An Attachment View on Parental Deployment in Adolescence: Examining the Impact on the Parent-Adolescent Relationship

Kristin Elizabeth Wade

Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE
In
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Angela J. Huebner, Committee Chair
Eric E. McCollum, Committee Member
Mariana K. Falconier, Committee Member

April 20, 2011
Falls Church, Virginia

Keywords: Attachment, Deployment, Parent-Adolescent Relationship

An Attachment View on Parental Deployment in Adolescence: Examining the Impact on

the Parent-Adolescent Relationship

Kristin Elizabeth Wade

ABSTRACT

Adolescence is a period of vulnerability and profound change, during which the parental

relationship remains integral to positive developmental outcomes. For adolescents in

military families, parental deployment creates an additional stressor which may pose

challenges to the relationship between parents and adolescents. This project was a

preliminary qualitative study to develop a Theoretical model of how the parent-

adolescent attachment relationship is affected by parental deployment over the

deployment cycle. This researcher explored these adolescents' perception of their

relationship with their parents through focus group interviews with military adolescents

who have experienced parental deployment. An important explanatory and predictive

factor in parent-child relationships and adjustment outcomes is Attachment Theory

(Bowlby, 1969/1982). Attachment Theory provides a framework for understanding the

process that occurs between parents and children that leads to positive or negative

outcomes and the mechanisms that underlie relational ties. Theoretical thematic analysis

was employed using an attachment framework to explore the relationship between the

parents and adolescents over the course of deployment.

Acknowledgments

Producing this work has been a long and very rewarding process, but one I could never have undertaken on my own. For that, I owe an incredible debt of gratitude to all who have supported me in this endeavor. First, I wish to thank my committee chair, Dr. Angela Huebner, who has graciously provided me with guidance, structure, and inspiration at every point at which I needed direction. She has been an invaluable partner in this process, giving me just the right amount of support and autonomy, and encouraging me in each moment. To my committee members, I am also grateful. Dr. Eric McCollum's wisdom, humor, and support have helped make this project possible. Furthermore, Dr. Mariana Falconier's commitment to excellence and investment in everything she takes on has been very valuable to me. In addition, this study would never have been possible without the participants. Their struggle has been the inspiration for this project, and the light which been my constant guidance on this journey. I would also like to thank my cohort, who have been rays of sunshine over this long, cold winter. Lastly, I wish to thank my family, who are my secure base. Knowing that they are behind me has enabled me to launch myself fully into this process, despite its challenges.

Table of Contents

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem and its Setting

As U.S. military operations proceed, military families continue to face

deployments of one or both parents overseas. The military's two main operations,

Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) in Afghanistan, and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF)

in Iraq, rely on a smaller, all-voluntary military force of 2.2 million men and women

(Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense, 2005).   A smaller force than previous

conflicts means Service members are being called upon to deploy to these regions

multiple times (U.S. Department of Defense, 2010). Deployments last an average of 12

to 15 months (Congressional Research Services, 2008) and the average number of

deployments per Service members is 2.2 (Duckworth, 2009). As of 2008, more than 1.64

million Service members have deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan (Congressional Research

Services, 2008). Ever-increasing numbers of deployments for Service members mean

lengthy and sometimes multiple absences from home and family. This new reality of

military service means Service members and their families face more challenges than

ever before.

Service members and their families must cope with these deployments as they

occur. Deployments mean additional stress and require a great deal of adaptation for all

family members. The family must adapt to the absence of a parent, which means

compensating for that parent's role and responsibilities in the family (Huebner &

Mancini, 2005; McFarlane, 2009). Parental absence also takes an emotional and

physiological toll, as do concerns for the deployed parent's safety (Barnes, Davis, &

Treiber, 2007). Lastly, while the reunion of the family upon the deployed parent's return

is usually celebrated, it can also be the most stressful phase of deployment for the family

(Huebner & Mancini, 2005). Readjusting roles and responsibilities and dealing with

changes in the Service member and the family members can cause conflict. In addition,

returning Service members often experience emotional and behavioral changes as a result

of deployment which have implications for the quality of family relationships (e.g.,

posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), major depression, traumatic brain injury)

(Sammons & Batten, 2008). Most importantly, and in the interest of this study, parental

deployment may affect parents' ability to provide consistent caregiving, which has

important implications for adolescent development (Huebner & Mancini, 2005;

MacDermid, Samper, Schwarz, Nishida, & Nyaronga, 2008).

Adolescents may be especially at risk when faced with the stress of parental

deployment (Huebner & Mancini, 2005; Mmari, Roche, Sudhinaraset, & Blum, 2009).

Adolescence is a developmental time period of significant change, causing stress to the

adolescent and the family system. Normative stressors include physical changes, school

transitions, increased conflict with peers and family, and changing relationships with

parents and peers (Allen, 2008; Simmons & Blyth, 1987; Smetana, Yau, & Hanson,

1991). Adolescents' cognitive abilities allow them to understand more fully what it

means for a parent to be deployed, including the real danger their deployed parent faces,

in a different way than their younger peers (Huebner, Mancini, Wilcox, Grass, & Grass,

2007). Adolescents are more capable of providing for their own physical needs,

especially in comparison to younger children. Thus, self-sufficiency may contribute to

the perception that they are less in need of attention during a period of parental absence

(Mmari et al., 2009). In sum, because of the stressors innately associated with this period

of development, adolescents may be particularly vulnerable when exposed to the added stressors associated with being part of a military family. Indeed, psychosocial stress during adolescence has been demonstrated to be a risk factor for psychopathology (Compas, Connor-Smith, Saltzman, Thomsen, & Wadsworth, 2001).

Because parents continue to play an important role in adolescent emotional health during this phase of development, especially in times of stress, (Steinberg, 1990), it is important to study how parental deployment affects the adolescent's relationship with their parents. High-quality parenting is the factor most consistently associated with resilient outcomes in children facing stressful events, like deployment (MacDermid et al., 2008). However, with one or both parents absent and under increased stress, parents may struggle to provide the kind of care that is associated with secure attachment relationships. In fact, when a parent is deployed, the mental health and emotional adjustment of the at-home parent has consistently been shown to have a significant influence on adolescent adjustment (Chandra et al., 2010a; Lester et al., 2010; Wong & Gerras, 2010).

Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1969/1982), as a theory of the factors underlying relationships, contributes to an understanding of the importance of the relationship between parents and adolescents for adolescent adjustment. According to Attachment Theory, a child's experience with their caregivers is the most important determinant of the attachment relationship. Specifically, a secure attachment requires that individuals have a mental representation of their caregiver as available and responsive in their times of need. Maternal sensitivity involves a caregiver's ability to "understand the child's individual attributes, accepts the child's behavioral proclivities, and is thus capable of

consistently orchestrating harmonious interactions between self and child, especially those in which soothing distress is involved" (Belsky & Fearon, 2002; p. 295). Maternal sensitivity to child has been shown to be one of the most important factors in the development of the attachment relationship (Belsky & Fearon, 2002). Maternal sensitivity to adolescent, and more broadly parent behavior, indicates that a parent is providing care in a way that promotes secure attachment.

The quality of the parent-adolescent attachment relationship has important implications for developmental outcomes for adolescents. Insecure attachment in adolescence has been linked to a myriad of concurrent and future adjustment difficulties; examples include poor peer relations, anger, poor behavioral self-control, and psychopathology (Carlson & Sroufe, 1995; DeKlyen & Greenberg, 2008; Sroufe, Egeland, Carlson, & Collins, 2005). Conversely, attachment security can serve as a protective factor and contribute to resilient outcomes for adolescents (Hamilton, 2000). Even under stressful circumstances, the trust of children in the availability and support of their attachment figures means children have the confidence to explore their world (Grossman, Grossman, Kindler, & Zimmerman, 2008).

Adolescence, as a period of transformation, poses many challenges to the attachment system. Adolescents must begin the process of becoming independent from their parents while they are still dependent on them in many ways (Steinberg, 1990). Balancing the need for autonomy with the need for a secure attachment to parents is "exquisitely difficult" for adolescents (Allen, 2008). An important part of achieving a healthy autonomy in adulthood involves the reevaluation and deidealization of parents (Allen et al., 2003). Attachment security is an important and necessary part of this

process because it provides adolescents with the mental and emotional latitude, or epistemic space, needed to see their parents as fallible humans (Allen et al., 2003).

<center>Significance</center>

Given the current context of military deployment, it is important to study the effect of the stress of parental deployment from the perspective of those it affects. As mentioned, adolescents already face many challenges as they strive to grow into young adults. Along with the developmental, cognitive, and social changes that occur during adolescence, adolescents and their parents must constantly work to maintain a secure bond while supporting the adolescent's growing capacity for autonomy.

With the addition of the stress of parental deployment at this crucial period in development, adolescents and their parents may struggle to cope with the combination of normative challenges of adolescence and the non-normative challenges posed by parental deployment. Research has found that the number of co-occurring family stressors (e.g., financial, medical, social) during deployment is related to adolescent behavioral and emotional adjustment (Chartrand & Siegel, 2007). Additionally, a pile-up of stressors leads to poor adolescent adjustment, specifically with regard to adolescent depression (Seiffge-Krenke, 1995). Increased stress is perceived as especially frightening to individuals facing the loss of a secure base, in this case the deployed parent (Bowlby, 1973). Losing one attachment figure means adolescents must rely more on their at-home parent, who may also be struggling with the loss of an attachment figure and other stressors, affecting their own mental health and ability to provide consistent and supportive care (Chandra et al., 2010a; Lester et al., 2010; Vormbrock, 1993).

More research is revealing the state of adjustment among adolescents during deployment (e.g., Barnes et al., 2007; Chandra, Burns, Tanielan, Jaycox & Scott, 2008; Chandra et al., 2010a; Chandra, Martin, & Hawkins, 2010b; Hiew, 1992; Jensen, Martin, & Watanabe, 1996; Rosen, Teitelbaum, & Westhuis, 1993). However, to date relatively little is known about the process underlying those outcomes. This study proposes to explain the parent-adolescent relationship over the course of deployment, both in terms of stability and change, and with attention to how these interactional processes relate to adolescent emotional and behavioral adjustment.

<center>Rationale</center>

As of the present, a relatively small number of studies have examined the factors that affect the relationship between parents and adolescents over the course of parental deployment (e.g., Chandra et al., 2010a; Huebner et al., 2007; Huebner & Mancini, 2005; Jensen et al., 1996; Jensen & Shaw, 1996; Lester et al., 2010; Mmari et al., 2009). This author was unable to locate any research that has specifically addressed the attachment relationship between parents and adolescent during parental deployment. Examining parent-adolescent attachment over the course of deployment will give treatment providers a better understanding of the process that occurs between parents and their adolescent which plays a role in adolescent adjustment.

This researcher must emphasize that the current research project was a secondary analysis of previously collected data from adolescent focus groups. It must be noted that parents' perspectives of their relationship with their adolescent was not queried. Rather, the focus of this study was on adolescent perspectives of the parent-adolescent relationship and how it unfolded over the course of their parent's deployment. The

questions asked of the adolescents originally in the focus groups were consistent with the

concepts found in the attachment literature as it relates to the parent-adolescent

relationship. Questions asked in the focus group will be described in the Methods

section. The full interview protocol is available in Appendix A.

This study analyzed previously collected data from focus groups in which

adolescents who had experienced deployment were asked to describe their experience.

Investigating the attachment relationship qualitatively, and from the adolescent's

perspective, will generate a more thorough understanding of what adolescents experience

over the course of parental deployment. A rich understanding of the adolescent

perspective, as of yet unexamined by researchers, is essential for developing effective

treatment paradigms and supports for military families.

Theoretical Framework

Attachment Theory

Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1969/1982) is primarily a theory of the mechanisms

that underlie relational ties. Initially, Attachment Theory was a theory of relationships in

infancy and childhood; however, its scope has been expanded to include adolescence, and

has even been adapted to explain the motivations and behavior that characterize adult

romantic relationships (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Bowlby initially described the

evolutionary etiology of attachment behavior. He described how animals, and especially

human infants, are biologically motivated to maintain proximity to their primary

caregiver, or attachment figure, because proximity to a caretaker increases the likelihood

of survival (Bowlby, 1969/1982). According to Bowlby, all attachment behaviors are

organized around achieving or maintaining proximity to an attachment figure. Proximity-

seeking behavior increases when an individual experiences danger or feelings of stress. Attachment behaviors, (i.e., behaviors that are designed to maintain proximity to an attachment figure), are activated in response to the conditions of the child and the child's internal state, the conditions of the external environment, and of particular importance, the attachment figure's location and behavior.

Attachment Theory is also a theory of emotion and cognition (Bowlby, 1969/1982). Emotion functions as a regulatory mechanism by alerting attachment figures of a child's distress and by promoting attachment behavior. Over time, individuals' repeated experiences with attachment figures coalesce into scripts, and eventually more general mental representations, or internal working models. Representations of attachment figures, views of self and other, and representations of the environment enable the individual to form expectations about the future and to plan actions. According to this theory, individuals use internal working models to inform them about what behaviors to use under specific circumstances with specific individuals. Having expectations for the future is more cognitively efficient and therefore evolutionarily adaptive. This being said, these internal working models require conscious or unconscious processing in order to check and revise expectations as the environment changes, relationships change, and the individual ages.

The attachment bond is an affectional tie which a child has to one the child perceives as stronger and wiser (Bowlby, 1969/1982). Individual differences exist in attachment representations and behavior. Individuals with a secure attachment have a mental representation of their attachment figure as available and responsive in their times

of need. Contrarily, individuals with an insecure attachment perceive their attachment figure as unavailable in their times of need.

According to theorists, attachment relationships can be represented by one of three styles: secure-autonomous, dismissing, or preoccupied (Main, 1985; Main & Goldwyn, 1984; Main, Kaplan, & Cassidy, 1985). In determining a classification, the scorer must interpret and characterize the behavior of the interviewee's caregiver based on indicators of loving behavior (e.g., providing the child with consistent and reliable physical expressions of affection, forgiving wrongdoing, and taking the child's part with others) and unloving behavior (e.g., rejecting the child's attachment bids, role-inverting, neglecting, and pressuring to achieve) (Main, Hesse, & Goldwyn, 2008).

It is also important to note that unlike the measurement of attachment in infancy which specifically examines attachment-related behaviors as they play out in front of researchers, the measurement of attachment in adolescence and adulthood relies on the individual's state of mind with regard to attachment.

Coping strategies utilized in the face of distress are also indicative of attachment security. Adolescents' internalized representations of their caregiver's availability and their own worthiness and competence guide their response in the face of a threat or stressor (Bowlby, 1969, 1973). Secure adolescents are more likely to cope both by taking action or seeking support from others and employing cognitive coping strategies such as reflecting on solutions (Seiffge-Krenke & Beyers, 2005). In contrast, insecure adolescents are more likely to cope through avoidance. Dismissing adolescents are more likely to cope internally and less likely to take direct action, while preoccupied

adolescents have been shown to cope actively, but with lower gains in internal coping over time.

Individuals' view of self and other is also indicative of attachment state of mind (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). A positive view of self, as worthy of love and affection, combined with a positive view of other, as available and caring, denotes a secure-autonomous state of mind. Individuals classified as preoccupied hold a negative view of self, as unworthy of love, and a positive view of other. The dismissing classification denotes a positive view of self and a negative view of other, as unavailable and uncaring. Finally, individuals classified as fearful have a negative view of self and a negative view of other.

Purpose of the Present Study

To date, most research on parental deployment and its effects on the family has focused on outcomes rather than processes. Of particular importance when raising questions of process is the parent-adolescent attachment relationship and how it is affected by parental deployment. While research has established the importance of parent nurturing and consistency in influencing adolescent coping, the way in which these two variables interact has yet to be fully explored. Understanding how the parent-adolescent relationship affects adolescent outcomes, and understanding how parental deployment affects this process, will help lead to more effective interventions and supports for military families.

Research has begun to report the effects of parental deployment on adolescents and their families. However, in-depth study of the effect of parental deployment on the attachment relationship between adolescents and their at-home parent has yet to progress.

This study explored the relationship between adolescents and their parents over the course of parental deployment. Specifically, this study examined the interactional processes that occurred between parents and adolescents over the course of deployment, by the report of adolescents, and interpreted these findings through the lens of Attachment Theory. The results of this study may lead to an increased understanding of the effects of deployment on family relationships, promote future research in this area, and enable treatment providers to support military families more effectively.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

The Attachment System in Adolescence

Given that adolescents experiencing parental deployment may experience changes in their attachment relationship to their parents, it is first important to establish a baseline for understanding the attachment relationship to parent in adolescence before an exploration of this relationship in the context of parental deployment can be undertaken; such will be the focus of this section. Adolescence is a period of transition for cognitive, behavioral, and emotional systems. It is also a period of transition for adolescent relationships. Adolescents must manage the transition from being the receivers of parental care to ultimately being the providers of such care for peers, romantic partners, and offspring (Allen, 2008). In order to accomplish these tasks, the adolescent attachment system undergoes changes both in the meaning and in the expression of attachment processes (Allen, 2008). This review will be followed by a review of the literature on the factors influencing the adjustment of adolescents to parental deployment.

Cognitive Development

One of the most significant milestones reached by adolescence involves the ability to assess the attachment system in terms of a single overarching organization that is stable and can predict future behavior and functioning, within and outside of the family (Hesse, 1999). This overarching attachment organization is encapsulated in a "state of mind" regarding attachment, and encompasses the ways in which attachment experiences and relationships are conceived of by an individual (Keating, 1990). During adolescence, a developing aptitude for formal operational thinking, including the capacity for logical

and abstract reasoning (Keating, 1990) allows adolescents to develop a more integrative and more general stance with regards to their experience of attachment (Hesse, 1999).

These changes begin to open the cognitive space needed for adolescents to reflect upon and potentially modify their state of mind regarding attachment (Allen, 2008). Specifically, formal operational thinking enables the adolescent to engage both abstract and counterfactual possibilities, meaning the adolescent can compare relationships with different attachment figures, to each other and to ideals. Correspondingly, researchers have found that adolescent reports of attachment relationships with multiple caregivers become less consistent and more relationship-specific as they age (Buist, Reitz, & Dekovic, 2008). Adolescents also begin the process of cognitive differentiation of self, (Selman, 1980), which allows them to form a more consistent view of themselves, and to begin to think of themselves as separate from their interactions with caregivers.

Balancing Relationships and Autonomy

It is important to first note that while it is true that adolescents' relationships with those around them shift and take on different functions, this does not mean their relationship with their caregivers is no longer an important resource for them. On the contrary, research indicates that adolescents' relationships with caregivers remain important to adolescents and are in fact a valued source of intimacy (Paterson, Field, & Pryor, 1994). Additionally, when facing extreme stress, most adolescents still turn to their parents first to meet their attachment needs, even in young adulthood (Steinberg, 1990; Fraley & Davis, 1997). Some features of attachment relationships begin to shift from parents to peers as adolescence progresses, but parents remain adolescents' primary

attachment figures until late adolescence (Hazan & Zeifman, 1994). These shifts can be hard to navigate and pose many challenges for both adolescents and their caregivers.

