



## "A WELL SPENT DAY BRINGS HAPPY SLEEP": A DYADIC STUDY OF CAPITALIZATION SUPPORT IN MILITARY-CONNECTED COUPLES

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**BRIEF SUMMARY:** Research indicates that healthy relationships are linked to sleep quality. This study examined associations between veterans' and their spouses' capitalization support and sleep outcomes over a 32-day period. Capitalization is the recent disclosure of positive events, and capitalization support is the perceived responsiveness to that self-disclosure. Authors hypothesized that receiving greater capitalization support would lead to greater intimacy, less loneliness, and therefore, better sleep. Both veterans and spouses who experienced capitalization support reported less loneliness and greater intimacy which were associated with better sleep (i.e., less difficulty falling asleep, better sleep quality, and longer sleep duration). Overall, partner effects suggested that when veterans (primarily men) perceived that their spouses provided capitalization support, the spouse (primarily women) experienced less loneliness and more intimacy, which was positively related to their sleep.

### KEY FINDINGS

- Veterans and spouses who reported more capitalization support from their spouse also reported less loneliness and more intimacy. In turn, those who reported less loneliness generally reported better sleep.
- Authors found little evidence for a direct association among capitalization support and sleep, which is consistent with previous literature. Instead, intrapersonal mechanisms (e.g., loneliness) appear to be the linking mechanisms connecting capitalization support and sleep.

### IMPLICATIONS FOR FAMILIES

- Telling others (friends and family) about recent positive experiences (a good day at work, a kind lady at the grocery store) may help individuals build intimacy with others and reduce feelings of loneliness.
- Ask your partner intentional questions that may spark positive conversation. For example, what is the nicest thing anyone has ever done for you? And why did you think it was so nice? Being responsive to your partner's disclosures is important for facilitating a sense of connection.

### IMPLICATIONS FOR HELPING PROFESSIONALS

- Therapists and family life educators may focus on self-disclosure of events, thoughts, and emotions and the benefits of being responsive to these disclosures for those receiving therapy and/or psychoeducation.
- Encourage military members and their partners to share their positive, daily life experiences with others.
- Assist couples in practicing self-disclosure by providing topics of discussion (for example, what was the best thing that happened to you today?).

### IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY MAKERS AND MILITARY LEADERSHIP

- Because relational health can impact other domains of health and well-being (i.e., sleep), evaluating and encouraging programs that focus on relational health and the development of intimate knowledge and support between partners may improve health outcomes.
- When assessing the value of relationship programs, consider if they adequately foster relationship skills, such as self-disclosure and appropriate ways to respond to partner disclosures.

## SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

- ✓ 159 veterans and their spouses in a community sample
- ✓ 91.2% married or in a civil union; 83% Caucasian
- ✓ Couples had been together for 12 years on average
- ✓ Veterans had been separated from the military for an average of six years

## METHODOLOGY

- The data were collected as part of the Study for Employment Retention of Veterans and were from a community, rather than military, sample.
- Both spouses provided data on their sleep (quality, duration, and difficulty falling asleep), perceived responsiveness to capitalization attempts, loneliness, and intimacy daily for 32 days.
- Researchers controlled for gender, relationship length, and general psychological distress as well as veterans' posttraumatic stress symptoms and deployment status.
- Researchers examined the indirect effects of capitalization support on sleep with loneliness and intimacy using an actor-partner interdependence mediated model.

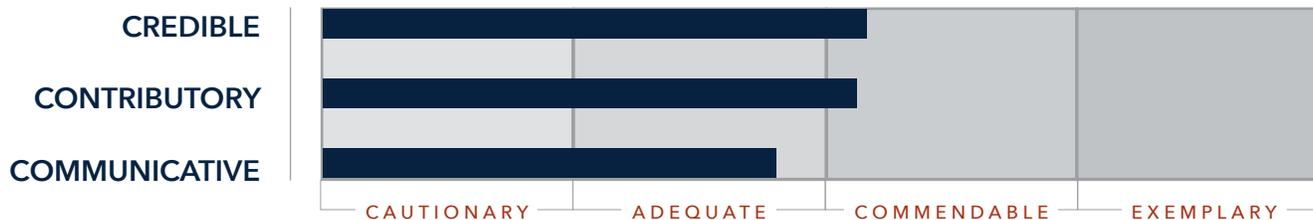
## STRENGTHS

- The article uses daily diary data with responses from both spouses over a period of 32 days.
- Data were collected from a community sample, focusing on military members who have successfully transitioned into the civilian workforce.

## LIMITATIONS

- All study variables were self-reported which increases the concern for measurement overlap and social desirability bias.
- Because veteran status was conflated with gender (most veterans were male and most spouses were female), it is unclear if the findings of partner effects reflect gender differences or are a product of military experiences.
- Length of time since military separation was not accounted for in this model, which may impact findings, particularly related to sleep quality.

## ASSESSMENT OF THE STUDY



## DIMENSIONS OF ASSESSMENT

- CREDIBLE: Research that is rigorous, transparent, consistent, and generalizable. This dimension reflects an evaluation of the study's scientific methodology.
- CONTRIBUTORY: Research that is original, applicable, and has the potential to enhance the well-being of military families. This dimension examines the impact of the study.
- COMMUNICATIVE: Research that is coherent, understandable, and readable. This dimension assesses how effectively the authors convey the content of the study.

\* These dimensions are adapted from the work of Mårtensson et al. (2016). For more information on the REACH evaluation framework and rubric visit: [militaryREACH.org](http://militaryREACH.org)

## PARTNERSHIP

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