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EXPLAINING ASSOCIATIONS BETWEEN RELATIONAL TURBULENCE, COMMUNAL COPING, STRESSORS, AND RELATIONAL SATISFACTION DURING MILITARY REUNIONS: AT-HOME PARTNERS' PERSPECTIVES

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ABSTRACT

Owlett, Jennifer S. Ph.D., Purdue University, December 2014. Explaining associations between relational turbulence, communal coping, stressors, and relational satisfaction during military reunions: At-home partners' perspectives. Major Professor: Steven Wilson.

The current study examined how 179 romantic partners of U.S. service members perceived that they and their service members experienced the reintegration transition following a recent deployment. The relational turbulence model (Solomon & Knobloch, 2004) and the theoretical model of communal coping (TMCC; Afifi, Hutchinson, & Krouse, 2006) were used to frame this study. These frameworks had not been previously joined in this context. A revised communal coping measure was constructed to examine 17 hypotheses and 8 research questions because of challenges with the construct and external validity in prior measures. Participants completed an online questionnaire that assessed their perceptions of post-deployment stress, relational satisfaction, communal coping, uncertainty, and partner interference. Results indicated that communal coping completely mediated the association between partner interference and relational satisfaction. However, communal coping only partially mediated the association between uncertainty and relational satisfaction. The relational turbulence variables were also found to mediate the relationship between stress and relational satisfaction. Lastly, communal coping was found to moderate the relationship between stress and satisfaction.

Practical contributions are noted in the form of a potential training program for military couples who are experiencing post deployment stress. Limitations and directions for future research are also noted.

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

Recent estimates indicate that approximately 2 million U.S. service members have been deployed on over 3 million tours of duty to Iraq and Afghanistan since 2001 (IoM, 2010; Wells et al., 2011). Understanding what the deployment experience is like for service members, their romantic partners, and families requires providing attention to all aspects of the deployment process. Deployment occurs across multiple phases and includes pre-deployment, mid-deployment, and post-deployment (McNulty, 2005). Recent reports have called for increased attention to be placed on the post-deployment transition (e.g., IoM, 2012). The reunion phase, which is often labeled "reintegration" or "post-deployment," includes the service member and his/her family preparing for the service member's return home and attempting to return to their daily lives (Marek et al., n.d.). Reintegration does not follow a strict timeline, varies from several months to several years, and is frequently characterized by both excitement and apprehension (Marek et al., n.d.; Verdeli et al., 2011). For many individuals and families, reintegration can be challenging (Bowling & Sherman, 2008; Hutchinson & Banks-Williams, 2006).

Multiple voices are valuable to consider when evaluating how deployment and reintegration affect families, but the non-deployed partner's perspective is particularly important for several reasons. One reason for focusing on the relational partner is that

how she or he experiences deployment affects the larger family unit. Allen et al. (2010) indicate that military couples' relational satisfaction is correlated, so whether partners are satisfied may impact if service members are satisfied. This point is especially salient given that marital difficulties are one, among many, risk factors for suicide among recently returning service members (Martin et al., 2009; Patterson et al., 2001). Military spouses/partners play a critical role in encouraging service members who are experiencing mental health or marital difficulties to seek help (Wilson, Gettings, & Dorrance Hall, 2014). When military children are part of the family unit, understanding how the non-deployed partner is reacting to deployment and reintegration challenges offers additional insight. Relational partners' mental health and abilities to cope with deployment related stress have been shown to strongly predict how children experience deployment and reunion (Chandra et al., 2010; Lester et al., 2010).

With this information in mind, the proposed project extends prior work by examining how, and with whom, military couples cope with reintegration challenges. Throughout this project, specific attention is granted to exploring the non-deployed romantic partner's perspective. The non-deployed romantic partner is showcased because current findings suggest changes in whom spouses turn to for support when coping with stressors during deployment and reintegration. During deployment, military spouses are unlikely to name their partners as sources of social support, but include them as part of their social support network during reintegration (Karakurt, Christanesen, Wadsworth, & Weiss, 2013). Consequently, one goal of this investigation is to evaluate if partners perceive that their military service member is supporting them in coping with reintegration challenges.

