

For health and happiness, share good news

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Credit: Bill Kuffrey/public domain

Service members, including both active and recently separated, have been called upon to fight overseas and to assist during natural disasters at home. They can face unique challenges when they return in both the workplace and at home. New research, focused on service member couples in Oregon, confirms supportive, responsive partners provide a buffer to loneliness and sleep deficits among military couples.

Better sleep, communication, and emotional support are a key part to

better overall health and to being successful in the workplace. The research is being presented at the 2017 Society for Personality and Social Psychology Annual Convention.

"This study adds to a larger body of literature that supports how important it is to share with your partner when good things happen, as well as to respond positively to the sharing of good news," says Sarah Arpin (Gonzaga University), a social psychologist involved in the study.

Arpin and colleagues examined relationships among perceived responsiveness to capitalization (sharing good news), loneliness, intimacy, and sleep in 162 post-9/11 military couples.

"Very few studies have examined daily relationship processes among military couples, who may be particularly vulnerable to relationship difficulties post-deployment," says Arpin.

In relationship research this type of support, sharing good news, is referred to as capitalization. Capitalization is a particularly important support process in close relationships.

"When you share something good, and the recipient of information is actively happy for you, it heightens the positive experience for both parties," says Arpin. "However, when someone 'rains on your parade' that can have negative consequences."

Researchers required couples to be living together for at least 6 months to participate; about 20% were unmarried. The length of time couples were together varied widely, though the average length of relationship was 12 years.

This study is part of a larger research project, the Study for Employment Retention of Veterans (SERVe) that is working to enhance retention of

veterans in the workplace, with the goal of improving workplace culture and general well-being of service members.

Sarah Arpin will present "A Well Spent Day Brings Happy Sleep": Findings from a Dyadic Study of Capitalization Support" during the symposium, "Implications of Sharing Good News with Others on Health."

Provided by Society for Personality and Social Psychology

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