A process that potentially increasingly characterizes caregiver-adolescent relationships and interactions and can facilitate families' attempts to negotiate relationships during adolescence is goal-correction (Kobak & Duemmler, 1994). A successful 'goal-corrected partnership,' (Bowlby, 1969), involves the ability of caregiver and adolescent to adjust attachment-related behavior to the evolving attachment needs of the adolescent, while simultaneously balancing other needs (Allen, 2008). Adolescent and caregiver must first establish mutual goals for their relationship, such as maintaining positivity, and then can work towards maintaining the relationship when challenges to it arise (Allen et al., 2003).

This attachment process is enabled and facilitated by the adolescent's developing communication abilities and perspective-taking skills (Allen, 2008). However, both parties must have the capacity to communicate and be willing to allow and support both the adolescent's attempts at autonomy and the parent-adolescent relationship simultaneously if this process is to play out successfully (Allen, 2008).

Indicators of Attachment Security

Secure

Secure adolescents have been found to represent their parents as loving and available in times of stress, despite reporting some negative experiences in childhood (Kobak & Sceery, 1988). Maternal attunement has been found to robustly predict attachment security in adolescence, after accounting for demographics and other relationship factors (Allen et al., 2003). It is possible that secure adolescents enable

parental sensitivity by being more open and more accurately reporting their emotional states to their parents (Allen, 2008). In addition, adolescent perception of maternal supportiveness has also been linked to attachment security, with secure adolescents perceiving more maternal support (Allen et al., 2003).

Attachment security in adolescence has been linked to popularity with peers, higher self-esteem, and is inversely related to depression and delinquency (Allen, Moore, Kuperminc, & Bell, 1998; Kobak, Sudler, & Gamble, 1991; van Ijzendoorn & Bakermans-Kraneburg, 1996).

Interestingly, secure adolescents' cognitive advances allow for them to integrate both positive and negative features of individuals and relationships into one coherent picture or narrative (Fonagy, Steele, Steele, Moran, & Higgit, 1991). Having a more nuanced understanding of their parents facilitates an increased understanding and acceptance of the relational changes and conflict that occur during adolescence (Ammaniti, Van Ijzendoorn, Speranza, & Tambelli, 2000). Changes may be perceived by secure adolescents as less threatening to their attachment relationships as a result of this new perspective.

Security in adolescence has additionally been associated with a lower likelihood of utilizing withdrawal as a coping strategy, when compared to insecure adolescents (Seiffge-Krenke & Beyers, 2005). In response to a problem, an internal coping strategy involves contemplating solutions, while withdrawal involves avoidance behavior, such as distraction (Seiffge-Krenke & Beyers, 2005). Active coping involves taking direct action, seeking support or advice from others, or seeking to solve the problem with the person it concerns (Seiffge-Krenke & Beyers, 2005). Secure adolescents show increases

in the use of active and internal coping over time, supporting Seiffge-Krenke and Beyers'
(2005) hypothesis that secure adolescents are more likely to believe that they can manage
their own stress and that others will provide them with assistance if they need it.

In conversation, relatedness, or working together to reaffirm a relationship during
a disagreement, is linked to adolescent security (Allen et al., 2003). As children enter
into adolescence and adulthood, a secure attachment is supported by truthful and
comprehensive communication regarding topics of significance in close relationships
(Cassidy, 2001). In discussions with parents, securely attached adolescents have been
found to express less dysfunctional anger and avoidance, demonstrate more balanced
assertiveness, and were more likely to use constructive conflict resolution strategies such
as negotiation and compromise than their dismissing peers (Kobak, Cole, Ferenz-Gillies,
Fleming, & Gamble, 1993; Ducharme, Doyle, & Markiewicz, 2002). Ducharme et al.
(2002) found secure adolescents reported more positive and fewer negative interactions
with their parents than their insecure counterparts. In the same study, secure adolescents
also scored higher on emotional expressivity than dismissing adolescents in the same
sample.

Insecure

Balancing the needs of the attachment system and the developmental tasks of
adolescence may prove more difficult for insecure adolescents (Allen, 2008).
Predominant features of adolescence, such as increased moodiness, shifting relationships
with parents and peers, and increasing autonomy together may cause the attachment
system to remain activated, thus influencing adolescent behavior to a greater extent
(Allen, 2008). Affectively-charged disagreements between parents and adolescents may

overwhelm adolescents (Kobak et al., 1993), and may be perceived by them as threatening to relationships that already feel unstable (Allen, 2008). Internal working models constructed and colored by repeated experiences of negative interactions with parents influence adolescents' perceptions of interactions and behavior in interactions (Allen, 2008). In fact, adolescent insecurity is predicted by "heightened and unproductive overengagement with parents in arguments," ultimately undermining the adolescent's quest for autonomy (Allen, 2008, pg. 426).

Insecure-preoccupied. Seiffge-Krenke and Beyers (2005) found preoccupied adolescents showed high levels of active coping initially, but low gains over time; thus these adolescents continued to use support-seeking as a coping strategy, but showed a lack of progress in coping skills. A lack of withdrawal or avoidance of arguments in adolescence predicts later preoccupied attachment (Allen & Hauser, 1996). Preoccupied attachment in adolescence has been associated with passive thought processes; this is thought to result from the mental entanglement of self and caregivers that characterizes preoccupied attachment (Allen & Hauser, 1996).

Preoccupied adolescents report feeling less socially self-efficacious and report lower levels of perceived social support (Mallinckrodt & Wei, 2005). Wei, Russell, and Zakalik (2005) found that the relationship between attachment anxiety and loneliness and subsequent depression was mediated by lack of social self-efficacy. Attachment Theory suggests that preoccupied individuals have negative working models of self (Pietromonaco & Feldman Barrett, 2000), and thus would perceive themselves as less efficacious (Wei et al., 2005).

Preoccupied adolescents have been shown to struggle more when leaving for college (Bernier, Larose, & Whipple, 2005). During this transition, these adolescents' interactions with parents increase and are more conflicted (Bernier et al., 2005).

Preoccupied adolescents represent their parents as loving, but role-reversing during the AAI (Kobak & Sceery, 1988). Adolescents in this group also report significantly higher levels of symptoms than either their parents or their peers; these adolescents are reporting their distress, but their reports are either not heard or believed by others (Berger, Jodl, Allen, McElhaney, & Kuperminc, 2005).

Insecure-dismissing. Ducharme et al. (2002) found dismissing adolescents reported more negative interactions and fewer positive interactions with their parents and were more likely to use disengagement as a conflict resolution strategy with parents. This withdrawal prevents adolescents and their parents from meeting to work together to balance the needs of the attachment system and the adolescent's growing needs for autonomy (Allen, 2008). Adolescents with dismissive attachment styles are also less likely to seek social support (Ognibene & Collins, 1998); not seeking social support in times of stress is considered a health risk factor (Kotler, Buzwell, Romeo, & Bowland, 1994). Commensurate with this finding, Seiffge-Krenke and Beyers (2005) found dismissing adolescents showed increases in the use of internal coping over time; however, level of internal coping was significantly lower than it was for secure adolescents, and was not accompanied by increases in active coping over time. Individuals who limit coping to cognitive strategies are at increased risk for depressive symptoms (Kraaij et al., 2003).

Wei et al. (2005) found discomfort with self-disclosure of personally distressing information mediates the relationship between attachment avoidance and loneliness and subsequent depression in freshman college students. Unfortunately for this group, self-disclosure of distress has been shown to be an important predictor of relationship building (Laurenceau, Feldman Barrett, & Pietromonaco, 1998). This finding is predicted by Attachment Theory, which purports that individuals with an avoidant attachment hold the belief that others would be unresponsive were they to disclose their feelings of distress (Wei et al., 2005).

In intimate relationships, dismissing adolescents rate their relationships as less satisfying, have partners with less healthy personality profiles, engage in fewer pro-relationship behaviors, and rate their partners as engaging in fewer pro-relationship behaviors (Collins, Cooper, Albino, & Allard, 2002).

From AAI transcripts, dismissing adolescents are rated as experiencing rejection and a lack of love from their parents (Kobak & Sceery, 1988). Families of dismissing adolescents have been shown to be less responsive to their adolescents when compared to families with preoccupied adolescents (Reimer, Overton, Steidl, Rosenstein, & Horowitz, 1996).

Attachment Stability and Malleability

It is important to recognize that as individuals progress throughout the lifespan, their attachment style and IWM are being influenced through continued interactions with others. Much debate has occurred over the extent to which attachment styles and IWMs are open to change as individuals age. However, attachment theorists generally agree that attachment styles tend to persist in stable child-rearing environments, but are open to

change in light of significant attachment-related experiences (Waters & Cummings, 2000). Longitudinal studies have shown that consistently, 60-70% of individuals show stability in attachment style over time, while 30-40% of individuals' attachment styles change (Scharfe, 2003).

Researchers have begun to examine some of the factors that influence either stability or change in attachment style. In a twenty-year longitudinal study, Waters, Merrick, Treboux, Crowell, and Albersheim (2000) found that negative life events prompted changes in attachment style, most often from secure to insecure. These negative life events included the loss of a parent, parental divorce, life-threatening illness of a parent of a child, psychiatric disorder in a parent, and physical or sexual abuse by a family member. While negative life events may lead to changes in individuals' attachment representations, for others this is not the case. Hamilton (2000) and Waters et al. (2000) both found that about half of their sample of infants who retained a secure attachment style into adolescence reported negative life events. Hamilton (2000) interpreted his findings to mean that attachment security can serve as a protective factor and promote resilience in the face of adverse life circumstances. Additionally, Hamilton (2000) found that negative life events contributed to stability in attachment representation among insecurely attached adolescents.

Alternatively, other processes likely contribute to attachment style stability over time. Waters et al. (2000) offer that consistency in caregiver behavior, an individual tendency towards persistence in early cognitive structures, the effects of individuals on their environments, and personality trait variables which have a stabilizing effect on individuals can all contribute to the stability of attachment styles over the lifespan.

Attachment stability and change during adolescence is influenced by the cognitive changes and developmental tasks of this period (Ammaniti et al., 2000). Higher stability in attachment representation has been found for adolescents with dismissing styles (Ammaniti et al., 2000). In fact, derogation of parents and lack of recall intensified as time and age progressed, and adolescents reported perceiving their parents as more rejecting over time (Ammaniti et al., 2000). It has been proposed that a dismissing attachment style may be adaptive during adolescence because it allows for the maintenance of a close relationship between parent and adolescent while simultaneously relieving strong feelings of anger or anxiety that typify this phase of development (Main & Hesse, 1990). This same process may destabilize adolescents with preoccupied attachment styles, as the dissonance between the strategies associated with their attachment style and their developmental need for autonomy is larger; such dissonance may encourage these adolescents to confront and revise their internal working models (Ammaniti et al., 2000).

Military Adolescents

Parental Deployment

The experience of parental deployment represents a daily, chronic, and possibly traumatic stressor for military families (MacDermid et al., 2008). Both deployment and reintegration represent times of difficult transitions for families (MacDermid et al., 2008). In addition, Service member deployments frequently involve deployment to an active war zone and thus a greater risk of injury or death, an additional stressor for these families. In this section, the relationship between parental deployment and adolescent adjustment is explored.

Deployment and Adjustment

Factors Mediating Adjustment

Parent adjustment over the course of deployment has been shown to play an important role in predicting adolescent adjustment. For example, when the at-home parent adapts well to the deployment of their partner, the association between adolescent depression and anxiety and deployment decreases (Jensen, Lewis, & Xenakis, 1986; Jensen et al., 1996). Poorer mental health in the at-home caretaker has been found to be positively associated with increased externalizing behaviors, problems with academic engagement, emotional difficulties including depression, and problems with peer and family functioning for adolescents (Chandra et al., 2010a; Lester et al., 2010). Correspondingly, in a study of military spouses during a war deployment, parental stress was found to be the best predictor of school-age children's psychosocial functioning (Flake, Davis, Johnson, & Middleton, 2009). Quality of family relationships may also play a role; during peacetime, research on military families has shown that when a supportive and stable family structure is established, adolescents adapt well to frequent moves and short-term separations from a parent (Jensen et al., 1986; Kelley, Finkel, & Ashby, 2003).

Longer parental deployment has been found to be associated with negative behavioral adjustment and emotional difficulties in adolescents (Chandra et al., 2010a; Lester et al., 2010). Age and gender also seem to play a role in how adolescents adjust to deployment. Older adolescents and girls of all ages who have experienced parental deployment in particular reportedly exhibit more school-, family-, and peer-related

difficulties (Chandra et al., 2010a). Jensen and Shaw (1996) suggest the perception of

the level of danger the deployed parent is in influences adolescent adjustment.

Adjustment Outcomes

A number of adverse outcomes have been linked to parental deployment in

adolescence. In adolescence, parental deployment has been associated with higher

symptom levels of depression (Jensen et al., 1996), higher levels of anxiety (Chandra et

al., 2010b), worse performance in academics (Hiew, 1992), increased irritability and

impulsiveness (Hillenbrand, 1976), and more requests for attention (Rosen et al., 1993).

The period of deployment has been associated with higher rates of child maltreatment

and child neglect (Gibbs, Martin, Kupper, & Johnson, 2007), and increased marital

conflict and a higher probability of spousal aggression (McCarroll et al., 2000).

Meanwhile, length of deployment has been shown to be positively correlated with child

depression and externalizing symptoms (Lester et al., 2010).

Adolescent. Adolescents experience a myriad of consequences as a result of

parental deployment. While most adolescents are resilient and effectively cope with this

experience, others have trouble adjusting emotionally and behaviorally. Adolescents who

have experienced parental deployment have been found to report more emotional

difficulties than national samples (Chandra et al., 2010a). School staff report the anxiety

of students who have experienced parental deployment, stemming from parental absence,

increased responsibilities at home, poor mental health in some at-home caregivers, and

difficulties accessing mental health services, affected these students' ability to function

well in school (Chandra et al., 2010b). Adolescents with a deployed parent report higher

symptom levels of depression when compared with adolescents from families with

nondeployed Service members (Jensen et al., 1996). Military dependent adolescents with deployed family members have been shown to report higher levels of post-traumatic stress symptoms, and also show higher heart rates and blood pressures when compared to military dependents without a deployed family member and civilian dependents (Barnes et al., 2007).

Having a deployed parent has also been shown to be negatively correlated with behavioral adjustment and academic performance (Chandra et al., 2008; Hiew, 1992; Huebner & Mancini, 2005). Adolescents whose parents have deployed have been found to report more difficulties with family functioning than national samples (Chandra et al., 2010a). Research also indicates that parental deployment results in increased tearfulness, increased discipline problems in the home, and increased demands for attention in children (Rosen et al., 1993).

Parents. Both the Service member and Service member's spouse are affected by deployment in ways that can have important implications for adolescent adjustment. Service members are being diagnosed with PTSD in increasing numbers, and studies are beginning to explore the effects this disorder can have on families (Haley, 1984; McFarlane, 2009). In addition to PTSD having been found to be associated with poorer parenting practices and disruptions in the parent-child relationship, (Haley, 1984), it may also be associated with the transmission of trauma to other family members (Dirkzwager, Bramsen, Ader, & van der Ploeg, 2005; Rosenheck & Fontana, 1998). Secondary traumatic stress is defined by Figley (1998) as "any transmission of distress" and results from caring for, or desiring to care for, a traumatized person. According to Figley (1998), care and concern involve empathizing with the traumatized person, which may

mean the non-traumatized person experiences emotions similar to those of the traumatized person. Over time, accumulation of this type of stress can result in "emotional exhaustion and emotional burnout," or secondary traumatic stress disorder.

In a comparison of partners of soldiers with or without PTSD, partners of soldiers with PTSD reported more somatic difficulties, more negative social support, and judged the marital relationship more negatively (Dirkzwager et al., 2005). Partners of veterans with PTSD were also shown to exhibit increased PTSD symptoms, more marital and family adjustment problems, and more problems in social relationships (Dirkzwager et al., 2005). Further, the most important predictors of current PTSD symptoms of spouses were shown to be the number of war events the veteran had experienced, and the veteran's current PTSD symptoms (Bramsen, van der Ploeg, & Twisk, 2002). Trauma transmission to children may also occur, through direct behaviors such as violence, through child identification with the traumatized parent, or as a result of a lower-quality family environment (Rosenheck & Fontana, 1998).

During deployment, at-home caretakers experience and increase in duties which they must manage; these include finance management, child care responsibilities, and household management. This increase in tasks and responsibilities often occurs in the absence of a significant support system, which may lead at-home caretakers to experience increased distress (Lester et al., 2010). Meanwhile, Service members' adjustment following deployment may be influenced by the experience of combat-related mental health problems such as changes in sleep patterns, mood, level of arousal, and use of alcohol. The Service members' mental health problems have been shown to influence child distress.

Additionally, both parents must cope with the separation from their partner, an attachment figure. Vormbrock (1993) examines this period of separation and its effects from an attachment perspective. According to Vormbrock, for military spouses, a deployment, and the absence of an attachment figure, registers as a threat because of the possibility that the deployed spouse will not return. Vormbrock purports that such separations will produce separation distress and manifest through symptoms of anxiety and depression. Any of these stressors can adversely affect the at-home parent's mental health, leading to a decreased ability to provide consistent supportive care to their adolescent.

CHAPTER III: METHODS

Design of the Study

This qualitative study employed secondary focus group data collected by Drs. Angela Huebner and Jay Mancini in 2008. These focus groups were comprised of adolescents who had experienced parental military deployment and were reporting retrospectively on this experience. The purpose of the present inquiry was to explore the parent-adolescent attachment relationship over the course of parental deployment from the perspective of the adolescent. To examine the data, this researcher used Theoretical thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Sample Participants and Procedures

Original Study

Participants in the original study were adolescents who attended Operation Military Kids (OMK) camps in the summer of 2008 in five states: Florida, Maine, North Carolina, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. OMK camps were developed for military youth who have experienced deployment by OMK (U. S. Department of the Army) and Cooperative Extension (CSREES) and so were provided at no- or low-cost to participants. OMK camp attendees were asked if they were willing to participate in this research project. Parental consent was obtained for participation in the OMK camps and the research project. Additionally, the adolescent's assent was obtained.

In the original study, there were 85 adolescents from 11 focus groups and 5 camps. Participants' ages ranged from 11-18 years of age. Focus groups contained between 6 and 10 participants. Gender was approximately equally mixed, with 50.6% female and 46.4% male participants. Participants reported their ethnicity as: 73% White,

11% African-American, 2% Hispanic/Latino, 4% Asian, 1% Native American, and 8% biracial. Participants reported their families were part of the following military branches: Active Duty (25% Army, 4% Navy, 8% Air Force, 8% Marines, 2% Coast Guard), National Guard (41% both services) and Reserves (2% all branches). Meanwhile, 7% of participants reported having parents in multiple branches, and 2% were unsure of their parent's branch of service.

