



**Department of Defense**  
Deployment Health Research Department  
c/o Naval Health Research Center  
PO Box 503310  
San Diego, CA 92150

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**BARCODE AREA**

Subject ID: xxxxxxxxxx

## COMPLETE YOUR FOLLOW-UP SURVEY TODAY!

The 2024–2025 Family Study follow-up survey is available.  
Complete it today and receive a \$10 Amazon gift code!

The Millennium Cohort Family Study is an authorized Department of Defense project. Note Report Control Symbol #DD-NAVY(AR) 2678, Office of Management and Budget Approval #0703-0064, and Primary Institutional Review Board Protocol #NHRC.2015.0019

## BECAUSE FAMILIES SERVE TOO!

Dear Participant,

On behalf of the Millennium Cohort Family Study team, I want to thank you for your commitment to this critically important research. It has been my privilege to serve on the Family Study team since it was launched in 2011. As we begin our fourth survey cycle, we are reaching out to almost 30,000 spouses that have already enrolled in the Family Study – representing spouses from all military branches, spouses of Reserve and National Guard, spouses of Veterans, male spouses, spouses that have served in the military, and spouses whose marital status has changed, but have military-connected kids! We are the only study that can examine the impact of military life over time and we are honored that you have chosen to join us on this journey. The Family Study is a key resource for decisions that are being made to protect and support military families both during and after service. Your continued participation is vital!

Please consider completing your 2024–2025 follow-up survey today!

Very respectfully,

Hope McMaster, PhD  
Principal Investigator, Millennium Cohort Family Study



# CHARACTERISTICS OF THE COHORT

11% Male



89% Female

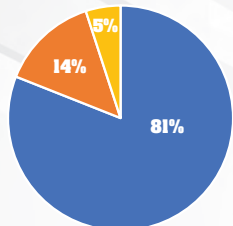


70% have some college education



13,623

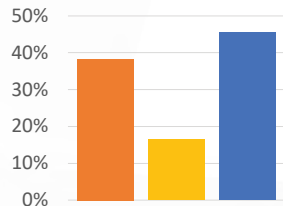
children are represented in the Family Study



5% are separated from the military

14% are Reserve/Guard families

81% are Active duty families



39% work full time

15% work part time

46% are not employed outside of the home

45% are Army families



15% are Navy families



10% are Marine Corps families



27% are Air Force families



3% are Coast Guard families



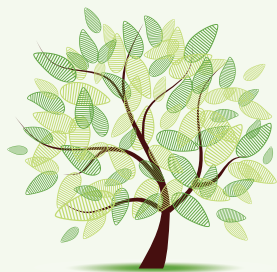
14% are currently serving or have served in the military



7500 Spouses in the study have experienced over 7,500 deployments



## PARTICIPATION



As a member of the Millennium Cohort Family Study, we ask that you take 45 minutes out of your day to complete your online follow-up survey.

## COMPLETION GIFT

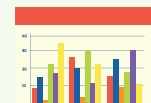


As a token of our appreciation for your participation in the 2024-2025 Family Study survey cycle, you will receive a \$10 digital Amazon gift code at the end of your survey that can be used immediately!"

## HOW YOUR PARTICIPATION HELPS MILITARY FAMILIES



Data from participants are collected, combined, and analyzed together. Individual information and data are not shared outside of the study team.



The study team analyzes data from all participants to better understand how military experiences impact families.



The study team writes reports, publishes articles and provide briefs to decision makers. Through partnerships with advocacy groups, support programs and military leadership, study findings help to inform policy and programs for current and future military families.



**NOVEMBER**

**National Veterans and Military Families Month**

*Because families serve too!*



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Dear NAME,

During National Veterans and Military Families Month, we acknowledge and honor the strength and sacrifices of our service members, veterans, and their families. Spouses and families serve as the backbone of our armed forces, and their strength is unparalleled. The Millennium Cohort Family Study team pays tribute to their unwavering dedication and invaluable contributions to our nation.

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank you for your contribution to the Family Study. Your continued participation is vital to this unique research effort. If you have not had a chance to complete your follow-up survey, please visit [www.familycohort.org](http://www.familycohort.org), click "Start Survey," and enter your Subject ID: XXXXXXXX.

