The Military Family

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**Thesis Statement:** This essay will describe the life changes that military families go through and the negative effects children face, the importance of encouraging strong family bonds to lower the stressors, and the abundant stress families face daily.

**Research Question(s):**

1. How is being part of a military family so different from regular families and what situations are harder?

2. Do changes for children contain them by hiding their emotions, performance(s) in school, anger problems, disrespecting parents, depression and feeling and sense of loss?

3. How do deployments affect children that go through one of the most stressful times in their life while a parent is deployed and risk having mental health issues during one of the most stressful times in their life?

**Purpose Statement:** The purpose of this study is to raise awareness for military families due to constant changes involving a permanent change of stations and how badly military spouses are and children are affected by their husband or wife or mother or father’s deployment.

**Why is the Problem worth Solving?** This problem is worth solving because it heavily affects some children and negatively affects spouses and their ability to find a job. The financial stress and multiple deployments have led to a high amount of divorces and an increase in suicides.

**Introduction**

Military families consist of a senior member that is part of the military while the other is mainly a civilian and is in charge of the children. As a part of the military family, the members that are left back home and the children have to face a lot of difficulties. This family setup may cause a lot of disturbances in the normal living of the other members. Children face the most difficulties due to frequent location changes, changes in academic careers and absence of the head of the family (DeVoe et al., 2018). These may lead to changes in habits, anxiety, stress and other health issues. Such conditions require the development of a bond between the family to stabilize the condition. Such issues are unbeknown to civilian families.

The new location, starting from the initial stage and getting used to are all the challenges that such families face. No doubt that there are perks to be part of the military family. These perks aid in the overall family settlement. But when there is a fear in mind that the one family member would be gone forever, nothing seems right. At such times there is an additional need to take care of the members back home to battle the tough times. Many measures can be taken that can decrease anxiety and stressful element. This essay will describe the life changes that Military Families go through and the negative effects children face, the importance of encouraging strong family bonds to lower the stressors, and the abundant stress families face daily (Park, 2011).

**Comparing Civilian and Military Family Challenges**

The two families in comparison to each other face different kinds of challenges. When talking about civilian families, some of the challenges that such people have to face include finding good employment, getting access to good facilities like education and medical, and living easily with what they earn. These are some of the facilities that the military families don’t have to worry about. Civilians have to bear their own expenses and find decent employment to manage all of this. If we talk about the higher class of civilians, they might not feel so negatively towards this. But when it is the case of the middle class or lower-middle-class families, this matters a lot. The problem of getting the necessary facilities like that of medical and education is very expensive for such families. Another issue is of having to do everything by themselves. The civilian family might not be so privileged in getting the extra help that the military families might have. These include servants, driver and other helpers. This creates an element of stress when having so much on the mind of a regular family. The future of themselves as well as the kids is a constant source of worry. On the other hand, military families may be aided in such regard. These are all part of the incentives that the military families tend to receive for not only themselves but for their families as well. Now moving on to the challenges that are faced by the military families. First and foremost is the concept of posting from one location to the other. This happens after regular intervals and as a result, causes great disturbance within the family as well as in the social circle. It is an extremely difficult task to manage the process of settling in o the new environment and doing everything from scratch again and again. The second issue that the military family faces is that of constant fear. The senior member of the family goes out to battle for their country. Not only does this have a stressful impact on the family but also poses a great deal of problems that are present by not having the adult member. These problems include not getting proper guidance and a lack of protection. This is not the case when talking about civilian families. Although it might be hard for them to manage somethings having the benefit of a senior family member being close to you without fear is a big plus. Children are the center of attraction because of their young age and the inability to cope easily as the adults normally would do. They have to be properly handled to make sure that there are no lasting effects on their health as well as general wellbeing. Their academics need to be monitored more than those of the civilian families to ensure that they have the spirits high and adapting to the situation properly.

**Challenges of Military Families**

Even in all the incentives and facilities that the military families get, it is not freely earned. Behind all this is a huge amount of cost that the military families are willing to pay. The recruited member that belongs to the military family has to protect their country from every threat even if he has to lay down his life doing so. They go to any lengths to make sure that the other population of the country sleeps every night and works every day. They have to work in a harsh environment where it is just the survival of the fittest. The other family members back home are in constant fear of the individual that he might not return home one day. This constant fear leads to many health and psychological problems. Such families lack the protection and guidance of the senior family members due to which it gets hard for the other members to settle into the new environment. The new environment has its added difficulties to seek all the essential places, get access to the necessary facilities and develop a new social circle to depend on when thing might not be going the right way.

Due to the constant postings, there is also the case of the extremely tiring process of moving from one place to another leaving all the familiar things behind. A new environment and starting everything from the start again is a daunting task, to say the least. There is also a case of childhood education that gets severely disrupted when such moving takes place. They are required to leave the education in the current institute even in between the courses and are supposed to continue it somewhere else. This creates a problem when the student might not be allowed to continue from the same topics when they were disrupted and thus forcing them to lose a year of studies.

