recent PCS move and the spouse being unemployed, seeking work ( $B = .42, p < .05$ ).



Key Relationships: Child Well-Being<sup>34</sup>

Dependent Variable	Independent Variables	Coefficient (B)
Problematic Behaviors <sup>35,36</sup>	Career Deployments	.01*
	Recent Deployments <sup>37</sup>	-----
	Current Deployment	.13
	Career PCS Moves	.02
	Recent PCS Moves	.00
	Connection	-.42*
Problematic Attachment <sup>38</sup>	Current Deployment	-.03
	Connection	-.26*
Reconnection with Active Duty Member <sup>39,40</sup>	Recent Deployments	-.13
	Months Away Since 2008	-.04*
	Connection	.82*
	Problematic Deployed Behaviors	-.12*

\*Significant at  $p < .05$  levelKey Relationships: Satisfaction with the Military Way of Life<sup>41</sup>

Dependent Variable	Independent Variables	Coefficient (B)
Satisfaction with the Military Way of Life	Financial Condition: 2010 <sup>42</sup>	-.16*
	Financial Condition: Change from 2010 <sup>43</sup>	-.19*
	Depressive/Anxiety Symptoms: 2010	-.07*
	Depressive/Anxiety Symptoms: Change from 2010	-.05*
	Stress: 2010	-.19*
	Stress: Change from 2010	-.17*
	Saving Regularly: 2010	-.05
	Saving Regularly: Positive Change from 2010	-.08
	Saving Regularly: Negative Change from 2010	.03
	Emergency Savings of \$500 or more: 2010	.13*
	Emergency Savings of \$500 or more: Positive Change from 2010	-.02
	Emergency Savings of \$500 or more: Negative Change from 2010	-.01
	Employed: Baseline	.01
	Unemployed: Baseline	-.05
	Change from Employed to Unemployed <sup>44</sup>	.15*
Satisfaction with the Military Way of Life <sup>45</sup>	Currently Enrolled in School/Training: Baseline	.01
	Not Currently Enrolled, but Would Like to be: Baseline	-.02
	Change from Enrolled to Unenrolled	.01
	Problematic Attachment: 2010	-.06
	Problematic Attachment: Change from 2010	-.07
	Reconnection with Child: <i>Very Easy</i> <sup>46</sup>	.69*
	Reconnection with Child: <i>Easy</i>	.61*
Satisfaction with the Military Way of Life <sup>47</sup>	Reconnection with Child: <i>Neither Easy nor Difficult</i>	.44
	Spouse Reconnection with Child: <i>Difficult</i>	.39
	Reconnection: Positive Change from 2010	-.04
	Reconnection: Negative Change from 2010	.16
Satisfaction with the Military Way of Life <sup>47</sup>	Problematic Behaviors: 2011	-.10*
	Problematic Behaviors: Change from 2011 <sup>48</sup>	-.07*

<sup>34</sup> All regression procedures controlled for military paygrade (5 levels) and year (2010, 2011, and 2012).<sup>35</sup> Results reflect data from 2011 and 2012 only since data on "Problematic Behaviors" were not collected in 2010.<sup>36</sup> The relationship between months away since 2008 and problematic behaviors is not significant. Thus, it was not included in these results since months away since 2008 was not measured in 2010.<sup>37</sup> No estimate was returned for recent deployments because it duplicates current deployment; that is, there were no additional cases who had been recently deployed beyond those who were currently deployed.<sup>38</sup> Current deployments was the only deployment/PCS move variable included in the regression because the Attachment Behavior Index focuses on changes in the child's behavior in the past four weeks.<sup>39</sup> Because of the way the ordinal regression was set up, a negative B value indicates a negative impact on child reconnection, despite the original variable scale being 1 = *Very easy* to 5 = *Very difficult*.<sup>40</sup> Results reflect data from 2011 and 2012 only since data used to create months away since 2008 were not collected in 2010.<sup>41</sup> All regression procedures controlled for military paygrade (5 levels) and year (2010, 2011, and 2012).<sup>42</sup> Because the scale for financial condition is 1=*Very comfortable* and secure to 5=*In over our heads* (i.e., higher values indicate worse financial condition), a negative B value indicates a positive impact on financial condition.<sup>43</sup> See note 41.<sup>44</sup> Due to the way the data are coded, the positive B value indicates that a change from employed to unemployed is negatively associated with satisfaction with the military way of life.<sup>45</sup> Spouse well-being, education, and employment variables were included in the regression as control variables.<sup>46</sup> Reference category for all four reconnection variable levels: *Very Difficult*.<sup>47</sup> See note 44.