The theoretical model of communal coping (TMCC; Afifi, Hutchinson, & Krouse, 2006) and the relational turbulence model (Solomon & Knobloch, 2004; Solomon, Weber, & Steuber, 2010) were used to guide this research project. Broadly speaking, the relational turbulence model (Solomon & Knobloch, 2004) is used to understand how relational problems form; the model suggests that factors like relational uncertainty and partner interference create relational turbulence. The communal coping (Afifi et al., 2006; Afifi et al., 2012) model offers insight to the communicative processes that individuals undergo when coping with problems individually or collectively. These two models were brought together in this study's hypotheses and research questions, which examined how different levels of turbulence affected the non-deployed partner's perception that communal coping was present. This investigation also explored how military partners' perceptions that communal coping is enacted as a response to reintegration stressors affects relational satisfaction.

From a conceptual standpoint, this study's primary contribution was bringing together two theoretical frameworks (relational turbulence and communal coping) that have not been previously linked. Processes associated with the creation of relational turbulence (e.g., uncertainty and perceived interference) hold potential for hindering communal coping. One explanation for this potential relationship is that relational turbulence might prompt individuals to view stressors as belonging to individual members of the dyad rather than being collectively shared.

This study also provides several other valuable contributions. For example, reintegration transitions are explored with a coping lens. This addition is particularly needed because few studies have examined how individuals cope with post-deployment

concerns that can affect the entire family unit (Dimiceli, Steinhardt, & Smith, 2010). Another benefit that this research provides is a validated measure of communal coping. Prior work (e.g., Afifi, Felix, & Afifi, 2012) has begun working on a quantitative measure, but efforts to date have limitations, which are outlined. Furthermore, this inquiry assists in extending work in the relational turbulence (Solomon & Knobloch, 2004) literature that examines reintegration problems. The relational turbulence model recently has been applied (e.g., Knobloch, et al., 2013; Knobloch & Theiss, 2011) in exploring the challenges that service members and their significant others face during the reintegration phase, including how the model predicts communicative processes such as relational maintenance. This study extends current work by making links to communicative processes involving coping. Toward the conclusion of this document, practical contributions are highlighted in the form of advice for families who are experiencing relational turbulence in their deployment transitions. These findings can also be used to help inform individuals and programs that provide support to military couples who are experiencing reintegration.

1.1.1 Preview of Subsequent Chapters

To accomplish these goals, Chapter 2 builds a literature review by reviewing recent work on the communal coping and relational turbulence literatures. Solomon and Knobloch's (2004) relational turbulence model is reviewed first, before the coping literature (e.g., Afifi et al., 2006; Afifi et al., 2012; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Lyons et al., 1998) is outlined. In each case, attention is provided to recent applications across several areas. This chapter also contains the research questions and hypotheses that served as the foundation of this proposed study.

In Chapter 3 I described the proposed methods for this study. DeVellis' (2012) recommendations were employed for scale development because one aim for this dissertation was to create and validate a new measure that assessed communal coping. After a new scale was advanced, findings from the relational turbulence and communal coping literatures were brought together in a study that examined how military spouses/partners coped with reintegration stressors. Relevant details to each stage of the investigation process were provided (e.g., participant recruitment, study measures). For the purpose of this research, study measures included items related to: communal coping, relational satisfaction, relational uncertainty, and perceptions of partner interference.

During Chapter 4, study results were highlighted. Preliminary analyses were provided, and descriptive data were included. Findings relevant to each of the proposed research questions and hypotheses were individually examined.

In Chapter 5 I discussed research findings in light of the extant literature on relational turbulence, communal coping, and reintegration. This dissertation concluded with information about this study's theoretical, practical, and methodological contributions. Study limitations and directions for future research were also noted.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter develops the theoretical framework for the current study by explaining the relational turbulence and communal coping models. To begin this section, key concepts of the relational turbulence model, such as transitions, interdependence and partner interference, uncertainty, and appraisals of turmoil are described. Following these explications, applications of the relational turbulence model to military reintegration are examined. The second portion of this chapter focuses on how coping has been traditionally examined. This section begins by outlining Lazarus and Folkman (1984), before moving to Lyons et al. (1998). As part of this information, the communal coping model is explored with attention to recent contributions from the communication discipline (e.g., Afifi et al., 2006; Afifi et al., 2012). Hypotheses about associations between relational turbulence, stress, communal coping, and relationship satisfaction are then forwarded.