Some of the focus groups in the original study were divided by gender and age, and all were digitally audio-recorded and later transcribed. Each focus group lasted approximately 60 minutes.

These focus groups were semi-structured, with researchers using a general interview guide during the focus groups. To begin, participants were asked by the interviewer(s) to share some brief information about themselves and their parents' military service. Next, participants were asked a series of open-ended questions about each phase of the deployment cycle (i.e., pre-deployment, deployment, and reintegration). These open-ended questions assessed how parental deployment affected family routine and family relationships, (e.g., "How are things in your family (including relationships with brother & sisters, mom) different when your parent is deployed? For example, do you find that you spend more or less time with each other than you did before? Do you notice any changes in how you get along?" "Tell me about the relationship you have with your at home parent during deployment," "After the deployment, what did you notice about your relationship with your at-home parent?" and "Who is the first person you usually turn to for support when you are really sad/scared/ or lonely?"). The interview

ended with a question about what advice adolescents would give other adolescents going

through parental deployment (see Appendix A for the entire Interview Protocol).

Table 1: Participant Demographics

Name	Gender	Age	Race	Deployed Parent	Branch in Military	Number of Deployments
Adrienne	Female	13	White/Caucasian	Father	National Guard	1
Alexis	Female	14	White/Caucasian	Father	National Guard	1
Patricia	Female	13	White/Caucasian	Father	Army	1
Kesha	Female	14	White/Caucasian	Father	National Guard	1
Stacy	Female	15	White/Caucasian	Father	Navy	1
Michael	Male	15	Asian	Father	National Guard	2
Trevor	Male	17	White/Caucasian	Father	National Guard	1
Carol	Female	16	White/Caucasian	Father	Marines	2
Noah	Male	15	White/Caucasian	Father	National Guard	1
Trey	Male	15	White/Caucasian	Father	Army	5
Micah	Male	15	White/Caucasian	Father	National Guard	2
Leanne	Female	15	White/Caucasian	Father	National Guard	4
Brandi	Female	13	Asian	Mother	Marines	Multiple
Dominique	Female	13	African-American	Father	Army	Multiple
Jacob	Male	13	White/Caucasian	Father	Air Force	1
Aubrey	Female	13	White/Caucasian	Mother	Multiple branches (both parents in military)	3
Bethany	Female	14	White/Caucasian	Father	National Guard	1
DeDe	Female	14	Bi-Racial	Father	Army	3
Samantha	Female	18	White/Caucasian	Father	National Guard	1

Present Study

For the present study, a sub-sample was selected (see Table 1 above) based on

several criteria. Firstly, criterion sampling was used; this type of sampling is used to

ensure study participants meet a certain criterion or have experienced the phenomenon

under study (Miles & Huberman, 1994). For this project, participants were limited to

those individuals who were ages 13 and above and who had experienced at least one full

cycle of parental military deployment. A full cycle of parental military deployment was

defined as having experienced a parent leaving and coming home from an overseas military deployment.

After these participants were identified, this researcher employed intensity sampling, which calls for a selection of the cases demonstrating the highest intensity of the phenomenon of study (Patton, 2002). Accordingly, this researcher included participants based on the amount of information they provided about their relationship with their parents during the focus group interviews in order to ensure information-rich cases to study. A minimum of 14 lines of text was required for inclusion. This was also quantified based on the adolescents' ability to describe the relationship with both their parents minimally at two different points during the deployment process.

Overall, 19 participants were identified for inclusion in the present study. Thirteen of the participants were female (68%) and 6 were male (32%). Participants' ages ranged from 13 to 18, with an average age of 14.4. The majority of participants reported their ethnicity as White/Caucasian (n=15, 79%), with 2 participants reporting they were of Asian ethnicity (11%), one as African-American (5%), and one as Biracial (5%). A majority of adolescents reported their Service member parent was National Guard (n=10, 53%), while 4 other branches were also represented (21% Army, 11% Marines, 5% Navy, 5% Air Force, 5% Parents in multiple branches of military). The majority of participants reported their father was the parent who deployed (n=17, 90%), while 2 participants reported their mother deployed (10%). Participants reported they experienced between 1 and 5 deployments, with 10 reporting they experienced one deployment (53%) and 9 reporting they experienced multiple deployments (47%).

Analyses

In the current study, this researcher examined the parent-adolescent relationship over the course of parental military deployment. To explore the data, this study employed thematic analysis, described by Braun and Clarke (2006) as "a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data" which organizes data while still describing data in rich detail (p. 79). The present study employed a specific type of thematic analysis, Theoretical thematic analysis, in which analysis is driven by the researcher's theoretical or analytic interest, providing in-depth analysis of a particular aspect of the data. Themes that were identified were guided by the research question, and thus this researcher sought indicators of stability, change, and adjustment that contributed to the parent-adolescent attachment relationship over the course of parental deployment. Themes were identified at the semantic level, meaning themes were derived from the explicit and unambiguous meanings derived from the data. Semantic themes are first described, or simply organized to reveal patterns. Themes are then interpreted, hypothesizing the meaning and broader significance of the themes (Patton, 1990). Interpretation of the themes in this study was guided by Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1969/1982), a framework for organizing and explaining findings related to stability, change, and adjustment in the parent-adolescent relationship over the deployment cycle.

Consistent with the method described by Braun and Clarke, rather than moving from one step directly to another, thematic analysis utilizes a recursive process, with the researcher moving back and forth between the data, codes, and analysis being produced, as necessary. This being said, after all the data had been coded, this researcher sorted the codes that had been identified into potential themes. This researcher examined the

relationships between the codes and between the preliminary themes. This researcher developed "candidate themes" and sub-themes from this process. Once these themes were identified and coded data had been sorted based on their relationship to each theme, this researcher refined the themes. Themes were refined based on the support for them anchored in the data, their similarity to and distinctness from each other, and their coherence. The next level of analysis involved ensuring coherence between the themes and the coded data, and reviewing the data within the themes to ensure no additional themes have been missed. Finally, this researcher defined and continued to refine the themes as she pulled together the themes in order to present a coherent story of the findings.

This researcher used an additional coder, this researcher's Thesis Committee Chair, Dr. Angela Huebner, in order to ensure trustworthiness and credibility in the process of data analysis.

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

It became clear during analysis that the parents and adolescents were involved in

an interactional process such that the adolescents' reports of their own thoughts, feelings,

and actions seemed to be in direct response to their perception of their parent's

adjustment to the deployment. For presentation purposes, results will be presented with

descriptions of parent behavior followed by the adolescent coping response. Because

adolescents' descriptions of the deployment experience varied somewhat over the course

of deployment, results will be presented by deployment stage. The cycle of deployment

includes three phases, characterized by the departure and return of the Service member:

pre-deployment, deployment, and reintegration. Results will begin with a description of

several processes that seemed to influence the findings and will conclude with a

description of reported relationship changes over the deployment cycle. It should be

noted that adolescents' names have been changed to ensure confidentiality.

It is also important to note that descriptions of parental behavior in each of the

following sections were derived from adolescents' descriptions of their *perceptions* of

their parent's behavior, and not derived from this researcher's direct observation of

family processes. Thus, "Parent Behavior" refers to adolescents' perceptions of what

they observed about their parents over the course of the deployment cycle. The same is

also true of the "Adolescent Coping Response" sections, which describe adolescents'

perceptions of their reaction to parental deployment.

It is important to note that several factors were evident which appeared to

influence the process that occurred between parents and adolescents. Firstly,

adolescents' relationships with their deployed parent seemed to play an important role in

how they responded to changes in their relationship with their at-home parent during deployment. Generally, the closer the adolescent indicated they felt to their deployed parent, the more distress they exhibited over the course of deployment. In other words, stress in the relationship between the at-home parent and adolescent seemed to be magnified when adolescents indicated they were closer to their deployed parent.

The adolescent's gender also seemed to play a role. Generally, male adolescents indicated they were closer to their male deployed parent than to their female at-home parent. They reported that they relate better to their male deployed parent and were less embarrassed about discussing developmental issues, such as puberty, with him because he was male. Many female adolescents indicated they were closer to their female at-home parent; however, a group of female adolescents reported they felt closer to their male deployed parent.

Finally, it seemed that experiencing multiple stressors in addition to parental deployment increased both adolescent and at-home parent distress. This pile-up of stressors seemed to cause more strain in the parent-adolescent relationship and make adjusting to parental deployment more difficult for everyone. The stressors included deaths in the family, strained relationships with the extended family or community, and at-home parent change in occupation or school status.

<div align="center">Pre-Deployment</div>

The pre-deployment phase includes the period of time during which the Service member is notified about their deployment up until the time at which the Service member departs for their deployment. Families must deal with the emotional and logistical challenges posed by the deployment of the Service member. Themes resulting from the

reports of the adolescents will be discussed below, and include: parent denial and avoidance, and adolescents responding by feeling unprepared and confused.

Parent Behavior

 Denial and avoidance. Overwhelmingly, adolescents reported their parents did not acknowledge the full reality of the impact of parental deployment. This denial took many forms; for example, some adolescents reported their parents avoided the topic of the deployment, even if these adolescents tried to discuss it with their parents. Adolescents reported feeling that this avoidance was intentional. According to the adolescents, for these parents, not addressing deployment openly also included not marking the event of deployment in any way. In fact, one at-home parent did not tell their adolescent about the deployment until the deployed parent had already left.

> *Jacob: My dad had already left like the day after when I asked my mom where my*
>
> *dad had went. She told me after he had deployed for a couple of months and I was*
>
> *a little sad at first.*

 In addition, one adolescent was told explicitly by their at-home parent to "suck it up," and thus to ignore her own emotions in response to parental deployment. Her description of the pattern of denial and avoidance that occurred in her family across the stages of deployment is similar to the pattern reported by many other adolescents in this category:

> *DeDe: Pretty much because my mom is the type that stays in denial until it*
>
> *actually happens. So, she likes to make it seem like nothing, like my dad is on a*
>
> *long vacation instead of actually deployed or whatever. She tries to keep things as*

normal as possible, which I don't see how it's going to be normal since I'm

starting my freshman year. [tearful]

Almost every adolescent reported their deploying parent did not acknowledge the

danger of deployment or the impact this might have on adolescents' emotions.

Adolescents also reported they wanted their parents to acknowledge their worry about

their deploying parent's safety and their feelings of loss in response to the deployment of

their parent. Many adolescents reported their deploying parent told them not to worry

about them. They also presented the experience of deployment to adolescents as just

another work experience. Frequently, deploying parents maintained that they would not

be in danger and that deployment would be fun and enjoyable to them.

> *Trevor: My parents really didn't do anything too special. My dad tried to act like*
>
> *it was nothing, that he was just going to work for a year and a half. I just wasn't*
>
> *going to see him. He didn't act like it was anything in particular . . . He just told*
>
> *me not to worry. He was just going to be in the sandbox working for a year and a*
>
> *half.*

> *Parting instructions from the deploying parent.* Many adolescents reported their

deploying parent left them with an object of special significance, such as a stuffed animal

or locket. Along with telling adolescents not to worry about them, some adolescents

reported their deploying parent's last directions to them were to take care of the rest of

their family members and to behave well.

> *Carol: I quote this from my dad. He said to all of us because I have three brothers*
>
> *and sisters, he told us, "The ball is in your court." He just wanted to see how we'd*
>
> *use it.*

Adolescent Coping Response

    Confusion. Adolescents reported they recognized that deployment did involve danger for their deploying parent and stress for the family at home; thus they reported their parents' reports to the contrary were confusing.

    Trevor: It's stressful on the family, but my dad didn't act like it was anything.

    When adolescents reported their parents were in "denial" about the reality of parental deployment, they reported their experience of their deployed parent leaving was more of a shock or a surprise. Without their parents helping them anticipate the changes that might occur at home or the emotional response they might have to their deployed parent leaving, adolescents reported they were unprepared for the deployment and reported it felt abrupt. They reported they were unsure how to respond or how to cope with their emotions in response to this novel experience without assistance from their parents. Perhaps in response to the perception of mixed messages, adolescents reported they didn't believe deployment would actually happen, or forgot their deployed parent had left.

    DeDe: I feel less close because usually I'm used to my dad being like right there and his office is right by my room so if I need something, I just go right there. And sometimes I'll go there and realize he's not there, and it just hurts. [crying]

    Adolescents reported this shock was difficult, and that adjusting to the reality of having a parent deployed took time and was challenging.

    Trey: It was one of those changes where you, it was a subtle change like I remember always having my dad come home, and he would always go out to the garage and clean up, and I always used to, the first couple of days he wasn't

there. I always used to run out to the garage because the truck was still there

because we lived so close he'd just walk down, I remember walking out to the

garage and saying dad, are you there? And then I realized he wasn't there.

Trevor: It hits you that they are actually gone.

Trey: Yeah. It was one of those things like, whoa. I thought he was just joking

around.

During Deployment

This phase of deployment begins after the Service member departs for a theater of

war. Because of the Service member's departure, the family is faced with the challenge

of adapting to the absence of this parent in their role in the family, and the responsibilities

previously held by this parent. By adolescent report, their perceptions of the responses of

their at-home parents to parental deployment varied, but generally seemed to involve a

behavioral process of stepping down from or stability in their roles and responsibilities.

Adolescents reported they perceived that their deployed parents continued the processes

of denial and avoidance characterized by the pre-deployment phase.

At-Home Parent Behavior

Stable Unsupportive Relationships

A minority of adolescents reported they observed that their at-home parents'

behavior did not change; however, adolescents reported perceiving their at-home parents

as more stressed. Adolescents reported they believed that filling both parental roles and

taking on the responsibilities of both parents during deployment created additional stress

for their at-home parent during deployment. For these at-home parents, adolescents

perceived that even maintaining the family's often already hectic schedules seemed to

become more difficult and produced more stress in the at-home parent without the

support of the deployed parent. Frequently adolescents reported their parents' busy

schedules resulted from attending school, being busy at work, providing childcare, or a

combination of the three.

Exhibiting Distress

Adolescents reported observing their at-home parents express distress both

verbally (i.e., their words and tone indicated distress) and physically (e.g., crying). Most

adolescents reported they perceived these parents were more distressed than before

deployment.

Trevor: My mom took it harder than everyone. She worries so much.

Many adolescents reported observing that their at-home parent cried about the

deployment. Most adolescents reported their at-home parent tried to hide this behavior

but that it was nonetheless apparent to them, while some adolescents reported their

parents did not hide their distress from their adolescents.

Samantha: [My mom] was trying to do all these things and it was stressing her

out, and so she was just ill all the time, ill, just ill, because she was so stressed out

about everything because she takes it a lot harder than I do. I'm a lot lighter kind

of person, kind of bubbly, and you know, I might not show my emotions, but she

wears hers on her collar, you know? You can tell how she's feeling all the time,

and she was just taking everything, it was really, really, really hard on her, and I

can only imagine why, but she was just, she was not easy to handle.

At-home parents did not have to withdraw in order for adolescents to report perceiving they were distressed, but the two patterns of behavior were most frequently reported together.

> *Kesha: That's pretty much it. Everything got harder and my mom had five kids to take care of. She had to go away. She was always stressed out. We never got to spend time together. There's four of us and only one of her.*

Stepping Up

> *Compensating for the deployed parent's absence.* Several adolescents mentioned that their at-home parent took on, or attempted to take on, their deployed parent's responsibilities during deployment. Although these parents were trying to compensate for the absence of one parent in the family, adolescents reported they perceived these parents were more stressed.

> *Samantha: Like, when he was deployed, because [my mom] felt like she needed to be him while he was gone, and she just got crazy with it, but while she was trying to cope, she was trying to do all these things and it was stressing her out.*

Additionally, these adolescents reported their parents generally failed when they attempted to fulfill responsibilities formerly held by the deployed parent, such as household chores.

> *Carol: I remember like my mom trying to take over my dad's responsibilities like one day my mom tried the mow the lawn. It didn't work out really well. [laughter] She didn't know what she was doing. She broke it actually.*

Stepping Down

When adolescents described a pattern of stepping down in their at-home parent's behavior, they described the at-home parent either turning away from them or turning towards them. The pattern of turning away involved withdrawing from adolescents and parenting responsibilities. The pattern of turning toward involved an increase in conflict between the at-home parent and their adolescent or the at-home parent seeking the adolescent for comfort. In both cases, the pattern reported by adolescents involved the at-home parent stepping down from the parental role they had filled prior to deployment. Adolescents reported their at-home parents' functioning (i.e., active behaviors in the family) decreased much more frequently than that their at-home parent's functioning remained the same. Adolescents reported these parents relinquished pre-deployment responsibilities (e.g., cooking family meals), or engaged with the adolescent in an unproductive and uncharacteristic way (i.e., engaging in more conflict).

Often stepping down seemed to be the result of the at-home parent being overwhelmed, according to adolescents. They reported their at-home parents were attending school, experienced a change in employment, or both. Whereas their at-home parent had previously been able to manage these stressors and maintain their parental role, the at-home parent was unable to step up and into both their role and the role of the deployed parent during deployment.

Turning away. Many adolescents reported observing that their parents stepped down from their parental role by withdrawing from their relationship with their adolescent. Most of these adolescents reported they perceived their at-home parent was busier and less available to them.

Dominique: [During deployment] my mom becomes distant.

These adolescents frequently reported their at-home parents avoided the topic of the deployed parent. Adolescents reported other at-home parents were no longer able to comfort them in a satisfying way. One adolescent reported her at-home parent did not defend her family against the criticism of others, as this adolescent had expected her to do.

Bethany: Our family did not support us at all, but my grandma and my grandparents that's it. And it kind of made me mad because my aunt she, and all my aunts and uncles and everybody else just like got mad at my mom and my mom didn't do anything to them. [crying]

Illustrative of the idea of turning away is that many adolescents reported their at-home parent stopped cooking family meals during deployment.

Trevor: We didn't have family dinners every night like we used to when my dad was home.

Some adolescents also reported their parents were less strict, more relaxed in the rules they enforced, and did not monitor their adolescent's behavior as closely as they had prior to deployment.

Turning toward. On the other hand, some adolescents reported that at times their parents turned toward them, but did so by engaging in more conflict with them, and not by engaging with them in a loving way. Adolescents reported this behavior did not occur in the absence of withdrawal, or "turning away;" in fact, "turning toward" and "turning away" were often both reported by adolescents as behaviors they observed in their at-home parent at different times. While "turning toward" behavior was not withdrawing in

the sense that it did not involve decreased engagement with the family, it seemed as though these parents were still abdicating the roles adolescents reported they had held prior to deployment (i.e., in this case, remaining calm during disagreements). These adolescents reported they believed the conflict resulted from their at-home parent's increased level of stress during deployment.