Key Relationships: Retention Support <sup>49</sup>

Dependent Variable	Independent Variables	Coefficient (B)
Support to Stay on Active Duty	Financial Condition: 2010 <sup>50</sup>	-.06*
	Financial Condition: Change from 2010 <sup>51</sup>	-.11*
	Depressive/Anxiety Symptoms: 2010	-.08*
	Depressive/Anxiety Symptoms: Change from 2010	-.07*
	Stress: 2010	-.13*
	Stress: Change from 2010	-.07*
	Saving Regularly: 2010	-.04
	Saving Regularly: Positive Change from 2010	-.11
	Saving Regularly: Negative Change from 2010	-.06
	Emergency Savings of \$500 or more: 2010	.19*
	Emergency Savings of \$500 or more: Positive Change from 2010	.02
	Emergency Savings of \$500 or more: Negative Change from 2010	-.04
	Employed: Baseline	-.01
	Unemployed: Baseline	-.04
	Change from Employed to Unemployed	.07
	Currently Enrolled in School/Training: Baseline	-.02
	Not Currently Enrolled, but Would Like to be : Baseline	.03
	Change from Enrolled to Unenrolled	-.13
Support to Stay on Active Duty <sup>52</sup>	Problematic Attachment: 2010	-.05
	Problematic Attachment: Change from 2010	.03
	Reconnection with Child: Very Easy <sup>53</sup>	1.28*
	Reconnection with Child: Easy	1.17*
	Reconnection with Child: Neither Easy nor Difficult	1.07*
	Spouse Reconnection with Child: Difficult	1.06*
	Reconnection: Positive Change from 2010	-.14
	Reconnection: Negative Change from 2010	.23
Support to Stay on Active Duty <sup>54</sup>	Problematic Behaviors: 2011	-.05
	Problematic Behaviors: Change from 2011 <sup>55</sup>	-.03

\*Significant at  $p < .05$  level

In this report, relationships among variables were presented in callout boxes. Statistical support for these reported relationships is provided in the table below.

## Correlations: Statistical Support

Variable 1	Variable 2	Correlation (r)
Financial Condition <sup>56</sup>		.30*
Financial Saving: Saving Regularly	Depressive/Anxiety Symptoms	-.17*
Financial Saving: Emergency Savings of \$500 or more		-.18*
Financial Condition <sup>57</sup>		.24*
Financial Saving: Saving Regularly	Stress	-.12*
Financial Saving: Emergency Savings of \$500 or more		-.10*
Spouse Connection to Active Duty Member	Child Connection to Active Duty Member	.43*
Satisfaction with the Military way of Life	Support to Stay on Active Duty	.53*

\*Significant at  $p < .05$  level

<sup>48</sup> Results for problematic behaviors reflect data from 2011 and 2012 only since problematic behaviors were not collected in 2010.

<sup>49</sup> All regression procedures controlled for military paygrade (5 levels) and year (2010, 2011, and 2012).

<sup>50</sup> Because the scale for financial condition is 1 = *Very comfortable and secure* to 5 = *In over our heads* (i.e., higher values indicate worse financial condition), a negative B value indicates a positive impact on financial condition.

<sup>51</sup> See note 49.

<sup>52</sup> Spouse well-being, education, and employment variables were included in the regression as control variables.

<sup>53</sup> Reference category for all four reconnection variable levels: *Very Difficult*.

<sup>54</sup> See note 51.