Another issue that the members left back home have to face of the military family is that of having the added responsibility. This includes taking care of the kid, the house and any other matter that needs attending to. They have to cook, clean, shop and all the tasks that would naturally be the duty of the other family members. This added pressure may not be distributed among others as the family might be living alone. It may lead to bouts of health issues and mental disturbances. The added burden sometimes might be too difficult to bear for the individual back home and can lead to a mental breakdown. If proper care is not taken then such issues can lead to long term effects on the entire family which may be hard to treat.

**Challenges of Military Children**

Military children are some of the worst affected by being part of such a family where there is a member belonging to the military. First and foremost is the issue of constant location changes and thus disruption in academics. It not only causes disturbance in the learning capabilities but also may result in losing precious academic years. Children are affected the same way due to posting as elders. They have to start all over again making new friends, develop a bonding with the new environment and other such factors. Having to do this constantly leads to many mental and social problems. Children are very volatile. The effect of certain things might be too harsh on them as compared to the elders. Such problems can be caused by the hectic schedule of military families. Some of the problems that arise due to the discussed causes include irritation and anger issues. The moods might get unstable and lead to behavior changes that are not expected. Leaving their friends and family may develop a sense of loss in their minds and some sensitive children may develop anger issues as well as anxiety and depression. Facing such circumstances a few times might not be so bad but constantly being on the receiving end can cause immense load on the mind (Julian et al., 2018).

Another major issue is that of bonding properly with the parents. This might not be such an issue if the children are of a certain age but small kids are affected the most. When having to face the deficiency of one parent, such kids suffer a lot. They either don’t get the love of a mother as they desire or they don’t get the affection or guidance of a father (Willerton et al., 2011). As a result, it leads to complex and anxiety issues among them especially when they might see other children having quality time with their parents. It does not fall into the category of a disease so there is no proper cure for it. Such moments may leave scars for a long time.

The physical and entertainment activates of such kids may also be hindered due to being part of the military family. As a single parent might be too preoccupied, the children may feel left out. It would help if there are elder siblings but this is not always the case and the children may face the music alone. There is an element of such kids getting into wrong habits and deviate from the positive activities and in the negative ones. There needs to be a proper check on them and their career paths. This brings about another element the senior family member would have to bear. If any leniency is given in such cases, it may lead to the development of lasting habits that would be not easy to let go of. Addiction and long nights out are a couple of them. When kids see that there is no check on them, they could easily be attracted to these. A strict hand is necessary in such cases for them to be properly guided (Lester et al., 2016).

**How to Lower Stressors to Enrich Military Families**

Many of the military family members would face the issues of anxiety, stress, and depression one time or another. Some might be able to cope with it but that might not be the case for everyone. So what to do under such circumstances? The military already provides many facilities to the family members of the recruited people. By adding certain other elements to the incentives, a lot of stress-related issues might be resolved (Aronson & Perkins, 2013).

* The members of the family should talk about their issues. Keeping everything bundled up inside is definitely going to cause issues that might be difficult to handle. Have a conversation with someone or join a therapy session to talk about all the fears that keep you up late at night.
* The members of the family should pay extra attention to their overall well-being. There shouldn’t be any reason for distress except for the safety of the recruited military family member. So, looking after oneself and also the other family members, is the key. Proper diet, exercise and sleeping schedules are all of the utmost importance and can save the individual from any serious complication. All these are affected when a person in stress so these should be properly taken care
* Develop increased bonding with the other family members. All of them need the maximum support at such times so it is the duty of the family members to not make the environment dull and totally dependent on the absent member.
* Take part in more activities than usual. Keep a pet, go out have a conversation with friends and family members. This would increase the time for family bonding and aid in reducing the stressful stimuli that are close by (O’Neal et al., 2018).

**Conclusion**

This essay will describe the life changes that Military Families go through and the negative effects children face, the importance of encouraging strong family bonds to lower the stressors, and the abundant stress families face daily. There is no doubt that there is much to worry about when the matter of being part of the military family is at hand. Children especially face a lot of issues due to the liabilities that are linked to being the kid of a military parent. But in all these circumstances, there are many ways by which the negative effects can be countered. All it takes is to have a good time with friends and family and speak up that which is bothering from the inside. By following certain simple procedures, the family members can aid each other in overcoming any and all the difficult situations. The family member battling for the country is as important as the people that are left behind.

There is a need to take extra care of the health of the families back home. Constant anxiety and stress can lead to many mental issues that should be taken care of properly. Children should be given adequate time and the parent that is back home should pay more attention to the wellbeing of the child. Help them in overcoming the challenges of new locations and academic pressure. Such a time is the best time o develop an even stronger bond among the family members. Such a bond helps in the struggle against the excessive anxiety and stress of having a military member in the family. Although military families might be more privileged than the civilian counterparts yet there is always an element of fear involved. These need to be overcome in order to lead a peaceful life.

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