2.1 Relational Turbulence Model

The relational turbulence model (Solomon & Knobloch, 2004; Solomon et al., 2010) examines perceptions, emotions, and communicative behaviors that occur during transitions in romantic relationships (Knobloch et al., 2013). According to the model, relational turbulence occurs when individuals react intensely to relationship events that would be quite mundane under more normal circumstances (Solomon et al., 2010).

Examining the relational turbulence model requires defining key concepts that comprise this perspective, such as transitions, partner interference, relational uncertainty, and appraisals of turmoil. After this explanation is provided, attention will be lent briefly to research on turbulence with romantically involved military couples during the reintegration phase.

2.1.1 Key Concepts

2.1.1.1 Transitions

To understand how relational turbulence functions, one should start by defining transitions. Transitions are viewed as "shifts in how individuals define their relationship and behave toward each other" (Theiss & Knobloch, in press, p. 2). In the earliest conceptualization of the model, the transition from casual dating to serious involvement was considered as an event that would spark increased turbulence (Solomon & Knobloch, 2004). Transitions can induce turbulence because they hold the potential for individuals to reassess their relational involvement, and can lead to interruptions in daily routines (Theiss & Knobloch, 2011). Solomon, Weber, and Steuber (2010) add that transitions and turbulence are separate but related entities. Transitions are "the changes in circumstances that create the potential for relationships to change, rather than in the relationships themselves" (p. 117). In comparison, turbulence refers to individuals' appraisals of relationship changes (Solomon et al., 2010). Transitions are likely to challenge a dyad when a person perceives interference from a partner, and has increased relational uncertainty (Solomon & Knobloch, 2004).

2.1.1.2 Independence and Partner Interference

Before identifying how interference from a partner might happen, one must focus on the role of interdependence in developing relationships. Interdependence is "the coordination of mutually beneficial systems of behavior between partners" (Solomon & Knobloch, 2004, p. 798). Interdependence tends to increase over the relationship's progression (Solomon & Knobloch, 2004). Examining how individual members within the dyad manage their interdependence is important because of the potential gains and/or losses that each person might experience. For example, one benefit that can result from increased interdependence is that individuals might feel they are better able to reach their daily goals. When interdependence is not successfully negotiated within the dyad, individuals might instead believe that their partner has interfered with their abilities to meet these goals (Solomon & Theiss, 2011). Interference from partners is likely to be perceived when one's relational partner does not assist in helping a person to reach a goal or hinders personal development (Solomon & Knobloch, 2004). The relational turbulence model suggests that perceived interference from partners is one factor that is likely to create relational turbulence (Theiss & Knobloch, 2011).

Partner interference has been studied in the context of several relational transitions. In the context of dating relationships, interference is thought to share a curvilinear association with relational closeness. At moderate levels of intimacy, perceptions of interference are highest because partners' lives are becoming increasingly interconnected. However, partners likely have not yet been able to work out their individual routines for managing the interconnectivity within their relationship (Solomon, et al., 2010). Even in a well-developed relationship, however, transitions may make it

necessary for couples to renegotiate their interdependence. As noted below, reintegration is one example of a transition that prompts couples to work out new routines (Knobloch & Theiss, 2011; Theiss & Knobloch, 2011).

2.1.1.3 Uncertainty

Uncertainty can also influence how turbulence is constructed. In general, uncertainty occurs when individuals lack confidence in their abilities to both predict future outcomes and to explain previous outcomes (Berger & Bradac, 1982). Multiple forms of uncertainty exist in the relational turbulence model, including self uncertainty, partner uncertainty, and relational uncertainty (Solomon & Knobloch, 2004). Self uncertainty includes individuals evaluating their own relational goals or feelings about a partner (Solomon & Knobloch, 2004). Partner uncertainty references how one perceives his/her partner's investment to the relationship (Solomon & Knobloch, 2004). Finally, relational uncertainty refers to the degree of confidence in what the relationship is and where it is headed (e.g., about the future of the relationship itself) (Knobloch, 2007; Knobloch & Solomon, 1999). Research has indicated that self and partner uncertainty can contribute to increased relational uncertainty (Solomon & Knobloch, 2004). Transitions are also likely to influence levels of relational uncertainty (Knobloch, Ebata, McGlaughlin, & Ogolsky, 2013; Solomon et al., 2010). Notably, while all three types include uncertainty in some form, they are empirically distinct and do not form a uni-dimensional factor (Knobloch, 2007).