Several adolescents reported their at-home parents turned to them to talk about deployment, thus turning outward to ask for comfort and companionship rather than turning inward to deal with their emotions on their own. These adolescents reported their at-home parents often became distressed during these discussions. While the behavior of these parents does not indicate withdrawal from the adolescent, it does again indicate withdrawal from their parental role. In these cases, it seemed at-home parents turned to the adolescent in the absence of the deployed parent. These adolescents reported their parents withdrew at other times, and only engaged with them to talk about the deployed parent.

> *Dominique: She doesn't like clean or nothing. She just sits around and me and my mom we don't talk as much no more. We don't have like this as close as we were from like my dad, he's kind of like the head of the family so he keeps everything together and so like when he leaves my mom doesn't talk as much to like us. She mostly goes to her friends or something, and when we do talk it's mostly about my dad and where he is at right then or he's coming back and stuff like that.*

Deployed Parent Behavior

Denial and Avoidance

Adolescents reported their deployed parents continued to deny the impact of deployment even while they were away on deployment. Adolescents reported their deployed parent continued to communicate to them that deployment is just "work" and not dangerous. In addition, adolescents reported their deployed parents continued to tell them not to worry, and that they were fine.

> *Trevor: Yeah, my dad would just act like he was having a good time and*
> *everything over there.*

However, adolescents reported their deployed parent's facial expression, when viewed via webcam, frequently contradicted their insistence that they were not distressed. Adolescents reported they were able to contact their deployed parent occasionally, but that conversations with them consisted of generalities instead of more meaningful exchanges.

> *DeDe: We do the web cam . . . or we email, but if we email it's pretty much the*
> *same messages kind of reversed or whatever, and the web cam is pretty much*
> *saying the same thing, like, 'What did you do today?' 'I miss you.' 'Okay.' But a*
> *lot of times with the web cam because so many people are talking the whole thing*
> *just drops so we get mainly like five minutes of conversation at least every, like,*
> *we used to do it like every Sunday, but now it's like once a month or whatever.*
> *Which is kind of hard because I'm really close to my dad. [crying]*

Adolescent Coping Response

The majority of adolescents reported feeling a combination of anxiety, fear, sadness, uncertainty, confusion, and anger about their experience with their at-home caregiver over the course of parental deployment. Adolescents' responses to deployment were encompassed within the following coping themes: distress, confusion, protecting self and parent, turning inward, taking responsibility, censoring, seeking other supports, and adjustment difficulties. These coping themes are outlined below.

Distress

Adolescents reported deployment had an emotional impact on them. They reported experiencing sadness, anxiety, fear, and uncertainty. The source of their distress that they cited most frequently was concern for both their parents' well-being. Being separated from their deployed parent was difficult they reported because they lost the support of this parent and because they were worried for their safety. Adolescents reported that witnessing their parents' distress was unsettling for them. Again, they reported this made them afraid for both their parents.

> *Jacob: My mom gets sad more often [during deployment]. It's just really hard to see her cry like that and I really don't want to see her like that again . . . And I don't want to go through [deployment] again either.*

Adolescent distress was both manifested physically, via tears, and reported verbally during the focus groups. Although each adolescent had experienced at least one full cycle of deployment, (i.e., their deployed parent had returned home), many continued to express strong emotions about their experience of their parents as they reflected back on their experience over the course of parental deployment. A number of adolescents

cried as they spoke about their experience, and a smaller group seemed to still feel

resentment regarding their experience of parental deployment.

> *Bethany: Well, my sister, she tried to be my parent, and it kind of, and it kind of*
>
> *didn't work. That made us not get along anymore because it kind of made me*
>
> *upset. [crying] . . . Because she tried to act like my parent, and I felt real bad for*
>
> *my mom. [crying] . . . I don't know why . . . Well, I knew my mom was trying to be*
>
> *there for us all the time, and [crying].*

Confusion

When adolescents reported their deployed parent told them not to worry, or that

the deployed parent was not in danger, adolescents reported struggling due to their own

thoughts and feelings which contradicted this message. On the one hand, adolescents

said that they knew deploying to a combat zone was dangerous and that this belief was

reinforced by media images portraying the dangers of deployment; on the other hand, the

deploying parent frequently told them not to worry about their safety and that deployment

was a positive experience.

> *Trey: Like there was one time I was talking to [my dad], and he was, like, I've got*
>
> *a new roommate, I'm like, oh, really? He's like, yeah, a gecko is rooming with me.*
>
> *It's just funny because we know that when they are not on the phone with us we*
>
> *know what they are going through and then they turn around and they are just all*
>
> *good like nothing is happening, and it's one of those feelings where you're like,*
>
> *okay, I know what's going on, but I wonder if it's not as bad as what we see on the*
>
> *news.*

Adolescents juxtaposed their parent's directives and accounts with what they saw on their parent's faces at home and during webcam chats. Adolescents reported they were confused by the disparity in what both of their parents said and what they knew to be true.

Dominique: I'll be what are you doing? [My dad will] be like just working. He can't like tell us nothing so it's hard not knowing what he's doing and if he's really okay or not . . . Yeah, are you okay? He'll be like, yeah, I'm fine, but I know he's really not because like the little web cam thing you can see his face, and he wasn't liking it.

Some adolescents reported faulting their parents for not realizing that they were aware of this incongruity.

Trevor: Even at that young of age you can realize what's going on.

Although by adolescent report most parents attempted to hide their distress, adolescents stated they were nonetheless aware of what their parent was experiencing.

Bethany: Uhm, but sometimes my mom would just sit there, and I knew she was thinking about it, and she'd just cry in the bathroom. [crying]

Adolescents reported they were worried about their deployed parent's safety and their at-home parent's emotional adjustment, despite their parents' instructions to them and insistences of safety.

Protecting Self and Parent

For the larger group of adolescents who reported they experienced their parents as more distressed than before parental deployment, withdrawal from their parents seemed to be just one part of a broader process of adaptation. The majority of the adolescents

who perceived that their parents were distressed withdrew from them, i.e., they did not

seek them for support. It is important to note that this withdrawal occurred despite their

reported wish to be able to turn to their parents for help, or expectation held prior to

parental deployment that they could turn to their parents for support. One adolescent

who reported his at-home parent cried when he tried to talk to her about deployment

described his response:

> *Trey: No, I totally separated from my mom, and I actually called my dad and*
>
> *would talk to my dad every time I could. Every time I got a chance I talked to him*
>
> *to see how he was doing.*

One group of adolescents made attempts to seek support from their at-home

parent before withdrawing. Part of this group reported their attempts to seek support

from their parent were unsatisfactory, and so withdrew from them because of a lack of

other options.

> *Patricia: I usually have people to talk to, but while he was gone, they weren't*
>
> *really there.… I usually talk to my family but I couldn't talk to my dad because he*
>
> *was on a whole separate continent. My sister, she was a lot older than me so she*
>
> *understood more. And she was very quick to anger while he was gone. So of*
>
> *course she ended up yelling at me which would just make it worse. My mom was*
>
> *never available because she was always working or in school or studying. My*
>
> *grand dad was like ancient, so he just slept most of the time. So and I tried to go*
>
> *to friends, but I just, we had just moved there like a year ago, so I hadn't made, I*
>
> *hadn't developed a really good relationship with any friends yet. So I really didn't*
>
> *have anyone to talk to.*

Many adolescents reported they withdrew because they believed they caused their

at-home parent distress when they sought them for support.

Trevor: I didn't talk to my mom as much when my dad was gone.

Leanne: Yeah, neither did I.

Trevor: It was just too stressful to talk to them.

Trey: Because your mother would always end up crying.

Trevor: My mom took it harder than everyone. She worries so much.

Adolescents also reported that seeing their parent distressed caused them a great

deal of distress. Some of these adolescents reported they withdrew to protect themselves

from witnessing their at-home parent's distress.

Dominique: Every time they do the webcam I try not to be around or nothing

because I don't really want to see [my dad] like that.

Censoring. None of the adolescents reported they sought their deployed parent to

share their distress, despite many reporting they seek this parent for distress when they

were not deployed. When asked about this shift, these adolescents reported wanting to

protect their deployed parent from distress as well, and reported believing that causing

their deployed parent additional stress would put them in greater danger. Thus, many

adolescents indicated that they censored the information that they shared with their

deployed parent, leaving out their at-home parent's distress, negative events at home, and

their own emotional distress. For example, when asked if there were certain things that

adolescents intentionally did not discuss with their deployed parents, adolescents

reported:

Trevor: Yeah, the bad things.

Trey: Yeah. Like, I saw mom cry today again about you. I never told him that.

Trevor: Yeah, we never told my dad any bad things that were going on.

Trey: Right.

Trevor: He has to deal with everything going on over there. He doesn't need to know what's going on.

These adolescents also reported they censored the same sort of information when talking to their at-home parent, again because of a desire not to cause their parent further distress.

Trey: Yeah. Never brought the dad up. Just how school went and what you did and then she'd usually, I talked to your father today and then you'd change the subject as fast as you could.

Turning inward. Adolescents demonstrated during the interview that they were still processing the experience of deployment. They discussed turning inward during deployment to ponder their relationship with their parents and their parents' adjustment to deployment. The detail of adolescents' statements clearly indicated they were vigilant with regards to their parents' behavior as a method of coping with the distress of their at-home parent. Adolescents reported that they thought about what they could share with their parents without causing them further distress, and modified their behavior accordingly. A large number of adolescents demonstrated that they were still trying to understand the process of what had occurred during deployment. They seemed to be trying to work out why their parents behaved the way they did and what role they played or should play in response. As this adolescent demonstrates, she is still confused and still in the process of figuring out the changes in her at-home parent:

Dominique: And when, like, when he gets home or whatever, she's just, like, I don't know, she like moves more or something. I don't know. Just it's different from the day he, like, starts, you have to have [INDISCERNIBLE], like, she worries more that day about the planes and all of that.

Taking responsibility. Many adolescents seemed to take responsibility for both parents' emotional health by protecting them from the distress the adolescents were experiencing during deployment. They did this by taking responsibility for their parent's behavior, using "we" in their descriptions of parent behavior, taking on an expanded role and additional responsibilities at home, defending their parent to others, or actively attempting to soothe their parents or siblings. Some adolescents seemed to take responsibility by excusing their parents' unsupportive behavior. This adolescent reported her at-home parent became distant during deployment, and then here seems to defend or pardon her actions:

Dominique: It's okay because I understand what she's going through because we've been through it so much and I don't feel like talking that much either because you don't want to just like, sometimes you just don't feel like it when your dad's not there. So, when she leaves, when she doesn't want to talk to us or something or she feels like talking to her friends or sleep in or something because she don't want to talk about it, I just leave her alone.

Many adolescents seemed to blame themselves for changes at home. This was demonstrated by a group of adolescents who used "we" when discussing their relationship with their parent. While it was clear from their statement that "we" really

referred to the parent, these adolescents used language which indicated they were both responsible, taking the blame off the parent.

> *Stacy: Yeah, uhm, I think I remember it was hard to cope with it because my mom had just started nursing school and so we didn't really have time for each other she was working and homework. I think one of the ways I coped is I wrote a letter to my dad every single night.*

Using "we" also seemed to be these adolescents' way of elevating themselves to the level of co-parent, in their own internal representations of their relationship. It also seemed to be their way of indicating they and their parent presented a united front in response to stressors.

> *Samantha: I know what Tara means about everything gone wrong because it did, and this next time if he deploys again, we won't have to worry about anything because we replaced everything while he was gone. [laughter] Our hot water heater busted . . . I had a fender bender . . . I blew out one of my tires. Everything like that. We waited until after he got home to tell him about all this stuff. So, uhm, everything that went, could have went wrong, went wrong, but that's another thing. Me and my mom, we handled it, you know, when we didn't have time to cut the grass, we just didn't cut the grass. [laughter] When we didn't have time to do this or that, we just didn't do it, you know?*

Most adolescents reported they responded to the stress of parental deployment by taking direct action, in addition to withdrawing (i.e., choosing not seek support) from their parents. Whether parents explicitly asked their adolescent to take on more responsibility during deployment varied, according to adolescents. A group of

adolescents reported they became the support for their siblings, and began to feel

responsible for supporting these siblings during deployment.

> *Alexis: Well, when he was deployed, I felt very insecure, and I didn't really know*
>
> *how to deal with it and then ever since then I try to suck it up for my brother and*
>
> *I've just became a very talkative person so it's not that great. . . . I feel sometimes*
>
> *like if I need to lend someone a hand, it's mostly my brother. I probably shouldn't*
>
> *say that because it's confidential I guess you could say, but he's really shy and*
>
> *sometimes he'll come to me for advice and I'll just try my best to help him even*
>
> *though I haven't experienced as much stuff as he likes to think I did, but.*

Most adolescents reported that they took on more chores or responsibility during

deployment in order to help their family, regardless of their at-home parent's behavior.

When adolescents reported they felt confident they could take on the extra

responsibilities successfully, they did not report distress. However, some adolescents

reported they were concerned about their ability to handle the responsibilities that were

assigned to them by their parents.

> *Trey: My dad, my brother was too young . . . he was just about one, around that*
>
> *age, and so my dad really all he said was I'm leaving it up to you, you need to*
>
> *take care of them, take care of your mother and your brother. Which, uhm, which*
>
> *kind of I know he had that respect, but I didn't know he would ever drop it on me,*
>
> *with kind of gave me that good, but bad feeling like yippee, oh, crap.*

Additionally, two adolescents took on the role of actively soothing their at-home

parent's distress or helping them cope with their distress, but these adolescents indicated

they had performed this function in their relationship prior to deployment.

Samantha: We kept in touch with him and when my mom finally got over the fact

that you don't have to sit at home waiting for him to call, that you can just Instant

Message him then we were good. I mean because I think that was the hardest part

for her because she always wanted to be home just in case he called. I was, like,

mom, you can't sit at home and wait and wait and wait. You've got to do

something and you've got to get out of here.

Several adolescents reported defending their deployed parent's actions in the

military to their peers. They reported feeling anger over the way the wars and the Service

members were characterized by the media and by their peers. These adolescents reported

they responded by fighting with others, by throwing the remote at the television, by

avoiding media reports about the way all together, or by avoiding telling their peers that

their parent was deployed. Adolescents reported they were very proud of their deployed

parents and believed in the work they were doing in the military.

Trey: Every day at school someone would always say, oh, your dad's not doing

anything over there. He's just sitting around killing innocent people, and almost

every day I'd get in a fistfight, and it just kind of hit me hard because I took it to

military camp and just took it out on all of them . . . I always used to be able to

walk into the school with a strong head knowing that my dad is doing the right

thing, that he is fighting for my freedom and that he will defend me at any cost . . .

Because the bad thing about the news is all they say is, oh, four Iraqis killed by

U.S. soldiers or something like that, but over the time my dad was gone he built

12 schools, brought power to ten places that have never seen it before.

Seeking Other Supports

The majority of adolescents responded to changes at home during parental deployment by seeking out others, though their perception of the success of these efforts varied. Adolescents reported they sought out others for support especially when they perceived their at-home parent was less available to them, although this phenomenon was common regardless of the adjustment of the at-home parent. Key to determining who adolescents turned to seemed to be the adolescent's perception of who was available to them, and who shared their experience.

There were a variety of individuals to whom adolescents reached out. Adolescents frequently mentioned turning to their peers for support and reported they felt their peers could relate to them in a different way than their parents could. By adolescent report, older adolescent friends were frequently sought. Other adolescents who had experienced military life or parental deployment were reported as being especially helpful because of their shared understanding of the experience of parental deployment or military family life.

> *Jacob: I went to a friend. He's like 18 right now, and he's done it, his dad has actually deployed four times, and I would used to go to him for, you know, support and all of that and it was cool because we'd actually go out, you know, to the baseball park or something. You know, he helps me out like how should I talk to my dad when he gets back, you know, kind of stuff because, you know, he's been away for a while.*

Because of the nature of the sample, each adolescent had attended OMK camp and many had attended other camps and programs additionally. Adolescents

overwhelmingly reported being in an environment with other adolescents who shared their experience was relieving to them.

> *Bethany: Oh, my gosh. I love being here, with her definitely and all my friends because they know what you've been through, and it's like you don't even need to talk about it because you know that they know, you know?*

A few adolescents reported turning to older siblings, or to adults outside their immediate family, such as grandparents.

> *Aubrey: My brother and I, we weren't really close because he's four years older than I am, but he kind of gave up some stuff that he really liked to do in order to watch me, and so we became really close.*

Adolescents mentioned seeking out these individuals and feeling supported by them especially when they shared military experience; they reported these individuals could advise them and understand their experience.

Many adolescents coped with changes in their at-home parent's availability by turning to their pets. Adolescents reported they felt their pets could sense when they felt badly, would listen to them, and would make them feel better. These adolescents also advised other adolescents to seek their pets for support. Below, adolescent discuss seeking their pets in response to feeling sad or scared:

> *Carol: I really didn't go to anybody. I went to my dog. [laughter] . . . I'd sit on my bed and talk to my dog . . . Yeah, he can't talk back.*
>
> *Trey: And he will listen.*
>
> *Carol: Sometimes he can make me feel sad.*
>
> *Trey: And they actually look like they are listening.*

Carol: He understands kind of.

Michael: When you are sad or whatever, like it's weird how your pets know.

Interviewer: SO, DID YOU TALK TO YOUR PETS WHEN YOU WERE

FEELING SAD OR SCARED? . . .

Trey: I kept it to myself or my cat because he always, uhm, he just come and

actually when I was feeling sad or crying or anything like that, he would come up

and start purring and giving kisses.

In some cases, adolescents reported their deploying parents left them with an object of significance (e.g., a stuffed animal, a locket, etc.). These adolescents reported that these objects helped them to cope with distress because they reminded them of their deployed parent.

Trey: My dad left me a stuffed animal that you pushed the ear and it would say

something. He cut the wires so you couldn't over record it unless you put those

wires apart and then it erased it. But, uhm, what it said is my name and then it

said I miss you, I'll be home soon, I love you. That's what he left me with, and I

never had it leave my side except for when I went to school.

Although many adolescents sought school friends for support, they also frequently reported that their experiences with other adolescents at school were not supportive. They reported they felt these adolescents didn't understand their experience, and so did not continue to share with their classmates. Most adolescents reported they were careful in their decisions of who to share their experience with, either because they did not expect universal support and understanding, or because they did not want to make others feel badly and they did not want sympathy from others.

DeDe: School is awful. Because like [deployment] was always over a school year or whatever, and so like I'd tell my closest friends and maybe a couple of teachers, but I have to be careful who I tell because I don't want everybody knowing because then everybody is going to be like, oh, feeling sad or whatever and then there's times when I just had a break down in the middle of school and everybody is like, 'What's wrong?' And you want to tell them, but you can't because you think they're going to say, 'Oh, I know how you feel,' but really they don't unless they've been through it before and they haven't. [crying]

A few adolescents reported that schoolmates derided them or refused to believe they were experiencing parental deployment.