<sup>55</sup> Results for problematic behaviors reflect data from 2011 and 2012 only since problematic behaviors were not collected in 2010.

<sup>56</sup> Because the scale for financial condition is 1 = *Very comfortable and secure* to 5 = *In over our heads* (i.e., higher values indicate worse financial condition), a negative correlation indicates a positive impact when considering depressive/anxiety symptoms.

<sup>57</sup> Because the scale for financial condition is 1 = *Very comfortable and secure* to 5 = *In over our heads* (i.e., higher values indicate worse financial condition), a negative correlation indicates a positive impact when considering stress.

The following table provides the question wording and response options for all survey items and scales included in this study.

### Study Variables

Item/Scale	Question Wording	Response Options
Cumulative Number of PCS Moves	2010 Question: During your spouse's active duty career, how many times have <u>you</u> experienced a PCS move?	[TEXT BOX]
	2011 and 2012 Question: Have you experienced a PCS move in the last 12 months?	1. Yes No
Recent PCS Move	2010 Question: In what month and year was your last PCS move?	[TEXT BOX]
	2011 and 2012 Question: Have you experienced a PCS move in the last 12 months?	1. Yes 2. No
Cumulative Number of Career Deployments	2010 Question: During your spouse's active duty career, how many times has he/she been deployed for more than 30 consecutive days?	[TEXT BOX]
	2011 and 2012 Question: In the last 12 months, how many times has your spouse been deployed for more than 30 consecutive days?	2. [TEXT BOX]
Months Away from Home	In the last 12 months, how many nights has your spouse been away from home because of military duties (e.g., deployments, TDYs, training, time at sea, field exercises/alerts)? <i>Add up all nights away from home.</i>	[TEXT BOX]
Recent Deployment	Within the past 12 months, has your spouse been on deployment for more than 30 consecutive days? <i>This deployment may have started more than 12 months ago, but has continued within the past 12 months.</i>	1. Yes 2. No
Current Deployment	Is your spouse currently deployed?	1. Yes 2. No
Financial Condition	Which best describes the financial condition of you and your spouse? <i>Mark one.</i>	1. Very comfortable and secure 2. Able to make ends meet without much difficulty 3. Occasionally have some difficulty making ends meet 4. Tough to make ends meet but keeping our heads above water 5. In over our heads
Financial Saving	Do you save regularly by putting money aside each month?	1. Yes 2. No 3. Don't know
Financial Saving	Do you have \$500 or more in emergency savings?	1. Yes 2. No 3. Don't know

## Study Variables

Item/Scale	Question Wording	Response Options
Depressive/Anxiety Symptoms	Over the <u>last two weeks</u> , how often have you been bothered by any of the following problems? <i>Mark one answer for each item.</i> a. Little interest or pleasure in doing things b. Feeling down depressed, or hopeless c. Feeling nervous, anxious, or on edge d. Not being able to stop or control worrying	1. Not at all 2. Several days 3. More than half the days 4. Nearly every day
Spouse Stress	<u>Overall</u> , how would you rate the current level of stress in your personal life?	1. Much less than usual 2. Less than usual 3. About the same as usual 4. More than usual 5. Much more than usual
Spouse Education	Are you currently enrolled in school/training? <i>Mark one.</i>	1. Yes 2. No, and I do not need to be in school/training 3. No, but I would like to be in school/training
Degree Obtainment	Have you obtained a diploma/degree in the last 12 months?	1. Yes 2. No
Education Preventers	Do any of the following prevent you from attending school/training? a. I move too often. b. My spouse's deployments make it difficult to attend school/training.	1. Yes 2. No
Spouse Employment	<u>Are you currently serving in the military?</u> <u>Mark one.</u>	1. Yes, on active duty (not a member of the National Guard/Reserve) 2. Yes, as a member of the National Guard or Reserve in a full-time active duty program (AGR/FTS/AR) 3. Yes, as a traditional National Guard/Reserve member (e.g., drilling unit, IMA, IRR) 4. No
	<u>Last week</u> , did you do <u>any</u> work for pay or profit? Mark "Yes" even if you worked only one hour, or helped without pay in a family business or farm for 15 hours or more.	1. Yes 2. No
	<u>Last week</u> , were you temporarily absent from a job or business?	1. Yes, on vacation, temporary illness, labor dispute, etc. 2. No
	<u>Have you been looking for work during the last four weeks?</u>	1. Yes 2. No
Child Problematic Behaviors	In the past 12 months, has this child experienced an increase in any of the following? <i>Mark one answer for each item.</i> a. Academic problems b. Behavior problems at home c. Behavior problems at school d. Pride in having a military parent e. Anger about my spouse's military requirements f. Closeness to family members g. Acceptance of responsibility	1. Yes 2. No 3. Not applicable