Prior research indicates that multiple negative outcomes are associated with partner interference and relational uncertainty. When partner interference is perceived, individuals are more likely to appraise irritations with their romantic partners more

severely (Solomon & Knobloch, 2004; Theiss & Solomon, 2006b). Similarly, when individuals indicate that they are experiencing high levels of relational uncertainty, they are also likely to report having problems in communicating with their partners (Solomon & Theiss, 2011). Partners are also likely to have increased negative emotional states when relational uncertainty and partner interference are present (Knobloch, Miller, & Carpenter, 2007; Solomon & Theiss, 2011). Knobloch and Theiss (2011) also found that relational uncertainty and partner inference can predict turmoil appraisals and negative emotions. While several factors can influence how couples handle relational turbulence, additional insight can be gained by viewing how the model has been applied in previous studies.

2.1.2 General Applications of the Relational Turbulence Model

The relational turbulence model has been applied across a variety of contexts over the past several years (i.e., Solomon et al., 2010). For the purpose of this dissertation, representative examples of research that the model has generated will be reviewed. In early applications of this model, relational partners' appraisals of irritations (e.g., Solomon & Knobloch, 2004; Theiss & Solomon, 2006) were examined in relation to relational turbulence. In one study, Solomon and Knobloch (2004) asked college students who reported on their dating relationships to complete a questionnaire that included assessments of intimacy, relational uncertainty, partner interference, and appraisals of potential irritations. In a separate example, Theiss and Solomon (2006a) used a web-based survey, and asked participants to report on relational quality once a week for six weeks.

The relational turbulence model has also been used to examine how hurtful messages (McLaren, Solomon, & Priem, 2011), and romantic jealousy (Theiss & Solomon, 2006b) might lead to increased turbulence. In their work, McLaren, Solomon, and Priem (2011) used a web-based survey to examine how relational turbulence can occur when individuals receive a hurtful message from their relational partner. In another application, Theiss and Solomon (2006b) also prompted participants to complete a web-based survey, with the goal of assessing communicative directness between individuals who reported that they had experienced jealousy in their romantic relationships.

Additional applications of the relational turbulence model have focused on how relational turbulence might result when couples are dealing with stressors that can affect multiple individuals. For example, understanding how couples communicate about health problems holds potential for understanding if relational turbulence is likely (e.g., Weber & Solomon, 2008; Steuber & Solomon, 2008). In their investigation, Weber and Solomon (2008) examined breast cancer blogs to evaluate how a couple's response to a breast cancer diagnosis can lead to increased relational turbulence. In another application, Steuber and Solomon (2008) analyzed online blogs to understand how couples coping with infertility were at an increased risk for relational turbulence. One recent area of inquiry is how individuals and couples experience relational turbulence during military reintegration.

2.1.3 Applications to Military Reintegration

For the purpose of this next section, four reintegration studies' (Knobloch et al., 2013; Knobloch & Theiss, 2011; Knobloch & Theiss, 2012; Theiss & Knobloch, 2011) methods and findings will be highlighted. To summarize these results, this section will

begin by outlining common recruitment procedures that these studies share. Frequently examined themes and related findings will also be outlined. This section will conclude by providing suggestions for future studies that seek to bring together the relational turbulence and reintegration literatures.

Multiple topics have been examined across these four studies via qualitative and quantitative methods. Knobloch and Theiss (2012) prompted military couples to complete an open-ended online questionnaire about their post-deployment transitions; they then coded these open-ended data for themes related to relational changes, uncertainty, and partner interference. The other three studies measured these constructs and assessed their associations with a variety of communicative and relationship factors. For example, Theiss and Knobloch (2011) asked service members, or their non-deployed partners, to individually complete an online questionnaire. In this examination, items inquired about participants' assessments of relational maintenance behaviors, partner responsiveness, and turmoil appraisals. Knobloch et al. (2013) explored depressive symptoms, relational uncertainty, perceptions of partner interference, and reintegration difficulties as reported by both members of military couples via an online questionnaire. Knobloch and Theiss (2011) also assessed depressive symptoms, uncertainty (self, other, relational), and relational satisfaction, focusing only on recently returned service members.

One common theme throughout these studies is their use of similar recruitment methods. Knobloch and Theiss (2012), Knobloch and Theiss (2011), Theiss and Knobloch (2011), and Knobloch et al. (2013) recruited participants by emailing advertising information to family readiness officers, chaplains, and military life

personnel. In these examples, recruitment also occurred through posting announcements on online forums for military families, and sharing posters at reintegration workshops.