Aubrey: My friends don't support me in anything. They don't believe me. Like, I tried telling them when my mom left. And they were like, 'No, you're just saying that for attention.'

Adjustment Difficulties

A group of adolescents reported they experienced adjustment problems during deployment. Adolescents consistently connected these problems to the experience of parental deployment, and often directly to the lack of availability and adjustment difficulties of their at-home parent.

Patricia: She had to study all night and me and my sister both had a lot of trouble focusing on school. [My sister and I] both had to see counselors.

In particular, adolescents described experiencing problems at school, including fighting with their peers and dropping grades.

Carol: Me and mom like, every time we got on the phone it was a constant argue like every, we couldn't have a single conversation . . . It was harder than I expected it to be. Like, graders were dropping, social life with my family was getting harder, and then it just went downhill.

Reintegration

The reintegration phase of the deployment cycle begins when the Service member returns home. After a year or so of absence and changes occurring in the family, reintegrating the Service member parent can pose difficulties for families. Adolescents reported numerous adjustments and changes during this phase which will be discussed in this section. Adolescents reported experiencing a joyful reunion that was quickly accompanied by their parents' denial of the reality of changes that had occurred for each family member. Adolescents also reported many changes in their deployed parent. Adolescents reported responding to both their parents' denial of reintegration issues with frustration, and responding to changes in their Service member parent with feelings of distress and by attempting to protect this parent. Adolescents indicated these effects were still present in their families at the time of the focus groups.

Parent Behavior

Joyful reunion and high expectations. Many adolescents reported their at-home parents' mood changed after the Service member parent returned home. The majority of these adolescents reported that post-deployment, their at-home parent was happier, more energetic, or more like the parent the adolescents were used to before the deployment.

Dominique: When he comes back, my mom usually has more, she's usually more enthusiastic about things. And she likes to do more things like if she knows he's

coming back, like, in a week or so she'll do more stuff with us because she knows

he's going to be back soon. And when, like, when he gets home or whatever, she's

just, like, I don't know, she like moves more or something. I don't know. But when

he gets home, she is like, I won't say nothing changes, but, like, the mood changes

. . . it changes a lot, like when he gets back it's like, I don't know, it's like the

house peaks up or something. It's like everything is so smooth again. It slows

down when he leaves.

These adolescents also reported they felt like their parent and their relationships

were "back to normal."

Jacob: Yeah, when [my deployed parent] comes back, everything is back to

normal. It's a lot more fun.

Brandi: She'll sleep for three days and become completely normal again.

While the majority of adolescents reported a period of family cohesiveness

following deployment, they also reported these changes did not last.

Trevor: My dad shows more emotion, well, did when he first got home . . . My dad

seems more family oriented . . . The first year he was home. Before he left, he'd

work 60, 80 hours a week and then when he got home, he'd work 40 hours a week,

but now after being home for three years, he's back at the office until nine o'clock

every night.

Changing moods and behaviors. The majority of adolescents reported their

Service member parent exhibited changes in their behaviors and affect after their return

home from deployment.

> *Patricia: When my dad came home, we had to adjust to him being home and my dad has always been funny and goofy, but when he first came home he was really serious, and we didn't know why. It was like if something happened, we didn't know.*

These adolescents reported they perceived their Service member parent was more depressed, more serious, or simply that they acted strangely. These adolescents also reported their Service member parent withdrew from them and from the family. This adolescent reported her Service member parent withdrew physically following his return home:

> *Dominique: When my dad gets back, it's like the first month or so there's like this dazed where he can't get with it because he's used to being over there like where all the battlefields so he's not used to be around his kids and stuff. He just like looks rough and he looks like he's been through a lot and last time he deployed and came back he had a shooting game and he would sit on the computer and play that like all day. That's what he was used to and usually that's how it goes the first month . . . You would just see like this blank look in his eye. Usually he has a lot of emotion in his face.*

Additionally, many adolescents reported their Service member parent withdrew emotionally post-deployment:

> *Leanne: He wasn't there . . . Emotionally.*

> *Discussing deployment.* Many adolescents reported this parent did not discuss these changes or the experience of deployment.

Stacy: It was hard, I mean the first feeling I had was he's home, you know, and everything's going to be great. And then it just sort of got awkward and I mean he doesn't talk about it. He, to this day the only thing he mentions how frustrated he is with the world . . . and [how] people don't appreciate it.

A few adolescents reported their Service member parent did talk about their experience of deployment; however, adolescents reported these parents shared their negative experiences instead of discussing the experience as a whole.

Kesha: And he wouldn't tell us why for the longest time, but he just told me a couple of weeks ago that it's just because of the stuff he saw over there he'll never get out of his mind. He said he can't listen to certain songs anymore because when he was like, fighting, he was a lot more serious, he got put on a lot of depression medicine and talked to a lot of counselors. He figured out who his real friends were, they had his back the whole time.

Changing interactions. A few adolescents did not think their parents' behavior changed following deployment (i.e., the increased distress they exhibited during deployment did not abate).

Carol: Yeah, during deployment, but even like now still it's hard to keep a solid conversation with my mom without arguing. She's so still stressed.

Some adolescents reported they saw an increase in conflict between their parents. Usually adolescents reported they believed this conflict resulted from challenges reintegrating the Service member parent into the family. Adolescents reported that frequently, their Service member parent did not acknowledge that changes had occurred in the family (e.g., changes in roles, responsibilities, adolescent's privileges, and

adolescent's maturation). Adolescents believed that the expectation of their Service member parent was that things would be the same upon their return home, while they and their at-home parents expected the Service member parent to easily adjust to the changes that had occurred in the family. Adolescents reported this caused conflict and frustration for the whole family.

> *Trevor: When my dad first got back, my mom's lifestyle had changed since he had been gone because she was so much more lackadaisical with me being out. When my dad got home, my parents fought a lot just because of the differences because my dad, like being overseas with the Army for 15 months, he lived that strict life and that's what he tried to bring home, and my mom wasn't putting up with it.*

In contrast, many adolescents also perceived that their at-home parent "clung" to their Service member parent post-deployment.

> *Michael: My mom was very clingy to [my dad].*

Adolescent Coping Response

Adolescents reported continued anxiety during this phase. They responded to this phase in similar ways to their responses in previous phases. Again, when their expectations for what this phase of the deployment cycle would involve were not realized, they had difficulty coping. Again, they seemed to be very concerned for their parents' emotional and physical well-being. Notably, the after-effects of deployment still seemed to play a role in adolescents' current emotions and behaviors. Themes included: distance and closeness, protecting self and deployed parent, and long-lasting effects.

Closeness and distance. When adolescents reported their at-home parents became more joyful or more like themselves post-deployment, they reported feeling happiness

and relief that things were returning to "normal." All adolescents reported that this joyful period was quickly followed by their own realization of the challenges that reintegrating their Service member parent would involve.

> *Alexis: Uhm, when my father returned home, it felt like we were all rejoicing. We were so happy. And then after a couple of days it had sunk in that he was home to stay and it seems so different because we had all, you know, like a year children mature so much or become different and it wasn't the same and then it took a while to get used to it until we got back to our current relationship.*

Adolescents' most frequent complaint was that their Service member parent seemed not to recognize their personal growth and maturation that had occurred over the past year or so; they reported feeling very frustrated with the way their Service member parent treated them.

> *DeDe: And when he left I thought that he was, like, I thought my parents were getting a divorce and like all of a sudden this guy comes back and I'm like, I guess I kind of forgot him, which I feel kind of bad for, but then things got adjusted and then he left again when I was nine, and I was like, 'Okay." And me and mom had like changed everything to make it easier for us to work, and he came back and it's like he tried to make it look like nothing, like he had never left, but he really did and everything and everybody had changed even him. And he tried to make it like he didn't. So, I would get yelled at for not doing something. It was like, 'Well, it's not what I'm supposed to do, I'm supposed to do this,' and it took a while for adjusting, and I guess the same thing is going to happen again.*

Protecting self and the Service member parent. Perceived changes in the Service member parent's behavior and emotional state seemed to cause distress for adolescents who reported not understanding the cause of these changes. They reported they feared for their parent's health. Adolescents reported they were left on their own to make sense of these changes, which they reported was stressful. Adolescents' responses demonstrated they seemed to still be in the process of trying to understand the changes they saw in their Service member parent.

> *Dominique: He still can't like tell us what he did over there so we don't know what he actually went through . . . All we know is that he went through something and it made him upset . . . And when he came back he just had like this stare like he didn't know what was going on or anything. I guess because of what happened over there, you know, it was like scary. I was scared. I didn't know what was wrong with him. I thought something had happened and he was hurt or something. But when he started coming out of it, I felt better.*

Adolescents also reported feeling discomfort interacting with their Service member parent because the changes in their deployed parent made them feel like a stranger:

> *Noah: Well, when he first got home, it was like having a complete stranger living with me.*

They reported feeling unsure of how to interact with this parent, and a group of these adolescents blamed themselves for the changes and their own uncertainty. These adolescents also connected their discomfort to feeling disconnected from their parent during deployment.

Adrienne: When [my dad] got home, I wasn't used to him being home so I was

kind of scared to be around him . . . Because I didn't see him for a while.

Stacy: Just like he seemed different. I don't know if it was that I didn't remember

or he's changed, you know, I don't know. I don't know. I was awkward in a way.

Most adolescents reported they then withdrew from this parent because they

feared their behavior would upset their Service member parent.

Patricia: I still feel a little more comfortable talking to my mom than I do my dad

because he left when I was like nine, and he came back when we were a lot older,

so he had changed a lot and we had changed a lot and we didn't know if we said

something that we could have said back then but it might not be okay now.

Because we didn't know if he was having problems or something. And we didn't

find out that he had had to see a counselor until like a year after. Because he

didn't want us to know.

However, a few adolescents reported they clung to their Service member parent

following their return, indicating they felt continued anxiety for their safety. These

adolescents were also adolescents who characterized their Service member parent as

supportive prior to deployment.

Trey: Yeah, [my dad] called me a tick.

A few adolescents reported feeling mostly comfortable with their Service member

parent during this phase. They attributed their comfort to the fact that they felt as though

they had stayed connected to this parent during deployment, and did not feel this parent

had changed.

Samantha: Well, you know, everyone, the part that scared me the most was that everyone said they are so different when they come back, but he wasn't, you know, he still had his little sarcastic sense of humor on MSN even though I mean, you know, he didn't say it, but, like, you could sense it in his voice and you sit there and imagine exactly how he sounded when he said it, so I mean I think that it helped a lot that we were able to communicate so much because we still had that connection, so we never lost touch and it's important to have at least a little bit so that you can make sure your relationship is still going fine, and I know that he loves me and he's always going to be there for me.

Long-lasting effects. After a period of adjustment, a majority of adolescents reported that both parents' behaviors eventually returned to "normal," or resumed the behaviors characteristic of them prior to deployment. However, the majority of this group continued to exhibit distress and reported they continued to utilize the coping strategies they had adapted during deployment in their relationship with their at-home parent. It should be noted that while all adolescents had experienced at least one full cycle of deployment, several reported their parents were currently deployed for an additional tour of duty.

Below, an adolescent discusses still not feeling close to his at-home parent (his mother) and still feeling anxious to know that his Service member parent (his father) is available to him. Earlier in the focus group he had described withdrawing from his relationship with his mother, who he perceived as more stressed during deployment.

Trey: No, I'm still not [close to my mom]. I still like to be with my dad and be, I

like to know that he's still there and I can still talk to him that night, and I wasn't

looking, uhm, looking for that half-mast flag.

Some adolescents reported their behavior changed after their deployed parent

returned home. It seemed these adolescents were also returning to the pattern of behavior

they had exhibited prior to deployment.

Dominique: Uhm, I usually talk more when he comes back, and my mom doesn't

like that that much, but oh well.

However, while some adolescents' behaviors may have returned to normal, all

adolescents seemed to maintain a feeling of insecurity in their relationships or a changed

pattern of behavior as a result of parental deployment.

Stacy: He would go back to work, he worked 24 hours and just disappeared I

remember before he would go I remembered crying. Afraid he wouldn't come

back.

The Deployment Cycle: Relationship Instability or Stable Lack of Support

Adolescents gave varying reports on their perception of the quality of their

relationship with their parents over the course of deployment. However, the

overwhelming majority of adolescents reported that their relationship with both of their

parents worsened during deployment. A very small number of adolescents reported their

relationships with their parents were stable, in that they could not depend on this parent

prior to, during, or after deployment. One adolescent reported her relationship with her

at-home parent improved during deployment but returned to baseline following

reintegration, thus reporting she could not depend on this parent prior to or following

deployment. Adolescents reported they struggled a great deal to adapt their coping strategies to changes in their relationships with their parents.

Parent Behavior

The majority of adolescents reported worsening relationships with both their parents. Adolescents reported worsening relationships involved a loss of connection to their parents, as well as their observation that their parents were having difficulty adjusting to deployment and appeared more distressed than the adolescent had been used to prior to deployment.

> *Carol: [My mom is] still so stressed about [deployment] and she's also in school, and her parents were living with her, and she also had her husband and daughter gone so it was really hard for her. So we didn't really talk as much as I thought we would [during deployment].*

A minority of adolescents reported their parents' behaviors, and their relationship with their parents, did not change during deployment. However, these adolescents each reported relationships in which they did not depend on their parents prior to deployment, and continued not to depend on their parents during deployment. One adolescent reported her relationship with her at-home parent improved during deployment; thus she reported her family was more connected during deployment than they were prior to or following deployment.

Adolescent Coping Response

Each adolescent reported distress as a result of parental deployment. However, when adolescents reported their parents' behaviors and their relationship with their parent changed over the course of parental deployment, they seemed to report more distress than

adolescents who reported stable relationships (i.e., their perception of their parents as unavailable to them did not change). The adolescents who perceived changes in their parents reported a great deal of internal conflict regarding what their response should be to these changes.

> *Trey: And it just all the stress and trying to cope with it.*

Some adolescents reported that they tried to use the same methods of coping, but that they did not work in the way they had previously, (i.e., their parent did not respond to them in a supportive way). These adolescents then reported having to figure out how to cope in a different way.

> *Dominique: I used to go to like my mom or my grandma to talk to them, but like I saw that I started making them like sadder when I started crying or something. So, I just started like talking to myself or I'll talk to like one of my friends. They wouldn't know what to say because they didn't know so I just keep it in and getting over it. I don't talk to my mom about him being deployed or nothing no more.*

The majority of adolescents made the choice initially to change their coping strategy, and reported this change was motivated by their desire not to cause their parents additional distress. Adolescents overwhelmingly reported that they wanted to seek their at-home parents in response to their own distress surrounding deployment and other issues, but either gave up trying, or just did not try at all to seek their parents for support.
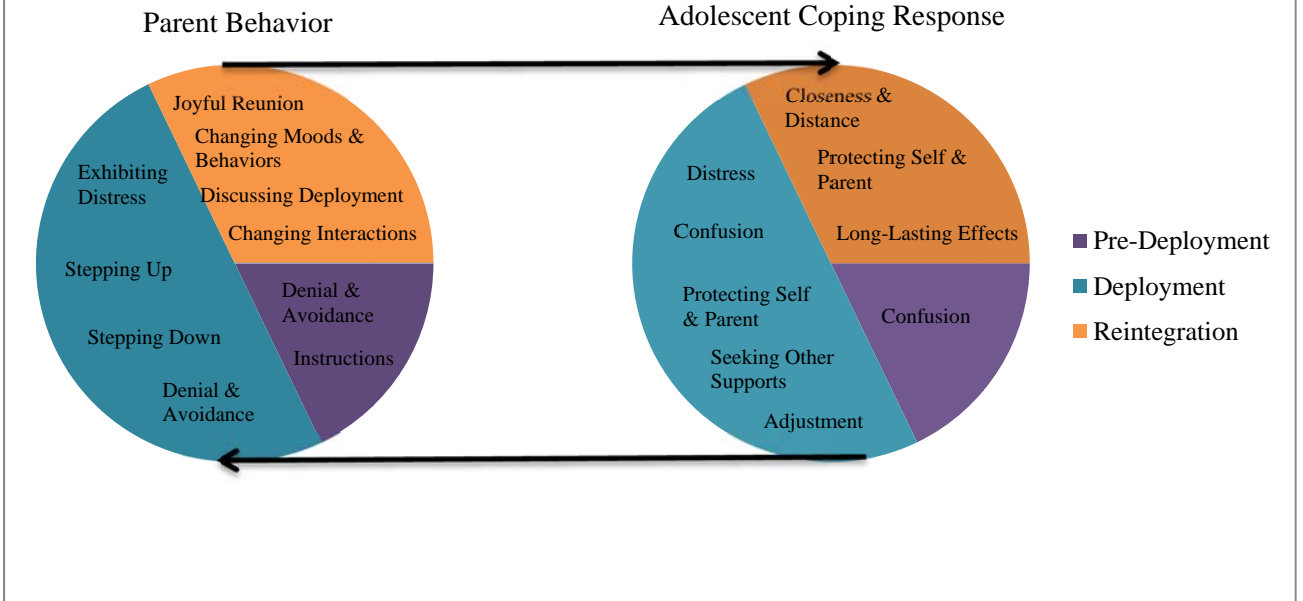
> *DeDe: [crying] So, I always had to stay at my grandmother's house on the weekends instead of with [my mom] which is where I wanted to be, but she couldn't do anything. She couldn't take me [with her to work], and it really hurt. And I couldn't tell anybody about it because it was just hard because it seemed*

like nobody understood . . . Even if I did try to tell her, she would try to

understand, but then it's like, so instead she would just take me along with her,

but instead of hanging out, I became like her assistant or whatever [which was

not really helpful].

Summary of the Findings

In summary, as illustrated in Figure 1 below (also available in Appendix B), it

appears as though adolescents' coping behaviors are influenced by their perception of

their parents' behavior. For example, according to adolescents, during the pre-

deployment phase, parents' behaviors could be characterized by denial and avoidance of

the reality of the situation, which in turn prompted confusion in the adolescents. During

the deployment phase, parents exhibited distress, continued to deny and avoid the reality

of the deployment, and exhibited a pattern of stepping up and stepping down from their

parental role; these behaviors seemed to prompt adolescent distress, confusion, behaviors

to protect themselves or their parents, seeking out other supports, and led to difficulties in

adjustment. During the reintegration phase, parents exhibited joy upon reunion, changing

moods and behaviors, changing patterns of interaction, and discussed deployment with

adolescents, who responded with behavioral patterns of closeness and distance, behaviors

to protect themselves or their parents, and effects which appeared to be long-lasting. Of

course, given the cross-sectional nature of the data, and the fact that this model is based

on the adolescent's recollection and perception of their parents' behavior, it may be the

case that the adolescents' behaviors prompted the behaviors of their parents. In other

words, causality may be bidirectional. Nonetheless, this model represents the interaction

as perceived by the adolescents.