We hope to hear from you because families serve too!

Very respectfully,

Dr. Hope McMaster  
Principal Investigator of the Millennium Cohort Family Study

The Millennium Cohort Family Study is an authorized Department of Defense project. Note Report Note Report Control Symbol # DD-HA(AR)2106, Office of Management and Budget Approval # 0720-0029, and Primary Institutional Review Board Protocol # NHRC.2015.0019.



# just a friendly reminder...



Millennium Cohort  
Family Study



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Please accept our small gift of recognition when you complete your follow-up survey.

Dear NAME,

As a member of the Millennium Cohort Family Study, you are part of a select group of individuals with the unique opportunity to make a lasting impact on the lives of military spouses and children. Even if you are no longer connected to the military or married to your service member spouse, your perspective matters! We hope you continue your involvement in this important research effort by taking some time out of your day to complete your 2024-2025 follow-up survey.

To complete your survey, visit [www.familycohort.org](http://www.familycohort.org), click on "Start Survey" and enter your **Subject ID XXXXXXX**. At the end of your survey, you will receive a \$10 digital Amazon gift code that can be used immediately!

Thank you for your time and continued support of this research effort.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Hope McMaster".

Dr. Hope McMaster  
Principal Investigator  
Millennium Cohort Family Study

Postcard artwork provided by the child of a Millennium Cohort Family Study participant.

The Millennium Cohort Family Study is an authorized Department of Defense project. Note Report Control Symbol # DD-NAVY(AR)2678, Office of Management and Budget Approval #0703-0064, and Primary Institutional Review Board Protocol #NHRC.2015.0019



Dear NAME,

As a member of the Millennium Cohort Family Study, you are part of one of the most important research initiatives designed to understand the impact of military life on families over time. By gathering the perspectives and experiences of nearly 30,000 participants, our study team can better understand the challenges families, like yours, face every day.

We recognize that military spouses face unique stressors including frequent moves, disruptions in education and career progression, and separation from spouses during deployments, trainings, and unaccompanied tours. We know that these stressors can impact marriages and relationship well-being.

In the included infographic, we have highlighted findings from a study examining how different strengths can help couples overcome the challenges they face. When the study was launched in 2011, more than half of Family Study participants felt they had strong marriages. More than a decade later, it is important to understand what factors may have protected your marriage or put it at risk. Knowledge of risk and protective factors help the DoD understand how to support military families so they can stay healthy and happy.

Our research is only possible by hearing from our participants every three years. If you have not had a chance to complete your 2024-2025 follow-up survey yet, please consider doing so today.

Please complete your survey by going to [www.familycohort.org](http://www.familycohort.org), clicking on Start Survey, and entering your Subject ID: XXXXXXXX. At the end of your survey, you will have the opportunity to select a digital \$10 Amazon gift code that you can use immediately!

Thank you for your time and continued support of this research effort.

Very sincerely,

Hope McMaster, PhD  
Principal Investigator  
Millennium Cohort Family Study

The Millennium Cohort Family Study is a Department of Defense project at the Deployment Health Research Department, located at the Naval Health Research Center, in San Diego, California. OMB Control #: 0703-0064, RCS: DD-NAVY(AR)2678, and Primary Institutional Review Board Protocol # NHRC.2015.0019



# WHAT STRENGTHS ARE YOU BUILDING IN YOUR MARRIAGE?

**Military life can be stressful for couples.  
Building these strengths can help during challenging times:**



## Personal Beliefs

Sense of control over your life • Positive outlook about the future • Spirituality, faith, and compassion



## Family Communication Skills

Ability to listen and empathize • Discuss ideas calmly • Solve problems effectively • Express feelings openly and honestly

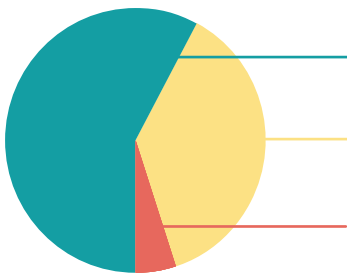


## Access to Social Support

Family and friends you can turn to for help  
• Others who care for you and make you feel loved

## How do military couples view their strengths?

Most service members and their spouses report high levels of the above strengths in their marriage.