The studies' enrollment criteria were adapted to fit the unit of analysis as either an individual's perceptions (e.g., Knobloch & Theiss, 2011; Knobloch & Theiss, 2012; Theiss & Knobloch, 2011), or as the dyads' accounts (e.g., Knobloch et al., 2013). Participants must have indicated that: "(a) they were currently involved in a romantic relationship, (b) they or their romantic partner had returned home from deployment during the past six months, and (c) they had access to a secure and private Internet connection" (Knobloch & Theiss, 2012, p. 8). Knobloch et al. (2013) also required that both the deployed and the non-deployed partners participate in the study, and be "custodial parents of one or more children" (p. 10).

Results from these studies indicate that many military couples do experience relational turbulence as service members return from deployment, and that factors associated with turbulence predict communicative behaviors and relational outcomes. Both service members and their at-home partners report that deployment and reunion resulted in positive and negative changes within their relationships. For example, Knobloch and Theiss (2012) asked participants to consider "in what ways, if any, did your relationship change after deployment compared to before deployment?" (p. 429). Participants stated they felt several noteworthy transformations had happened across this time period, such as:

> relationship is stronger (18% of substantive thematic units), value the relationship more (14.7%), problems reconnecting (11.8%), difficulty communicating (10.9%), increased autonomy (10.4%), changes in finances and employment

(9.5%), changes in sexual behavior (7.6%), problems reintegrating the service member into daily life (5.7%), heightened conflict (5.7%), and separation or divorce (5.7%).

With this information in mind, it is important to investigate what factors, such as those found in the relational turbulence model (e.g., uncertainty and partner interference), might influence the creation of these outcomes.

Uncertainty, in multiple forms, was a cause for concern among participants. Knobloch and Theiss (2012) requested that participants "list and briefly describe issues of uncertainty you experienced when you/your partner returned from deployment (after you were reunited)" (p. 434). In regards to this question, seven categories were identified that spanned issues of: commitment (19.1%), reintegration (18.5%), household stressors (15.9%), personality changes (15.0%), sexual behavior and infidelity (14.3%), service member's health (11.8%), and communication (5.4%). Uncertainty alone can be potentially problematic, but additional problems might come to light when individuals perceive that they are not able to achieve their goals because of their partner's interference.

Across these studies, participants commonly reported instances of partner interference after deployment (Knobloch & Theiss, 2012). When asked to "please list and briefly describe ways in which your partner has made it harder for you to complete your everyday activities since you have been reunited after deployment" (Knobloch & Theiss, 2012, p. 438), participants indicated partner interference related to: everyday routines (27.1%), household chores (19.6%), control issues (14.1%), feeling smothered (12.2%), parenting (9.0%), partner differences (7.4%), social networks and social activities (6.3%),

and not enough time together (4.3%). As a whole, these diverse issues collectively provide insight to the multitude of problems that individuals might face when re-establishing routines after deployment.

Uncertainty and partner interference might individually play a factor in creating negative deployment related outcomes, but attention should also be granted to understanding how these elements can collectively create challenges. In Knobloch and Theiss (2011), service members who reported depressive symptoms were also likely to experience less relational satisfaction, to express more relational uncertainty, and to indicate more partner interference. The negative relationship between depressive symptoms and relationship satisfaction was mediated by self-uncertainty and partner interference. It is valuable to note that these issues stem from reports by service members.

When both members of the dyad are asked to describe their post-deployment experiences, associations among multiple relational turbulence variables have been noted. For example, in Knobloch et al. (2013), depressive symptoms, relational uncertainty, and partner interference were found to be positively associated. These factors also predicted participants' reports of reintegration issues, which were defined as "cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and relational challenges that military families face upon reunion" (Knobloch et al., 2013, p. 755). Because the focus of this study was on both partners, the researchers were able to explore both actor and partner effects. Actor effects occur when a person's report (i.e., relational uncertainty) predicts their own outcomes, whereas partner effects occur when a partner's report predicts the person's outcomes. Knobloch et al. (2013) indicate that negative associations between a partner's self and relationship uncertainty and an actor's reintegration difficulty also were found. Notably, Knobloch et al. (2013)

indicate that fewer partner than actor effects were present, and the partner effects were smaller in effect size. These results are valuable to consider because the partner effects demonstrate that reintegration difficulties are not isolated to one individual alone.