## Study Variables

Item/Scale	Question Wording	Response Options
Child Problematic Attachment	<p>Indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about this child during the <u>last four weeks</u>. <i>Mark one answer for each item.</i></p> <p>a. My child has been more willing to try new things</p> <p>b. My child has been acting more “baby-like” than he/she is capable of</p> <p>c. My child easily becomes irritated or angry with me</p> <p>d. My child has been more clingy than usual</p> <p>e. My child has been afraid of doing things he/she is usually ok with</p> <p>f. My child is demanding and impatient with me. He/she fusses and persists unless I do what he/she wants right away</p>	<p>1. Strongly agree</p> <p>2. Agree</p> <p>3. Neither agree nor disagree</p> <p>4. Disagree</p> <p>5. Strongly disagree</p>
Child Reconnection with Active Duty Member	Which of the following describes <u>your spouse's</u> reconnection with your child(ren) after he/she most recently returned home from deployment?	<p>1. Does not apply, we did not have children at the time</p> <p>2. Very easy</p> <p>3. Easy</p> <p>4. Neither easy nor difficult</p> <p>5. Difficult</p> <p>6. Very difficult</p>
Child Connection with Active Duty Member during Deployment	In the past 12 months, how well has this child been able to stay connected to your spouse given deployment separations?	<p>1. Very well</p> <p>2. Well</p> <p>3. Neither well nor poorly</p> <p>4. Poorly</p> <p>5. Very poorly</p>
Spouse Connection with Active Duty Member during Deployment	<p>During your spouse's most recent deployment, to what extent were each of the following a problem for you?</p> <p>a. Difficulty maintaining emotional connection with spouse</p>	<p>1. Not at all</p> <p>2. Small extent</p> <p>3. Moderate extent</p> <p>4. Large extent</p> <p>5. Very large extent</p>
Child Problematic Behaviors During Deployment	<p>In response to your spouse's <u>most recent</u> deployment, did this child experience an increase in any of the following? <i>Mark one answer for each item.</i></p> <p>a. Academic problems</p> <p>b. Behavior problems at home</p> <p>c. Behavior problems at school</p> <p>d. Pride in having a military parent</p> <p>e. Anger about my spouse's military requirements</p> <p>f. Closeness to family members</p> <p>g. Acceptance of responsibility</p>	<p>1. Yes</p> <p>2. No</p> <p>3. Not applicable</p>
Spouse Satisfaction with the Military Way of Life	Overall, how satisfied are you with the military way of life?	<p>1. Very satisfied</p> <p>2. Satisfied</p> <p>3. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied</p> <p>4. Dissatisfied</p> <p>5. Very dissatisfied</p>

## Study Variables

Item/Scale	Question Wording	Response Options
Spouse Support to Stay on Active Duty	Do you think your spouse should stay on or leave active duty?	1. I strongly favor staying 2. I somewhat favor staying 3. I have no opinion one way or the other 4. I somewhat favor leaving 5. I strongly favor leaving
Focal Child's Age	Think of the child whose <u>birth month</u> is closest to your <u>birth month</u> . What is the birthday (month, day, and year) of this child?	[MM/DD/YYYY]
Focal Child's Sex	Is this child...	1. Male? 2. Female?



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Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC)

Department of Defense (DoD), Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy (ODASD (MC&FP)).