Figure 1: Parent-Adolescent Interaction
At-Home Parent & Deployed Parent Behavior Interacts with Adolescent Coping

Parent Behavior

Adolescent Coping Response

Parent Behavior pie chart labels:
- Joyful Reunion
- Changing Moods & Behaviors
- Discussing Deployment
- Changing Interactions
- Exhibiting Distress
- Stepping Up
- Stepping Down
- Denial & Avoidance
- Denial & Avoidance
- Instructions

Adolescent Coping Response pie chart labels:
- Closeness & Distance
- Protecting Self & Parent
- Distress
- Confusion
- Long-Lasting Effects
- Protecting Self & Parent
- Confusion
- Seeking Other Supports
- Adjustment

Legend:
- Pre-Deployment
- Deployment
- Reintegration

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

During qualitative analysis, many themes emerged which elucidated the interactive processes that adolescents reported occurred in their relationships with their parents over the course of deployment. These findings will be interpreted using the framework of Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1969/1982), which provides an explanatory model for the factors underlying the processes observed in parent-adolescent relationships. This chapter will provide further discussion of these findings, the limitations of this study, the clinical implications, and finally, suggested areas of future research.

Further Discussion of the Findings

The findings from this study suggest an interactive process between parents and adolescents in their adjustment to parental deployment. The reports provided by adolescents clearly indicated their perception that they reacted to the changes they observed in their parents by adopting new coping strategies. Bowlby (1969/1982) described that the attachment behaviors exhibited by individuals, designed to achieve proximity to a caregiver, are flexible and change based on the response of the caregiver. In other words, attachment behaviors follow the principle of "goal-correction": over time and through trial and error, children learn the most effective ways to stay close to their caregivers, or to achieve their caregivers' attention in times of stress.

Underlying Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1969/1982) are the tenets of Systems Theory, which posits that systems are interdependent with each member influencing the other (Whitchurch & Constantine, 1993). According to Attachment Theory, adolescents in this study could be seen as trying to change their coping strategies because their family

system had changed; their former strategies could no longer be relied on to maintain an acceptable level of closeness to their parents. As illustrated in Figure 1 (available on p. 72 and in Appendix B), adolescent reports reveal their response to changes they perceived in their caregivers, and it must be assumed that their response in turn influenced their caregivers.

<div align="center">*Parent Behavior*</div>

The majority of adolescents reported they observed that their at-home parents had a great deal of difficulty adjusting to deployment over the course of the deployment cycle. Commensurate with the literature, these parents faced an increase in tasks and responsibilities and experienced increased distress (Lester et al., 2010). Themes of parent behavior during deployment that will be explored are: withdrawing, avoidance and denial, and reintegration challenges.

Relationship Changes and Parental Withdrawal

Adolescents' parents did not seem able to respond to requests for support from their adolescents in a way adolescents found satisfying. Some adolescents did make requests of their parents, such as bids for support or requests for changes, but according to the adolescents' reports, their at-home parents seemed to be too overwhelmed to respond as they would have prior to deployment.   Interpreting this interaction through the lens of Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1969/1982) might suggest that as these relationships had previously been successful "goal-corrected partnerships," (Bowlby, 1969), in which parents and adolescents worked together to adjust to the adolescent's evolving needs and maintain a strong relationship; however, over the course of the

deployment cycle, it seemed adolescents could no longer count on their parents to adjust

to their needs.

Parental deployment, as a stressful event, could possibly lead to dysregulation in

caregivers. Dysregulated caregivers describe themselves as overwhelmed by fears about

themselves and for their children; they report feeling helpless to care for or protect their

children (George & Solomon, 2008). Dysregulation may lead to constricted caregiving

and an "abdication of care" (George & Solomon, 2008, p.846), in which caregivers

remove themselves from caregiving situations in order to prevent from breaking down,

leaving their children in distress. This provides a plausible explanation for the parent

withdrawal adolescents reported. Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1969/1982) and

empirical research suggest that parental sensitivity, or attunement, to adolescents is the

most important predictor of a secure attachment relationship (Allen et al., 2003). In fact,

as opposed to maternal attunement, maternal insensitivity has been found to be associated

with higher rates of family stress, maternal depression, and lower levels of social support,

(Belsky & Fearon, 2002), all possible effects of parental deployment.

Avoidance and Denial

Adolescents reported both their parents avoided the topic of deployment and

denied the reality of deployment over the course of the deployment cycle, possibly in

response to the traumatic nature of the experience. Adolescents reported that although

both their parents tried to hide their distress, they were nonetheless aware of it. It may be

that these parents perceived that they were protecting their children by hiding their

distress and by denying the true danger combat deployments involve. In addition, by

avoiding conversations about deployment, parents may have been attempting to protect

themselves from acknowledging their own distress. In fact, literature on caregivers

reveals that in the face of trauma, caregivers may engage in cognitive defensive

processes, like denial, in order to maintain a steady attachment representation that can

only be achieved by blocking out painful thoughts or emotions (George & Solomon,

2008). Adolescents did not indicate their at-home parents were aware of or responsive to

the distress they experienced in response to deployment and their parents' behaviors.

Reintegration Challenges

Many adolescents reported changes in their deployed parent after their return

home. The behavioral and emotional changes reported by adolescents seemed indicative

of mental health problems that deploying Service members are at risk of developing, such

as depression, generalized anxiety, and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD; Hoge et

al., 2004). Research has shown that PTSD is associated with poorer parenting practices

and disruptions in the parent-child relationship (Haley, 1984). Adolescents in this study

reported their Service member parents withdrew following their return, thus disrupting

their relationship or preventing the renewal of the relationship. Attachment theorists

might suggest that adolescents would experience this withdrawal as rejection, and as

threatening to their relationship with their parent. A secure bond requires that

adolescents perceive their parents as stronger and wiser (Bowlby, 1969/1982) whereas

these adolescents reported they were experiencing their parents as stressed or upset.

In addition, parents, especially the Service member, did not seem to recognize the

passage of time and the effect this has on individuals and relationships. Adolescents had

grown older by a year, or perhaps more, and had changed themselves. They had gained

maturity, privileges, and responsibilities. Adolescence is a period of profound cognitive

changes, as well as transformations in the attachment system, all of which are enabled by a secure attachment to a parent (Allen, 2008). Research has shown that fathers who are sensitive yet challenging in their support of their adolescent's exploration increase secure exploration of cognitive challenges (Grossman et al., 2008). In some cases, Service member parents seemed to continue the process of denial by not acknowledging any changes, and as a result, were not supportive of adolescents' growth and increasing autonomy. These relationships were not characterized by the process of goal-correction, which would have required parents to adjust their behavior to the evolving attachment needs of their adolescent, as well as the adolescent's increasing exploratory needs (Allen, 2008). It may be that parents hoped things would just go back to normal after the stress of the deployment separation had passed. When this did not turn out to be the case, withdrawal and conflict among family members generally resulted.

Adolescent Coping Response

Consistent with previous research findings, this study suggests that adolescent adjustment to deployment is affected by parent adjustment (Chandra et al., 2010a; Jensen et al., 1986; Jensen et al., 1996; Lester et al., 2010). Consistent with the findings of Chandra et al. (2010a), emotional and adjustment difficulties reported by adolescents seemed to be associated with poorer parent adjustment. These findings also support findings of research on attachment, which has found that caregiver behaviors are the most important contributing factor to the attachment relationship (George & Solomon, 2008).

Response to Parental Distress

It seemed as though adolescents' perception of their at-home parent's distress was a very important determining factor in their response to parental deployment. According

to adolescents' reports, the impact of seeing their at-home parent distressed very powerfully motivated their behavior: ultimately, most adolescents did not seek their parents for support as they had previously when they reported this perception of their at-home parent's adjustment.

Their responses speak to the very tenets of Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1969/1982), which purports that a secure attachment relationship requires that individuals have confidence in the availability and responsiveness of their attachment figure in their times of need. Caregivers promote attachment security through being protective, responsive, supportive, reliably available, stronger, and wiser (Grossman et al., 2008). Attachment behaviors, such as support-seeking, are motivated in times of perceived threat, (Bowlby, 1973), and indeed, adolescents reported wanting to seek their parents for support. Adolescents reported that historically they had been able to rely on their parents for support, but they seemed to lose this confidence in their parents' ability to provide them with support as they saw their parents' functioning and responsiveness decrease and level of distress increase.

Emotional and Behavioral Response

Adolescents reported feeling a great deal of anxiety and sadness in response to deployment, which may be indicative of mental health challenges. Research has shown that in adolescence, parental deployment is associated with increased emotional difficulties, increased tearfulness, and increased symptoms of depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress (Barnes et al., 2007; Chandra et al., 2010a; Chandra et al., 2010b; Jensen et al., 1996; Rosen et al., 1993). Additionally, separation from an attachment figure has been found to correlate to physiological responses and increased stress

response (Reite & Boccia, 1994). The behavioral adjustment difficulties and worsening

academic performance reported by adolescents has also been reported by researchers and

have been associated with an insecure attachment to parent (Chandra et al., 2008; Hiew,

1992; Fearon, Bakermans-Kraneburg, Lapsley, & Roisman, 2010; Huebner & Mancini,

2005).

Response to Relationship Changes

The character of the relationships adolescents reported prior to deployment also

seemed important. Adolescents seemed most distressed by changes in their relationships

with their parents, specifically, in their ability to turn to their parent for support.

Adolescents were thus faced with the anxiety of seeing their parent upset, and then not

knowing how to cope with their own distress. The attachment literature on "internal

working models," or the cognitive representations of attachment relationships, (Bowlby,

1969/1982), can serve as a frame for understanding adolescents' response to stability and

instability. For the handful of adolescents for whom relationships remained stable, (in

that they consistently did not seek their parents for support), there seemed to be no need

for them to reevaluate their relationships or coping styles since their parents continued to

behave in the same withdrawn way to which the adolescents were accustomed. In fact,

from this perspective, one could argue that the experience of deployment may have

actually contributed to stability in their internal representation of their relationship to

their parents. Hamilton's (2000) research has shown that "negative life events"

contribute to attachment representation stability among insecurely attached adolescents;

this association may be applicable to the experience of this group of adolescents. While

this group cannot be classified as insecurely attached, this group did report not being able

to rely on their parents for support, an important characteristic of an insecure attachment style (Bowlby, 1969/1982). Research has also indicated that adolescents with insecure-dismissing attachment styles show higher stability in their attachment representation over time, possibly because this style may be adaptive during adolescence (Ammaniti et al., 2000; Main & Hesse, 1990). In this study, these adolescents simply continued to cope in the way they had coped prior to deployment, usually by withdrawing or seeking others for support, which likely contributed to this study's finding that these adolescents reported less distress than their counterparts.

For adolescents who reported unstable relationships, changes they observed in their parents suggest that they lost confidence in the availability of their parents to respond to and soothe their distress. These adolescents seemed to believe they had lost the support of both of their parents at once. The attachment literature might explain that adolescents' expectations for the responses of their parents, or internal working models, had to be reevaluated in light of the change in their perceptions of their parents' availability. Discerning another method of coping, and additionally being concerned for their parents' mental health and safety, reportedly caused a great deal of distress. Indeed, Attachment Theory might posit that these adolescents were attempting to find new ways to maintain an acceptable level of nearness to their parents, a process which is less efficient than relying on past strategies and thus can be distressing (Bowlby, 1969/1982). This type of coping (e.g., attempting to find new ways to cope) seems to reflect the idea of internal coping, defined as cognitively reflecting on solutions (Seiffge-Krenke & Beyers, 2005). Research has shown that when adolescents limit their coping style to internal coping, they are at higher risk for developing depressive symptoms (Kraaij et al.,

2003). If not balanced by an equal reliance on active coping, a reliance on internal

coping is associated with a dismissing attachment style (Seiffge-Krenke & Beyers, 2005).

In addition, parents model coping behavior to their adolescents, and when they are

unable to cope themselves, they are less likely to transmit effective coping strategies to

their children (Walsh, 2007). In the absence of a healthy model for coping with distress,

it would make sense that adolescents would struggle with affect regulation. Indeed,

attachment researchers have found a significant relationship between attachment style

and affect regulation (Reite & Boccia, 1994).

Adolescent Coping

Adolescents responded to parental deployment in a variety of ways. The

relationship between parents and adolescents is obviously interactional. However,

because this study involved adolescents' perceptions of themselves and their parents, the

model (available in Appendix B) reveals their sense of how adaptation unfolded:

adolescents' responses suggested that their coping strategies were direct reactions to

changes in their parents' behaviors and level of distress.

Some adolescents reported they immediately stopped trying to seek support from

their parents, while others tried unsuccessfully for a period of time to seek support. Once

adolescents decided that seeking support was not an option, their responses included

withdrawal and taking on responsibility.

Withdrawal seemed to be motivated by a desire to protect the self from

experiencing distress due to seeing a parent distressed, as well as to prevent the parent

from experiencing additional distress. Research on coping has shown that in response to

a stressor, insecure adolescents show higher levels of withdrawal, defined as avoidance

and distracting behavior, than secure adolescents (Seiffge-Krenke & Beyers, 2005).

Research has also shown that this type of coping puts adolescents at a higher risk for later

psychopathology (Seiffge-Krenke & Klessinger, 2000). It is also possible that

withdrawal was utilized in an effort to protect a secure attachment representation of

adolescents' relationships with their parents, given that maintaining a cognitive

representation of a parent is more efficient than updating it (Cassidy, 2008; George &

Solomon, 2008). Healthy adolescent development requires that adolescents reevaluate

their relationships with their caregivers; cognitive advances in adolescence allow

adolescents to assess their attachment relationships in a more objective way than was

possible previously, seeing each relationship as distinct from others and seeing

themselves as separate from their parents (Allen, 2008; Main 1999). It is possible this

process did not occur for adolescents who reported they withdrew from their relationships

with their parents.

Taking responsibility, on the other hand, seemed to be a way for adolescents to

gain some control over their experience. Both responses seemed to involve the

adolescent taking on a parental role, wanting to protect their parents and help them

recover. Research has shown that dysregulated caregivers, under stress, report their

children taking over caregiving responsibilities; this process is described as "role-

reversal" or "adultification" (Solomon, George, & De Jong, 1995). This may occur when

parents are overwhelmed by their own distress and their attachment system is activated,

thus leaving them unaware of the attachment needs of their children (George & Solomon,

2008). In the measurement of attachment, role-reversal is associated with a preoccupied

attachment style (Main et al., 2008). This behavior can result in adolescents becoming

mentally and emotionally entangled with their parents, thus producing stress,

undermining autonomy, and preventing adolescents from achieving the cognitive distance

they need from their parent in order to reevaluate their relationship, a crucial

developmental task of adolescence (Allen, 2008; Main 1999).

Response to Avoidance and Denial

Adolescents' confusion in response to their parents' denial about the reality of

deployment was pervasive in the transcripts. Previous research has found that the level

of psychological preparation that occurs in families predicts their ability to adapt to

deployment (Booth et al., 2007, p. 32). Psychological preparedness refers to the

adolescent's expectations for the experience of deployment (Booth et al., 2007). It

seemed that when parents did not take steps to prepare adolescents, adolescents did not

know what to expect, were confused by what occurred, and struggled to cope. While

parents may have been trying to disconnect themselves from distress, and prevent their

children from experiencing their distress, adolescents could have felt rejected and

insecure in their relationship (George & Solomon, 2008). What may have been parents'

attempts to avoid dysregulation could be conceptualized in attachment terms as the parent

withdrawing from their relationship with their adolescent (George & Solomon, 2008).

Parents play an important role in modeling healthy affect regulation strategies to their

adolescents (Walsh, 2007), but because of their withdrawal did not seem to play this role

as parents during deployment.

Response to Reintegration Challenges

Adolescents seemed to be upset by the changes they perceived in their deployed

parent following their return home, and reported withdrawing in response. Adolescents'

greatest difficulty seemed to be that they simply did not understand why their deployed

parent was behaving in the way they were, and thus did not know how to interact with

them without causing them distress. It seemed they did not recognize their parent; they

reported feeling discomfort and even fear as a reaction to perceived changes in their

deployed parent. Adolescents reported feeling fearful about their Service member

parent's mental health and did not know how to respond; thus they withdrew.

Lingering Anxiety

Adolescents were clearly still coping with anxiety and uncertainty as a result of

their experience of parental deployment. This supports the research of Waters et al.

(2000) who state that consistency in caregiving behavior is an important contributor to

attachment style stability over time. Even when their parents' behaviors had returned to

baseline, most adolescents perceived uncertainty in their future relationships. It is likely,

as some adolescents reported, that adolescents were fearful their Service member parent

would be deployed again, and that their parents would become distressed again. They

reported being unaware if, or when, their Service member parent was deployed again and

what the future held for their relationship with their parents. Thus, adolescents seemed to

continue to withdraw from their parents and experience anxiety in their relationship with

their parents.

Parental deployment clearly has implications for the attachment system, and may

represent a "negative life event," as researched by Waters et al. (2000) that may prompt a

change in attachment style. The majority of adolescents reported their attachment-related

behaviors (e.g., seeking their parent for support) changed during deployment, such that

they did not seek their parents because perceived their parent was unavailable or

unresponsive to them. While no determination can be made about the adolescents'

attachment styles, the lingering effects of deployment were clear. Months, and even

years after the parental deployment experience, adolescents still exhibited distress when

talking about deployment, still reported they withdrew from their relationships with their

parents, and still reported anxiety about their parents' adjustment. This is important

because lingering anxiety, perhaps suggestive of a lack of security in parent availability,

can prevent adolescents from accomplishing developmental tasks necessary for a

successful transition into adulthood, such as exploring their environment and achieving

mastery (Bowlby, 1973). Indeed, adolescents in this study seemed preoccupied by their

experiences at home during parental deployment and reported difficulties at school and

with peers.

Summary

In summary, as revealed by the model in Figure 1 (available on p. 72 and in

Appendix B), the findings of this study revealed a systemic process in which parents'

behavior and adolescents' coping seemed to be influencing one another over the course

of the deployment cycle. Both parents and adolescents adapted to the experience of

deployment by changing their behaviors, with each also adapting to the behavior of the

other.

Clinical Implications

The clinical implications for adolescents and military families are important to

explore given this growing segment of the population. First and foremost, this study

reveals the important role parents and parental adjustment play in adolescents'

adjustment. Adolescents are still inclined to turn to their parents for support, but by their

own report will not do so when their parent is unresponsive or seems too stressed to

respond in a helpful way to them. Clinicians should educate parents on the effect their

distress may have on adolescents' emotions and ability to cope through seeking support.

Clinicians should educate parents on the hypervigilance stance that some adolescents

adopt during times of increased stress. Even if parents try to hide their distress, there is a

likelihood their adolescents are aware. While parents revealing their distress could be

dysregulating for adolescents, clinicians can help parents present the challenges of

deployment as well as their confidence in their own abilities to continue to care for the

family. This may help adolescents feel more security in their relationships, and perhaps

lesson the need to find new ways to cope with their emotions.