**58%** of couples reported the highest levels across all strengths.

**37%** of couples reported moderate levels of strengths.

Only **5%** of couples reported the lowest levels across all strengths.  
Without important strengths, life stress may take a greater toll on couples.

## Couples with the lowest levels of strengths experienced:



Worse mental health



Lower marital relationship quality



Less satisfaction with the military

## Ways to build strengths in your marriage

### Take an inventory of your personal beliefs:

- Participate in a [survey](#) of your character strengths
- Get involved in spiritual or charitable activities
- Seek out help from a professional when you need it

### Work on improving communication in your family:

- Make a plan for staying connected when family members are apart
- Contact your local family service center to participate in a communication skills workshop
- Check out [Military OneSource](#) and sign up for a marriage enrichment weekend

### Build your social support network:

- Make a list of family and friends you can turn to for support
- Communicate regularly with your most important friends and family
- Seek out opportunities to connect with others in your community

VIA Institute on Character. (2020). The VIA Character Strengths Survey. Retrieved from <https://www.viacharacter.org/survey/account/register>  
Pflieger, J. C., Porter, B., Carballo, C. E., Stander, V. A., & Corry, N. H. (2020). Patterns of strengths in U.S. military couples. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 29, 1249–1263. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-019-01593-4>



For more information, go to <http://www.familycohort.org>

The Millennium Cohort Family Study follows nearly 10,000 spouses of junior military personnel for 21 years to help the Department of Defense understand the needs of families and provide better support.





**Reminder Letter: Follow-Up Non-responders**

**Mail Date: TBD**

Dear NAME,

I understand that finding time to complete the Family Study follow-up survey is not easy. You may be wondering if the Family Study really matters and if it is different from other surveys. I want to assure you that it is! One of the reasons that the Family Study matters and is different from other surveys is the SCIENCE behind what we do.

When you joined the Family Study, you began a journey with a select group of spouses that we have the privilege to hear from every three years. There are no other DoD studies that are as large and long-term as the Family Study. We want to understand your experiences while your family is connected to the military, as well as after service! We want to hear from spouses who don't have children, as well as those that choose to have children! We want to hear from spouses even when their marital status changes! We care about you and want to make sure that military life is beneficial to you and your family.

This is why we work closely with Military Community and Family Policy, the White House, and numerous other advocacy and policy groups to make sure that your experiences as a military spouse are communicated to decision makers that can improve policy and programs.

We understand that families change over time and have tried our best to tailor our survey to address your specific situation. By sharing your perspective and experiences, you will help to fill in the gaps of how military life impacts service members, spouses, and children.

Please complete your survey today by visiting [www.familycohort.org](http://www.familycohort.org), clicking "**Start Survey**", and entering your **Subject ID: XXXXXXXX**. At the end of your survey, you will have the opportunity to select a **\$10 Amazon digital gift code**, as a token of appreciation for your time.

Thank you for your continued support of this important research effort.

Very sincerely,

Hope McMaster, PhD  
Principal Investigator  
Millennium Cohort Family Study



CELEBRATING THE  
**MONTH OF THE MILITARY CHILD**  
*BECAUSE FAMILIES SERVE TOO*





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Dear NAME,

Each April, the Month of the Military Child provides a chance for us to recognize and thank the children of our service members and veterans. The Millennium Cohort Family Study team and I understand the sacrifices that military-connected children make for our country, and we are so grateful.

I have been a member of the Family Study team since my family PCS'd to San Diego in 2010. My children have grown from babies to adolescents and have experienced numerous separations from their father since we launched the first Family Study survey. My experiences as a military spouse and mother have helped shape our surveys and provided insight into our findings. The Family Study is currently the only ongoing DoD study of the health and relationship well-being of military families, and I am proud that I have been a part of the team since the beginning!

I now have the honor of representing the Family Study as I move into the position of Principal Investigator, and I want to sincerely thank you for your continued participation! Please know that you are making a difference in the lives of current and future generations of military families by remaining engaged in this remarkable study.

We will be launching our next survey cycle soon and hope to have your support in this ongoing effort.

Very respectfully,

Dr. Hope McMaster  
Principal Investigator of the Millennium Cohort Family Study

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