

# Participation in a Family Readiness Group (FRG): How Does It Influence Military Spouse Identity?

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## Introduction

- A significant amount of research has been done on the life experiences and resiliency of military spouses.
- Occupational science literature has continued to add to its construction of identity and how it both shapes and is shaped by occupational engagement.
- Despite the wealth of research surrounding military spouses, literature addressing the link between the occupational choices military spouses make and the influence of this on identity is sparse.

## Research Question

- How does participation in a Family Readiness Group influence military spouse identity?

## Methods

- Qualitative research design
- Purposive sampling
- Semi-structured interview with three military spouses living in Fort Bragg, North Carolina
- Thematic analysis (Braun & Clark, 2006)

## Results

### A Sense of Comradery

- “Coming in as new to Fort Bragg, you’ve got to live off post and come in as a new army wife. [It] is like you know nothing and no one but with the FRG you have branches upon branches of people who you connect with.”

### An Us Vs. Them Dichotomy

- “It’s fun to hang out with them [military spouses] because they know what’s going on and you don’t always have to explain like with your other friends that are not military. ”

### A Need for Information

- “I definitely became involved with the FRG because of deployment. I knew it would be the key... factor in getting information, and it has been, you know?”

## References

- Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.
- Segal, M.W., Lane, M.D., & Fisher, A.G. (2015). Conceptual model of military career and family life course events, intersections, and effects on well-being. *Military Behavioral Health*, 3(c), 95-107.

## Discussion

- Considering the stressors military spouses face, the relevancy of finding a sense of comradery becomes clear (Segal, Lane, & Fisher, 2015).
- Military spouses benefit from social occupations where they are able to establish an ‘us’. Participants expressed that this allowed them to be “just a spouse” which fostered a sense of relief.
- Participants indicated that participating in their FRG facilitated their transition into military life and informed their role-identity as a military spouse.

## Implications for OS & OT

- Findings provide understanding of the relationship between FRG participation and military spouse identity.
- Findings provide a better understanding of an occupation that is unique to this population and the meaning that may be derived from it.