Clinicians should help parents find their own support networks. Parents may feel

especially supported by other parents who have experienced deployment. Clinicians can

help parents understand that when they are better supported, they are able to provide

better care for their families. In addition, this study reveals it is likely adolescents will

notice their positive adjustment, and may feel more comfortable approaching them for

support.

Of paramount importance for clinicians and for parents is the recognition that

adolescents may not approach their parents to share their distress with them. Thus,

parents may not realize that their adolescents are struggling to cope with sadness and

anxiety. With parents and adolescents, clinicians should normalize the distress both feel.

Acknowledging the feelings of loss and sadness that can occur during each phase of

deployment can help bring families together to support one another. Clinicians can help

parents listen to and experience the emotions of their adolescents. Clinicians should then help parents respond empathically, so that adolescents feel understood and supported.

Bowlby (1969/1982) outlined the role a goal-corrected partnership can play in maintaining positivity in parent-adolescent relationships. Clinicians can help families establish a mutual goal of maintaining positivity and repairing ruptures in their relationships. It can be difficult for parents and adolescents to support both the adolescent's need for connection and need to explore. Clinicians can also aid families in goal-correcting, thus modifying their behaviors, as the needs of the adolescent shift from needing support to needing to experiment with independence. While maintaining this partnership may involve discussions which become heated or intense, families that engage in relationship-maintaining behaviors are more likely to have secure attachment relationships (Allen, 2008).

Additionally, clinicians should know that adolescents may desire their parents to be more open about the reality of the struggles involved with parental deployment. Talking about deployment is difficult for each family member, and brings up a variety of emotions; thus, the support of a clinician in this process can be beneficial. However, not talking about deployment at all causes adolescents more stress because it may be confusing for adolescents to make sense of the present or to attempt to anticipate the future.

Clinicians can help parents prepare their adolescents for the changes in roles and responsibilities during deployment. Clinicians can help parents work with their adolescents to develop ways to stay connected and ways to seek support during deployment. Rituals can be very important throughout the deployment process; they help

the adolescent prepare mentally for events in the future and help them feel connected to the family. Clinicians can help families develop rituals together for marking the different stages of deployment, and for staying connected to each other during deployment.

Clinicians should recognize that the reintegration phase can be particularly challenging for military families because expectations for an easy and joyful transition may not be met. Clinicians can also help families renegotiate roles and responsibilities in the family so as to decrease conflict. Challenges families face during this time include acknowledging the changes that have occurred in adolescents (e.g., maturation, increased privileges), as well as changes in the deployed parent as a result of their service. Adolescents are more able to seek mastery and experiment with autonomy when they feel their parents are a secure base they can return to if needed (Bowlby, 1969). Thus, clinicians can help parents and adolescents work together to communicate and negotiate more openly, in order to maintain positivity in their relationship.

Clinicians should be particularly attuned to mental health symptoms in the Service member parents following their return from deployment. Service members may experience depression, anxiety, PTSD, or problems with substances. Additionally, they may behave differently, which can leave adolescents feeling as though their parent is now a "stranger." Families need to spend time getting to know one another again. Clinicians can help families adjust to any changes and to prevent family members from feeling that changes are threatening to the family unit.

Emotionally Focused Family Therapy (EFFT; Johnson, 2004) provides clinicians with a possible treatment paradigm, based in Attachment Theory, for families with relationships strained by parental deployment. EFFT strives to change relationship

dynamics which perpetuate a cycle which threatens a secure relationship between parent and adolescent. During EFFT, the clinician works to elicit new emotional signals which prompt new relational behaviors which revise prior expectations and models for relationships in both parents and adolescents. Key to repairing the relationship is the adolescent's expression of their despair in response to a loss of connection to their parent. Clinicians help parents to validate their adolescent's attachment needs and the emotions underlying their unmet needs. Johnson (2004) provides a more in-depth review of EFFT for clinicians wishing to utilize its techniques with this population.

Study Limitations

While some adolescents stated that their responses to deployment were directly a result of their parents' increased distress, other processes are undoubtedly at play that were not discussed by the adolescents. In addition to consistency in caregiver behavior, tendencies towards persistence in cognitive representations, the effect of individuals on their environments, and the stabilizing effect of personality trait variables likely all play a role in stability or instability of attachment representations (Waters et al., 2000). Teasing out the exact nature of these processes is not possible given the limits of the data, and of focus group research. Additionally, while the questions were reflective and process-oriented, this was not a longitudinal study, thus adolescent reports were retrospective.

Perhaps most significantly, this study only included the perception of adolescents and did not include data from at-home parents or Service members. This is essential to note because this study speculates regarding possible motivators for parent behavior without their direct report of their motivations. Undoubtedly, obtaining parent reports would present a richer picture of the experience of these families and would likely reveal

multiple explanations for their actions, as well as their perception of their adolescents' adjustment and the ways in which this influenced their behavior. For example, parent reports might reveal that parents did not want to discuss deployment with their adolescents because they perceived discussing deployment was distressing for their adolescents. Additionally, Service member parent reports might reveal that in order to serve effectively while deployed, these parents feel they must distance emotionally from their families. For these reasons, this study's reliance on adolescent reports should be taken into consideration before conclusions can be drawn about the exact nature of the processes that are occurring between parents and adolescents over the course of deployment. This being said, although data based solely on adolescent reports present limitations, adolescents' perceptions of their experience provide rich data and are incredibly important to obtain in order to effectively intervene with this population.

Furthermore, because this was a secondary analysis of existing research data, this researcher did not design the questions. Thus, while questions were originally designed to allow adolescents to report on their relationship with their parents over the course of adolescents, they were not specifically designed to measure attachment security. The measurement of attachment in adolescence is normally undertaken using a rigorous structured interview, the Adult Attachment Interview (AAI) (George, Kaplan, & Main, 1985). Thus, while attachment processes seemed at play, definite conclusions cannot be drawn about the security or insecurity of the bond between these parents and their adolescents. Nonetheless, the fact that our study findings are consistent with concepts from attachment theory is encouraging.

In addition, this study's sample comes entirely from participants in Operation: Military Kids, a supportive camp for military adolescents. This group of adolescents may differ from the general population of military adolescents since their parents enrolled them in this camp. Their parents may have perceived that their adolescent was having difficulty adjusting, and so sought this camp as a support. Or, it is also possible that these parents are more involved and supportive of their adolescents than other military families.

Limitations also arise from the use of focus groups as a source of data in this study. Focus groups capture group interactions and can bring out concurring and dissenting ideas within the group. However, group interactions also mean that participants can influence one another (Creswell, 2007). Adolescents in particular are more and more influenced by their peer relationships (Allen, 2008). Indeed, in one focus group of all females, female adolescents cried throughout the interview, and reported crying in response to one another. Thus, ideas or sentiments may become magnified when reinforced by group dynamics.

This study utilized criterion sampling (Miles & Huberman, 1994) and intensity sampling (Patton, 2002) in order to select participants for study. Criterion sampling was used to select participants who had experienced at least one full combat deployment cycle, as well as to select participants who were 13 or older. Next, intensity sampling was used to ensure participants had provided enough information in their answers to gain an understanding of their relationship with their parents. This researcher also used intensity sampling to make certain adolescents could coherently describe their experience. These purposeful sampling techniques (Patton, 2002) allow researchers to

select rich cases for more in-depth study; however, this type of selecting procedure may also cause bias in the results. For example, adolescents who did not speak at length or in detail about their experience may have done so because they had not been distressed during deployment and so felt they had nothing to contribute. They may also have had insecure-dismissing attachment styles, which are associated with excessive succinctness and discomfort in discussing attachment relationships or distress as well as refusing to discuss distressing experiences (Main & Goldwyn, 1998; Main, Goldwyn, & Hesse, 2003). These factors taken together may have biased the participants included for study.

Finally, the majority of the sample selected for this study was female (n=13, 68%), and from National Guard families (n=10, 53%). The experience of female adolescents, as well as the experience of National Guard and Reserve families, may not be representative of military families as a whole and could have influenced the results of this study. More specifically, National Guard and Reserve families may face different challenges from active-duty families. National Guard and Reserve service members currently comprise approximately 45% of the military's deployed force, while historically, these members served part-time, with shorter-term commitments (Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics, 2007). These families are usually geographically more dispersed, and thus frequently disconnected from military supports or other military families. Combined, these factors can mean Guard and Reserve families are less prepared for deployment, and have more limited access to resources to assist them in coping.

Future Research

This study has shown the value and understanding that can be gained through examining adolescent experiences of their relationship with their parents over the course of deployment from an attachment perspective. However, given the constraints of this research, additional research is needed to draw more thorough conclusions and to gain a richer understanding of the process that is occurring in these military families.

Broadening the sample to include the perceptions of parents would help researchers gain more information about their experience of their relationships during parental deployment. Without their direct description, researchers can only speculate about their motivations which seemed so unclear to adolescents in this study.

It would be greatly beneficial to study adolescents and their families longitudinally, using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Although costly, researchers should administer the AAI before, during, after deployment, and a year after deployment to see whether there are changes in the adolescents' attachment styles over time. Additionally, these adolescents could be followed through multiple deployments, using both the AAI and focus groups, in order to gain an understanding of how the experience of multiple deployments impacts the parent-adolescent relationship. Researchers could examine the outcomes for adolescents who report a secure relationship with their deploying parent and an insecure relationship with their at-home parent, as compared to adolescents who are secure in their relationship with their at-home parent and insecure in their relationship with their deployed parent. After assessing with the AAI, researchers could compare the secure adolescents and the insecure adolescents in order to determine what factors differentiate these groups.

It is also important for researchers and clinicians to begin to research effective treatment paradigms with this population. For example, attachment researchers should examine whether Emotionally Focused Family Therapy, (Johnson, 2004), which is based on Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1969/1982) is effective in improving relationships between parents and adolescents from military families. Clearly, more gains in research are essential in order to best serve this growing portion of the population if the treatment community hopes to sustain secure and repair insecure parent-adolescent relationships.

References

Allen, J. P. (2008). The attachment system in adolescence. In J. Cassidy & P. R. Shaver

(Eds.), *Handbook of attachment: Theory, research and clinical applications* (2nd

ed., pp. 419-435). New York: Guilford Press.

Allen, J. P., & Hauser, S. T. (1996). Autonomy and relatedness in adolescent-family

interactions as predictors of young adults' states of mind regarding attachment.

Development and Psychopathology, 8(4), 793-809.

Allen, J. P., McElhaney, K. B., Land, D. J., Kuperminc, G. P., Moore, C. W., O'Beirne-

Kelly, H., & Kilmer, S. L. (2003). A secure base in adolescence: Markers of

attachment security in the mother-adolescent relationship. *Child Development,*

74(1), 292-307.

Allen, J. P., Moore, C., Kuperminc, G., & Bell, K. (1998). Attachment and adolescent

psychosocial functioning. *Child Development, 69(5),* 1406-1419.

Ammaniti, M., van Ijzendoorn, M. H., Speranza, A. M., & Tambelli, R. (2000). Internal

working models of attachment during late childhood and early adolescence: An

exploration of stability and change. *Attachment and Human Development, 2(3),*

328-346.

Barnes, V., Davis, H. & Treiber, F. (2007). Perceived stress, heart rate, and blood

pressure among adolescents with family members deployed in Operation Iraqi

Freedom. *Military Medicine*, *172,* 40-43.

Bartholomew, K., & Horowitz, L. M. (1991). Attachment styles among young adults: A

test of a four-category model. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 61*,

226–244.

Belsky, J., & Fearon, R. M. (2002). Precursors of attachment security. In J. Cassidy & P.

R. Shaver (Eds.), *Handbook of attachment: Theory, research, and clinical

applications (2nd ed.,* pp. 295-316). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Berger, L. E., Jodl, K. M., Allen, J. P., McElhaney, K. B., Kuperminc, G. P. (2005).

When adolescents disagree with others about their symptoms: Differences in

attachment organization as an explanation of discrepancies between adolescent-,

parent-, and peer-reports of behavior problems. *Development and

Psychopathology, 17,* 489-507.

Bernier, A., Larose, S., & Whipple, N. (2005). Leaving home for college: A potentially

stressful event for adolescents with preoccupied attachment patterns. *Attachment

and Human Development, 7(2),* 171-185.

Booth, B., Segal, M., Bell, D., Martin, J., Ender, M., Rohall, D., & Nelson, J. (2007).

What we know about Army families: 2007 update. Retrieved March 20, 2011,

from http://www.army.mil/fmwrc/documents/research/whatweknow2007.pdf

Bowlby, J. (1969/1982). *Attachment and loss, Vol.1. Attachment.* New York: Basic

Books.

Bowlby, J. (1973). *Attachment and loss, Vol. 2. Separation: Anxiety and anger.* New

York: Basic Books.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative

Research in Psychology, 3,* 77-101.

Buist, K. L., Reitz, E., & Dekovic, M. (2008). Attachment stability and change during

adolescence: A longitudinal application of the Social Relations Model. *Journal of

Social and Personal Relationships, 25(3),* 429-444.

Carlson, E. A., & Sroufe, L. A. (1995). Contributions of attachment Theory to developmental psychopathology. In D. Cicchetti & D. J. Cohen (Eds.), *Developmental psychopathology* (Vol. 1, pp. 581-617). New York: Wiley.

Cassidy, J. (2001). Truth, lies, and intimacy: An attachment perspective. *Attachment and Human Development, 3(2),* 121-155.

Cassidy, J. (2008). The nature of the child's ties. In J. Cassidy & P. R. Shaver (Eds.), *Handbook of attachment: Theory, research and clinical applications* (2nd ed., pp. 1-22). New York: Guilford Press.

Chandra, A., Burns, R. Tanielian, T., Jaycox, L., & Scott, M. (2008). *Understanding the impact of deployment on children and families: Findings from a pilot study of Operation Purple Camp participants.* Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation.

Chandra, A., Lara-Cinisomo, S., Jaycox L. H., Tanielian, T., Burns, R. M., Ruder, T., & Han, B. (2010a). Children on the homefront: The experience of children from military families. *Pediatrics. 125,* 13-22.

Chandra, A., Martin, L. T., & Hawkins, S. A. (2010b). The impact of parental deployment on child social and emotional functioning: Perspectives of school staff. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 46(3),* 218-223.

Chartrand, M., & Siegel, G. (2007). At war in Iraq and Afghanistan: Children in U.S. military families. *Ambulatory Pediatrics*, *7*, 1-2.

Congressional Research Services (CRS, 2008). *U. S. forces in Iraq.* Washington, DC: CSR.

Compas, B. E., Connor-Smith, J. K., Saltzman, H., Thomsen, A. H., & Wadsworth, M. E. 2001. Coping with stress during childhood and adolescence: Problems, progress, and potential in theory and research. *Psychological Bulletin, 17(1),* 87-127.

DeKlyen, M., & Greenberg, M. T. (2008). Attachment and psychopathology in childhood. In J. Cassidy & P. R. Shaver (Eds.), *Handbook of attachment: Theory, research and clinical applications* (2nd ed., pp. 637-665). New York: Guilford Press.

Dirkzwager, A. J. E., Bramsen, I., Ader, H., van der Ploeg, H. M. (2005). Secondary traumatization in partners and parents of Dutch peacekeeping soldiers. *Journal of Family Psychology, 19(2),* 217-226.

Ducharme, J., Doyle, A. B., & Markiewicz, D. (2002). Attachment security with mother and father: Associations of adolescents' reports of interpersonal behavior with parents and peers. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 19(2),* 203-231.

Duckworth, D. (2009). Effects of multiple deployments on families. *Strategic Research Project.* U.S. Army War College: Carlisle Barracks, PA. Retrieved April 9, 2011.

Fearon, R. P., Bakermans-Kraneburg, M. J., Lapsley, A. M., & Roisman, G. I. (2010). The significance of insecure attachment and disorganization in the development of children's externalizing behavior: A meta-analytic study. *Child Development, 81(2),* 435-456.

Figley, C. R. (1998). Burnout as systemic traumatic stress. A model for helping traumatized family members. In C. R. Figley (Ed.), *Burnout in families: The systemic costs of caring* (pp. 15–28). New York: CRC Press.

Flake, E., Davis, B.E., Johnson, P., & Middleton, L. (2009). The psychosocial effects of

 deployment on military children. *Journal of Developmental & Behavioral*

 Pediatrics, 30(4), 271-278.

Fonagy, P., Steele, M., Steele, H., Moran, G., & Higgit, A. (1991). The capacity for

 understanding mental states: The reflective self in parent and child and its

 significance for security of attachment. *Infant Mental Health Journal, 12(3),* 201–

 218.

Fraley, R. C. & Davis, K. E. (1997). Attachment formation and transfer in young adults'

 close friendships and romantic relationships. *Personal Relationships, 4,* 131-144.

George, C., Kaplan, N., & Main, M. (1985). *Adult Attachment Interview protocol* (2nd

 ed.)*. Unpublished manuscript, University of California at Berkeley.

George, C., & Solomon, J. (2008). The caregiving system: A behavioral systems

 approach to parenting. In J. Cassidy & P. R. Shaver (Eds.), *Handbook of*

 attachment: Theory, research and clinical applications (2nd ed., pp. 833-856).

 New York: Guilford Press.

Gibbs, D. A., Martin, S. L., Kupper, L. L., & Johnson, R. E. (2007). Child maltreatment

 in enlisted soldiers' families during combat-related deployments. *Journal of the*

 American Medical Association, 298(5), 528-535.

Grossman, K., Grossman, K. E., Kindler, H., & Zimmerman, P. (2008). A wider view of

 attachment and exploration: The influence of mothers and fathers on the

 development of psychological security from infancy to young adulthood. In J.

 Cassidy & P. R. Shaver (Eds.), *Handbook of attachment: Theory, research and*

 clinical applications (2nd ed., pp. 857-879). New York: Guilford Press.

Hamilton, C. E. (2000). Continuity and discontinuity of attachment from infancy through

adolescence. *Child Development, 71(3),* 690-694.

Haley, S. (1984). The Vietnam veteran and his pre-school child: Child rearing as a

delayed stress in combat veterans. *Journal of Contemporary Psychotherapy, 14,*

114–121.

Hazan, C., & Shaver, P. R. (1987). Romantic love conceptualized as an attachment

process. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 52,* 511-524

Hazan, C., & Zeifman, D. (1994). Sex and the psychological tether. In K. Bartholomew

& D. Perlman (Eds.), *Advances in personal relationships* (Vol. 5, pp. 151-177).

London: Jessica Kingsley.

Hesse, E. (1996). Discourse, memory, and the Adult Attachment Interview: A note with

emphasis on the emerging cannot classify category. *Infant Mental Health Journal,*

17, 4-11.

Hesse, E. (1999). The Adult Attachment Interview: Historical and current perspectives.

In J. Cassidy & P. R. Shaver (Eds.), *Handbook of attachment: Theory, research,*

and clinical applications (pp. 395-433). New York: Guilford Press.

