

Impact on Troops and Families



Expectations

- It is an expectation of the military that service members will be held responsible for the behavior of their spouses and children. This cultural norm could be used as a rationale to exercise abusive power and control tactics with family members.¹
¹ *Partner Violence: A 20-Year Literature Review and Synthesis. Partner Violence in the Military*, Carolyn West, www.nnfr.org.



Dependence

- Economic dependence is increased due to the relative job security of the military, despite downsizing
- The availability of services provided by the military (*housing assistance, day care, health care, formal support services*) is highly valued benefits for many young families.



Tempo

- Frequent family separation and reunification requires assumption of new roles for the partner left at home, usually the wife.
- Upon reunification there may be issues related to this role reversal.
- Long separations can foster distrust between the couple, and uncertainty about their future.
- The constant reassignment of service member families from place to place, often with unfamiliar cultures and values, isolates many victims from familiar support systems.



Fit for service

- For certain service members, being convicted of a domestic violence offense (in either a civilian or military court means s/he will (or should) be discharged, reassigned or otherwise separated from the service.
- Fear of career consequences is the primary deterrent to reporting domestic violence.
- While few service members are actually discharged due to domestic violence, the numbers who face other adverse career consequences (e.g., loss of assignment or promotion) is unknown.