With these findings in mind, examining how relational turbulence impacts the construction of communicative messages is relevant. In a study that gathered data from either military service members or non-deployed partners (i.e., one but not both members for each couple), Theiss and Knobloch (2011) found relational maintenance behaviors to be predicted by relational uncertainty and partner interference. In this study, relational maintenance behaviors spanned three themes. These areas included communicating openly about the relationship, providing reassurance about the relationship, and constructively participating in conflict. Relationship uncertainty was inversely associated with openness and providing reassurances. Partner interference had inverse relationships with assurances and conflict management.

Knobloch and Theiss (2011) also examined partner responsiveness and turmoil appraisals during the post deployment transition. Partner responsiveness was defined as happening when recognition and support about a partner's core aspects occur (Reis, Clark, & Holmes, 2004). Partner responsiveness also refers to an individual's perception of their partner's behaviors. Theiss and Knobloch (2011) found that relational uncertainty (*H3*), and partner interference (*H4*), negatively predicted partner responsiveness. Theiss and Knobloch (2011) also questioned how relational uncertainty (self, partner, and relationship) and partner interference influenced the relationship between relational satisfaction and turbulence markers (*RQ3*). Turbulence markers for this study included relational maintenance, partner responsiveness, and appraisals of turmoil. For this

research question, relational satisfaction was the independent variable, and turbulence markers were the dependent variables. Analyses revealed that relational uncertainty and partner interference collectively explained an additional 5% and 14% of the variance beyond the relationship between relational satisfaction and turbulence markers (relational maintenance, partner responsiveness, and appraisals of turmoil). Relationship satisfaction and self uncertainty were found to predict relational maintenance behaviors (assurances, openness, and conflict management). Relationship satisfaction, partner uncertainty, and partner interference predicted partner responsiveness. Relationship satisfaction, relationship uncertainty, and partner interference predicted turmoil appraisals. Mediation analyses uncovered that self uncertainty mediated the relationship between relational satisfaction and relational maintenance. Partner uncertainty and interference mediated the relationship between relational satisfaction and partner responsiveness. Partner interference also mediated the relationship between relational satisfaction and appraisals of turmoil. Taken together, these findings help to suggest why turbulence is problematic for couples to experience. Increased turbulence might reduce the likelihood that partners would enact behaviors to help them manage or cope with stressful transitions like deployment.

2.1.4 Advancing Relational Turbulence Studies on Reintegration

These examinations collectively provide insight about how military couples can encounter relational turbulence during the reunion stage. Each study concludes by indicating a need for additional scholarship to be completed on this topic. As one direction, Knobloch and Theiss (2012) suggest evaluating if relational uncertainty and partner interference align to create constructive or destructive relational turbulence

experiences. In another study, Theiss and Knobloch (2011) reflect that future investigations that include the relational turbulence model with a military population should more strongly consider how variables like relational satisfaction might predict future turbulence. Lastly, in their review of their findings, Knobloch and Theiss (2011) call for future research to investigate how military couples view and evaluate coping strategies across the deployment cycle.

One way in which to respond to Knobloch and Theiss' (2011) suggestion is to create a study which views reintegration related turbulence with a coping lens (e.g., Afifi et al., 2006; Afifi et al., 2012, Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Lyons et al., 1998). Reviewing the coping literature might be helpful for advancing this research for several reasons. For example, by viewing this information, insight can be gained about how turbulence might interfere with communicative processes (e.g., relational maintenance, communal coping) that would otherwise assist couples in responding to reintegration challenges. This interference also could potentially lead to decreased relational satisfaction during reintegration transitions. Another reason is this literature might also contain suggestions about when partner interference or relational uncertainty can impede collective forms of coping (e.g., communal coping; Afifi et al., 2006). In light of the relational turbulence studies, valuable insight can be gained from understanding when military couples view responsibilities for issues as being collectively shared and as requiring collective action. Before applying the coping literature to look at military couples' responses to reunion challenges, reviewing this material is a pertinent next step.