Hesse, E. (2008). The Adult Attachment Interview: Protocol, method of analysis, and

empirical studies. In J. Cassidy & P. R. Shaver (Eds.), *Handbook of attachment:*

Theory, research and clinical applications (2nd ed., pp. 552-598). New York:

Guilford Press.

Hiew, C. C. (1992). Separated by their work: Families with fathers living apart.

Environment and Behavior, *24*, 206-225.

Hillenbrand, E. D. (1976). Father absence in military families. *The Family Coordinator*, *25*, 251-258.

Hoge, C. W., Castro., C. A., Messer, S. C., McGurk, D., Cotting, D. I., & Koffman, R. L. (2004). Combat duty in Iraq and Afghanistan, mental health problems, and barriers to care. *New England Journal of Medicine, 351*(1), 13-22.

Huebner, A., & Mancini, J. (2005, June). Adjustments among adolescents in military families when a parent is deployed. *Final report to the Military Family Research Institute and Department of Defense Quality of Life Office.* Retrieved July 11, 2010, from Military Family Research Institute Website: http://www.cfs.purdue.edu/mfri/pages/research/Adjustments_in_adolescents.pdf

Huebner, A., Mancini, J., Wilcox, R., Grass, S., & Grass, G. (2007). Parental deployment and youth in military families: Exploring uncertainty and ambiguous loss. *Family Relations*, *56*, 112-122.

Jensen, P. S., Lewis, R. L., & Xenakis, S. N. (1986). The military family in review: Context, risk, and prevention. *Journal of the American Academy of Child Psychiatry*, *25*, 225-234.

Jensen, P. S., Martin, D., & Watanabe, H. (1996). Children's response to parental separation during Operation Desert Storm. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 35(4),* 433-441.

Jensen, P., & Shaw, J. (1996). The effects of war and parental deployment upon children and adolescents. In R. Ursano and A. Norwood (Eds.), *Emotional aftermath of the Persian Gulf War: Veterans, families, communities, and nations* (pp.83-109). Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Press.

Johnson, S. M. (2004). *The practice of emotionally focused couple therapy: Creating connection* (2nd ed.). New York: Brunner-Routledge.

Keating, D. P. (1990). Adolescent thinking. In S. S. Feldman & G. Elliott (Eds.), *At the threshold: The developing adolescent* (pp. 54-90). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Kelley, M. L., Finkel, L. B., & Ashby, J. (2003). Geographic mobility, family, and maternal variables as related to the psychosocial adjustment of military children. *Military Medicine*, *168*, 1019-1024.

Kobak, R. R., Cole, H. E., Ferenz-Gillies, R., Fleming, W., & Gamble, W. (1993). Attachment and emotion regulation during mother-teen problem solving: A control theory analysis. *Child Development, 64(1),* 231-245.

Kobak, R. R., & Duemmler, S. (1994). Attachment and conversation: Toward a discourse analysis of adolescent and adult security. In K. Bartholomew & D. Perlman (Eds.), *Advances in personal relationships: Attachment processes in adulthood* (Vol. 5, pp. 121-149). London: Jessica Kingsley.

Kobak, R. R., & Sceery, A. (1988). Attachment in late adolescence: Working models, affect regulation, and representations of self and others. *Child Development, 59,* 135-146.

Kobak, R. R., & Sudler, N., & Gamble, W. (1991). Attachment and depressive symptoms during adolescence: A developmental pathways analysis. *Development and Psychopathology, 3(4),* 461-474.

Kotler, T., Buzwell, S., Romeo, Y., & Bowland, J. (1994). Avoidant attachment as a risk factor for health. *British Journal of Medical Psychology, 67,* 237–245.

Kraaij, V., Garnefski, N., de Wilde, E. J., Dijkstra, A., Gebhardt, W., Maes, S., & ter Doest, L. (2003). Negative life events and depressive symptoms in late adolescence: Bonding and cognitive coping as vulnerability factors? *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 23,* 185–193.

Laurenceau, J.-P., Feldman Barrett, L., & Pietromonaco, P. R. (1998). Intimacy as an interpersonal process: The importance of self-disclosure, partner disclosure, and perceived partner responsiveness in interpersonal exchanges. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 74,* 1238–1251.

Lester, P., Peterson, K., Reeves, J., Knauss, L., Glover, D., Mogil, C., . . . Beardslee, W. (2010). The long war and parental combat deployment: Effects on military children and at-home spouses. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 49(4),* 310-320.

MacDermid, S. M., Samper, R., Schwarz, R., Nishida, J., & Nyaronga, D. (2008). Understanding and promoting resilience in military families. Retrieved July 11, 2010, from Military Family Research Institute Website: http://www.mfri.purdue.edu/content/reports/Understanding%20and%20Promoting%20Resilience.pdf.

Main, M. (Chair). (1985, April). *Attachment: A move to the level of representation.* Symposium conducted at the meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development, Toronto.

Main, M., & Goldwyn, R. (1984). *Adult attachment scoring and classification system.* Unpublished manuscript, University of California at Berkeley.

Main, M., & Goldwyn, R. (1998). *Adult attachment scoring and classification system, Version 6.0.* Unpublished manuscript, University of California at Berkeley.

Main, M., Goldwyn, R., & Hesse, E. (2003). *Adult attachment scoring and classification system. Version 7.2.* Unpublished manuscript, University of California at Berkeley.

Main, M., Hesse, E., & Goldwyn, R. (2008). *The Adult Attachment Interview: Scoring and Classification System, Version 8.* Manuscript in preparation, University of California at Berkeley.

Main, M., & Hesse, E. (1990). Parents' unresolved traumatic experiences are related to infant disorganized status: Is frightened and/or frightening parental behavior the linking mechanism? In M. T. Greenberg, D. Cicchetti & E. M. Cummings (Eds.), *Attachment in the preschool years: Theory, research, and intervention* (pp. 161–182). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Main, M., Kaplan, N., & Cassidy, J. (1985). Security in infancy, childhood, and adulthood: A move to the level of representation. In I. Bretherton & E. Waters (Eds.), Growing points of attachment Theory and research. *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development, 50*(1-2, Serial No. 209), 66-104.

Mallinckrodt, B., & Wei, M. (2005). Attachment, social competencies, social support, and psychological distress. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 52,* 358–367.

Miles, M., & Huberman, A. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: A sourcebook of new methods* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

McCarroll, J. E., Ursano, R. J., Liu, X., Thayer, L. E., Newby, J. H., Norwood, A. E., &
Fullerton, C. S. (2000). Deployment and the probability of spousal aggression by
U.S. Army Soldiers. *Military Medicine, 165,* 41-44.

McFarlane, A. C. (2009). Military deployment: The impact on children and family
adjustment and the need for care. *Current Opinion in Psychiatry, 22,* 369-373.

Mmari, K., Roche, K. M., Sudhinaraset, M., & Blum, R. (2009). When a parent goes off
to war: Exploring the issues faced by adolescents and their families. *Youth and
Society, 40(4),* 455-475.

Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense. (2005). *2005 demographics report.*
Retrieved November 3, 2010, from Purdue University, Military Family Research
Institute Website:

http://www.cfs.purdue.edu/mfri/pages/military/2005_Demographics_Report.pdf

Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family
Policy (2007). *Demographics 2007: Profile of the military community.*
Department of Defense: Washington, DC.

Ognibene, T. C., & Collins, N. L. (1998). Adult attachment styles, perceived social
support and coping strategies. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships,
15(3),* 323-345.

Paterson, J., Field, J., & Pryor, J. (1994). Adolescents' perceptions of their attachment
relationships with their mothers, fathers and friends. *Journal of Youth and
Adolescence, 23,* 579-600.

Patton, M. Q. (2002). Designing qualitative studies. *Qualitative research & evaluation
methods* (3rd Ed.; pp. 209-257). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Patton, M. Q. (1990). Qualitative evaluation and research methods (2nd ed.). Sage

    Publications, Inc.

Pietromonaco, P. R., & Feldman Barrett, L. (2000). The internal working models

    concept: What do we really know about the self in relation to others? *Review of*

    General Psychology, 4, 155–157.

Reimer, M. S., Overton, W. F., Steidl, J. H., Rosenstein, D. S., & Horowitz, H. (1996).

    Familial responsiveness and behavioral control: Influences on adolescent

    psychopathology, attachment, and cognition. *Journal of Research on*

    Adolescence, 6(1), 87-112.

Reite, M., & Boccia, M. L. (1994). Physiological aspects of adult attachment. In M. B.

    Sperling & W. H. Berman (Eds.), Attachment in adults: Clinical and

    developmental perspectives (pp. 98–127). New York: Guilford Press.

Rosen, L., Teitelbaum, J., & Westhuis, D. (1993). Children's reactions to the Desert

    Storm deployment: Initial findings from a survey of Army families. *Military*

    Medicine, *158*, 465-469.

Rosenheck, R., & Fontana, A. (1998). Transgenerational effects of abusive violence on

    the children of Vietnam combat veterans. *Journal of Traumatic Stress, 11,* 731–

    741.

Scharfe, E. (2003). Stability and change of attachment representations from cradle to

    grave. In S. Johnson & V. Whiffen (Eds.), *Attachment processes in couple and*

    family therapy (pp. 64-84). New York: Guilford.

Seiffge-Krenke, I. (1995). *Stress, coping, and relationships in adolescence*. *Research*

    Monographs in Adolescence. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Press.

Seiffge-Krenke, I., & Beyers, W. (2005). Coping trajectories from adolescence to young

adulthood: Links to attachment state of mind. *Journal of Research on*

Adolescence, 15(4), 561-582.

Seiffge-Krenke, I., & Klessinger, N. (2000). Long-term effects of avoidant coping on

adolescents' depressive symptoms. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 29,* 617–

630.

Selman, R. (1980). *The growth of interpersonal understanding: Developmental and*

clinical analyses. New York: Academic Press.

Simmons, R., & Blyth, D. (1987). *Moving into adolescence.* New York: Aldine De

Gruyter.

Smetana, J., Yau, J., & Hanson, S. (1991). Conflict resolution in families with

adolescents. *Journal of Research on Adolescence, 1,* 189–206.

Solomon, J., George, C., & De Jong, A. (1995). Children classified as controlling at age

six: Evidence of disorganized representational strategies and aggression at home

and at school. *Development and Psychopathology, 7,* 447-463.

Sroufe, L. A., Egeland, B., Carlson, E., & Collins, A. (2005). *The development of the*

person: The Minnesota Study of Risk and Adaptation from Birth to Adulthood.

New York: Guilford Press.

Steinberg, L. (1990). Interdependency in the family: Autonomy, conflict, and harmony in

the parent-adolescent relationship. In S. Feldman & G. Elliott (Eds.), *At the*

threshold: The developing adolescent (pp. 255-276). Cambridge, MA: Harvard

University Press.

U.S. Department of Defense: Statistical Information Analysis Division (2010). *Military*

   personnel statistics. Retrieved January, 31, 2010, from

   http://siadapp.dmdc.osd.mil/

van Ijzendoorn, M. H., & Bakermans-Kranenburg, M. J. (1996). Attachment

   representations in mothers, fathers, adolescents, and clinical groups: A meta-

   analytic search for normative data. *Human Development, 39(4),* 224-231.

Vormbrock, J. K. (1993). Attachment theory as applied to wartime and job-related

   marital separation. *Psychological Bulletin, 114(1),* 122-144.

Walsh, F. (2007). Traumatic loss and major disasters: Strengthening family and

   community resilience. *Family Process*, 46(2), 207-227.

Waters, E., & Cummings, E. M. (2000). A secure base from which to explore close

   relationships. *Child Development, 71(1),* 164-172.

Waters, E., Merrick, S., Treboux, D., Crowell, J., & Albersheim, L. (2000). Attachment

   security in infancy and early adulthood: A twenty-year longitudinal study. *Child*

   Development, 71(3), 684-689.

Wei, M., Russell, D. W., & Zakalik, R. A. (2005). Adult attachment, social self-efficacy,

   self-disclosure, loneliness, and subsequent depression for freshman college

   students: A longitudinal study. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 52(4),* 602-

   614.

Whitchurch, G. G., & Constantine, L. L. (1993). Systems theory. In P.G. Boss, W. J.

   Doherty, R. LaRossa, W. R. Schumm, & S. K. Steinmetz (Eds.), *Sourcebook of*

   family theories and methods: A contextual approach (pp. 325-339). New York:

   Plenum Press.

Wong, L., & Gerras, S. (2010). The effects of multiple deployments on army adolescents.

Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College. Retrieved from

http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/display.cfm?pubID=962.

Appendix A

**Examining the Effect of Multiple Deployments on Adjustment among Youth in
Military Families
Focus Group Interview Protocol
REVISED 7.4.08**

Introduction:
*As introduction, My name is _____and _____we're from Virginia Tech. We are
so excited to talk with you today about your experience with having parent deployed. We
recognize that this is a very different time in your life—that deployment can potentially
create many changes for you and your family. We want to understand what this is like.
We think it's important for those in the military and outside of the military to have a
better understanding of what this experience is like from a teen's perspective.*

*To do this, we plan to ask questions and then let you talk and help us to understand. Our
role was to keep the conversation on track and to make sure that everyone has the chance
to contribute their ideas. We're going to do a graffiti wall (which we'll explain in a
minute), ask some questions, and end with you giving us some written feedback.*

Optional *(see note following): To make this official, we need to go over the agreement for
your participation* **[pass out the minor assent and review it-emphasizing process
confidentiality, anonymity, right to not answer questions; after signatures, turn on
the recorder.]** *NOTE: if assent forms have been completed prior to the focus groups,
there is no need to review the form in the group session.*

Background on Deployment Experience

*To begin, we just want to get a sense of who you are and where your parent is in the
deployment process. So let's just go around the circle and have each of you introduce
yourself (first name only) and tell us about your current situation with respect to
deployment:*
1. Who do you live with?
2. Is your parent deployed now? (how long has the parent been away)
3. Which of your parents is/has been deployed
4. How many deployments have you experienced?
5. How old were you when your parent was deployed the first time?

Graffiti Wall Exercise: "When I Think About Deployment"
[After the initial introduction, introduce the graffiti wall activity]
*You'll notice that we've placed three sheets of paper on the (floor/wall). Each one has the
same "starter" phrase on it* [read it out loud]: ***When I think about deployment………..***
6. When you think about deployment, what words, phrases, or pictures come to mind?

Please write/draw your response to the phrase. You can use a single word, a brief sentence, or a simple picture. No need to put your name on it—just give us your thoughts. We'll give you a few minutes to do that.
[Allow about 5-7 minutes—depending on interest and group size—for them to complete. Then hold up each sheet and review some of the responses. **The intent is to get the group more comfortable in talking and in sharing emotions. Limit this activity to 10 minutes**.]

I. The Deployment Cycle
Youth and their families go through different phases of deployment: before the parent goes, while the parent is away, and when your parent returns. We'd like to ask you some questions about your experience with this process.

A. We'll start with what happens BEFORE your parent is deployed.

*7. Tell me about how your family **prepared for the deployment**.*
      A. Were there special conversations or discussion about changing responsibilities?
      B. Who did the talking (e.g. both parents together/separate conversations)?
      C. Were there discussions about what the parent would be doing?

*8. What else do we need to know about what happens **before your parent is deployed**?*

B. Now let's talk about what happens DURING the deployment (when your parent is away)

9. How are things in your family (including relationships with brother & sisters, mom) different when your parent is deployed? For example, do you find that you spend more or less time with each other than you did before? Do you notice any changes in how you get along?
[what are they noticing in terms of change or stability—in all familial relationships]

*10. Tell me about the relationship you have **with your at home parent during deployment***
[trying to get a sense of the attachment relationship and its stability/change during separation].
      A. What kinds of things do you talk about?
      B. What things do you keep from him/her?
      C. What kinds of things do you do together?
      D. How close do you feel to this parent?

*11. Tell me about the relationship you have **with your deployed parent while they are deployed.***
[trying to get a sense of the attachment relationship and its stability/change during separation].

> *A. What kinds of things do you talk about?*
> *B What things do you keep from him/her?*
> *C. What kinds of things do you do together?*
> *D. How close do you feel to this parent?*

*12. What else do we need to know about **what happens during the deployment**?*

C. Now let's focus on what happens when the deployed parent RETURNS home.

*13. Was there **anything different about your deployed parent** when he/she returned home?*
[intent is to reveal description and stability/change in emotions, routines, expectations— also be listening for signs of PTSD, wounded warriors etc—probe a bit more if you get these to see the interpretation by the teen]

14. What did you notice about how your returning parent "fit' back into the family?

*15. After the deployment, what did you notice about your relationship **with your deployed parent?***

[More questions on post-deployment on next page]

*16. After the deployment, what did you notice about your relationship **with your at-home parent?***

*17. What else do we need to know about what happens or **what it's like when your deployed parent returns home?***

D. Now we'd like to talk about your experiences with MULITPLE deployments.

18. Now please remind me which of you have experienced a deployment more than once.
[NOTE: Focus on these youth, so that we get reports of experience, rather than what other youth have heard from their friends about multiple deployments, or what they guess about multiple deployments]

*19. For you, what was different about the second (or third) deployment? Did you and your family **prepare** for it differently than the first? **During** the second (third) deployment what was different for you? When your parent **returned** from the second (or third) deployment what was different for you, compared to the first deployment?*

E. Now we want to talk to you about who you go to for SUPPORT.

*20. Who is the **first person you usually turn to** for support when you are **really sad/scared/ or lonely?***
[going for if they have an attachment figure or if they are isolated—the scared sad lonely part is what tips us off to the attachment figure--keep them focused on the scared/sad/etc rather than on problem solving issues—again, trying to get at attachment activation—not problem solving per se]
>   *A. How are they helpful?*
>   *B. Is this the same person you turn to when your parent is deployed?*
>   *C. Does the support you receive from them change over the course deployment?*
>   *D. Do you find that you become the support system for others? If so, who?*

II. We will end our discussion with a very important question.

21. If you could give advice to a teen that just found out her/his parent was deploying soon, what would you tell her/him?

III. Now to end our focus group we have a very brief set of survey questions for you to complete.

It will take just a few minutes to complete. There are no right or wrong answers to any of these questions. We are interested in your honest opinions. If you do not understand some of these questions, please ask us to explain.

Appendix B
Figure 1
p. 114

Figure 1: Parent-Adolescent Interaction
At-Home Parent & Deployed Parent Behavior Interacts with Adolescent Coping

Parent Behavior

Adolescent Coping Response

Joyful Reunion

Changing Moods & Behaviors

Exhibiting Distress

Discussing Deployment

Changing Interactions

Stepping Up

Denial & Avoidance

Stepping Down

Instructions

Denial & Avoidance

Closeness & Distance

Distress

Protecting Self & Parent

Confusion

Long-Lasting Effects

Protecting Self & Parent

Confusion

Seeking Other Supports

Adjustment

■ Pre-Deployment
■ Deployment
■ Reintegration