2.2 Theories of Communal Coping

One perspective that can help individuals to understand how reintegration challenges are experienced is Afifi et al.'s (2006) theoretical model of communal coping (TMCC). Afifi et al.'s (2006) model expands upon prior work on coping, such as Lazarus and Folkman (1984), and Lyons et al. (1998). Consequently, these earlier pieces will be reviewed before moving to an explication of Afifi et al. (2006). As Lazarus and Folkman (1984) offer one of the earliest conceptualizations about how coping functions, and their work serves as a basis for Lyons et al. (1998), it will be reviewed first. Throughout this review, examples of stressors that military families might encounter during reintegration are provided. Following this section, communal coping's benefits are outlined. This section concludes by offering a critique of current methods for assessing communal coping and arguing that a new measure is needed.

2.2.1 Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) Coping Perspective

To understand Lazarus and Folkman's model, key concepts such as stress, cognitive appraisals, coping processes, as well as resources and constraints must be defined.

2.2.1.1 Stress

To begin outlining recent perspectives on coping, one should take note of the relationship between stress and coping. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) indicate that stress is an inevitable part of life, but how individuals cope with stress can greatly influence human functioning. Stress stimuli, also known as "stressors" (Selye, 1950), can come in multiple forms. Lazarus and Cohen (1977) outline three types: major changes that affect a large number of people, major changes that affect one or a few individuals, and/or daily

hassles. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) define stress as a "particular relationship between the person and the environment that is appraised by the person as taxing or exceeding his or her resources and endangering his or her well-being" (p. 19). To obtain a better understanding of this definition, several elements will be unpacked, like appraisals and resources, with relevant examples provided.

2.2.1.2 Cognitive Appraisals

Within Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) framework, the relationship between the person and his/her environment is mediated by cognitive appraisals and coping processes. Folkman, Lazarus, Dunkel-Schetter, DeLongis, and Gruen (1986) define cognitive appraisals as "a process through which the person evaluates whether a particular encounter with the environment is relevant to his or her well-being, and if so, in what ways" (p. 992). Cognitive appraisals reflect the need for an individual to predict and to interpret his/her environment (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Cognitive appraisals are formed as primary or secondary appraisals. In primary appraisals, an individual assesses if s/he could lose or gain anything from the encounter (e.g., commitments, values, or goals) (Folkman et al., 1986). Following the primary appraisal, secondary appraisals happen when the person evaluates how to prevent potential harm or how to maximize potential gains (Folkman et al., 1986). One should note that appraisals are not stagnant and reappraisals can develop. Reappraisals are "a changed appraisal on the basis of new information from the environment" (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, p. 38). For example, during reintegration, a service member's partner might need to appraise environmental cues in order to make decisions about when s/he can share information about problems that occurred while the service member was

deployed. This appraisal process might be especially important if not all information about stressors was shared during the deployment itself (e.g., Joseph & Afifi, 2010; Merolla, 2010).

2.2.1.3 Coping Processes

Coping processes generally follow appraisals about the stressor. In coping with environmental demands, a person attempts to control the situation that is creating a stressor. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) describe coping as "constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person" (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, p. 141). Lazarus and Folkman (1984) suggest that a variety of components can contribute to coping processes.

Coping is typically characterized across two dimensions that include problem-focused and emotion-focused coping. In problem-focused coping, coping efforts are directed at "managing or altering the problem causing the distress" (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, p. 149). If the environment is appraised as being able to be changed, problem-focused coping is likely. In comparison, if little can be done to change one's environment, emotion-focused coping is probable. For example, if the service member is provided information about family problems that happened while s/he was deployed, s/he might try to seek out the source of the problem and attempt to rectify it. In comparison, emotion-focused coping includes "regulating the emotional response to the problem" (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, p. 149). In emotion focused coping, the individual might downplay the importance of the issues that created problems in order to encourage the

family to move on from the selected problems. As another option, an individual might choose to listen attentively and supportively to validate a spouse or partner's frustration with the given issue.

2.2.1.4 Resources

Understanding how coping functions also requires one to note how resources are conceptualized. Resources can include items the person already has (e.g., money, tools, relevant skills). A person is also deemed to be resourceful if s/he potentially can find resources that are needed but not currently available. Resources tend to split into two categories: those that are person properties (e.g., health and energy, positive beliefs about oneself, and problem-solving and social skills) and those that are environmental (e.g., social and material resources).

To fully understand how Lazarus and Folkman (1984) employ resources in their coping model, it is valuable to understand how their version differs from other understandings, like Antonovsky (1979). Antonovsky (1979) indicates that coping serves as a resistance resource to stress. This point of view advances the idea that having specific resources will buffer stress. In comparison, Lazarus and Folkman (1984) state that coping evolves from resources, so that merely having resources alone does not necessarily result in a diminished stress response (e.g., Pearlin & Schooler, 1978). According to Lazarus and Folkman (1984), coping mediates the relationship between resources and stress responses.

2.2.1.5 Constraints

Unfortunately, resources are not always available and can be restricted by factors that Lazarus and Folkman (1984) label as constraints. Constraints focus on the internal

and/or external demands portions of Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) coping definition. Constraints are divided into personal and environmental concerns. Personal constraints, also known as personal agendas, are "internalized cultural values and beliefs that proscribe certain types of action or feeling" (p. 165). These personal agendas can serve as guidelines for when certain behaviors or emotions are appropriate in social interactions. In regards to the ongoing example, family members might believe that talking about the deployment related problems they are facing will not fix them, so few benefits are perceived in opening discussion about these concerns (i.e., Owlett et al., 2012). Environmental constraints are external demands that can include multiple demands for the same resource (e.g., money). As there are limited amounts of these items, decisions must be made about how to share resources with other individuals who might also be competing for them. For example, there may not be sufficient time for all family members to discuss problems that happened during the deployment.

2.2.1.6 Assumptions about Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) Coping Processes

When viewing Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) coping perspective as a whole, several qualities are important to consider. First, Lazarus and Folkman (1984) suggest coping is not trait-based, and should be viewed as a process. A process-oriented approach considers that a person can change how s/he copes with a stressful encounter as the event happens (Folkman et al., 1986). In comparison, a trait-based approach examines what a person typically does to respond to a stressor, which does not allow for a person to adapt his/her coping over time (Folkman et al., 1986). Coping also requires effort (through appraisals of demands) and is directed toward a specific stressful context. Finally, one should also note that coping is also defined as a person's efforts to "manage demands."

Through focusing on management, evaluative standards for "good" or "bad" coping are not created. Coping, according to this model, occurs even if the efforts to manage the demands are not considered successful (Folkman et al., 1986).

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) also comment that coping can serve multiple functions. In this perspective, a distinction is made between functions and outcomes. Coping functions are the purpose a strategy serves while coping outcomes are the effects a strategy has for the individual or couple. Consequently, certain functions will be associated with specific outcomes. One coping related function in the ongoing example is family members may agree not to talk about the deployment in order to avoid individuals feeling upset. An outcome of this function may be that there is less understanding overall among family members.

2.2.1.7 Limitations to Lazarus and Folkman

Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) perspective presents one approach to understanding how coping functions, but Lyons et al. (1998) suggest that there are concerns with this conceptualization. One of the largest issues Lyons et al. (1998) point out is Lazarus and Folkman (1984) do not explicitly identify who is involved in the coping process. For example, problem and emotion-focused coping operate from an individually-centered approach because they are created from one individual's appraisal of a stressor. This perspective does not account for the social nature of coping, which can occur when multiple individuals assist each other in responding to stressors. Lyons et al. (1998) posit that individuals do not take on stressors alone, and people are likely to seek out others while they process these issues. In spite of the numerous challenges that individuals might encounter, individuals may be better equipped to take on these issues if

they have additional support from others (Lyons et al., 1998). This point also holds true when coping with reintegration stressors. For example, Karakurt et al. (2013) note that individuals who are experiencing deployment stressors are likely to seek out others for support when coping with these challenges.

2.2.2 Lyons et al.'s (1998) Coping Perspective

2.2.2.1 Key Concepts

Given the problems that Lyons and colleagues (1998) identify with Lazarus and Folkman (1984), Lyons et al. (1998) developed a separate coping conceptualization. One goal that this separate approach advances includes understanding how individuals can band together to collectively confront issues. Lyons et al. (1998) label this action as "communal coping," which is defined as the "pooling of resources and efforts of several individuals (e.g., couples, families, or communities) to confront adversity" (Lyons et al., 1998, p. 580). Communal coping builds on Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) perspective, and has separate appraisal and action dimensions embedded within this framework. During appraisal, individuals consider if problems will be shared among several individuals, or if they are individually owned. Following these appraisals, the action component asks what coping strategies will be implemented to tackle a given stressor. Communal coping happens when "one or more individuals perceive a stressor as 'our problem' (a social appraisal) vs. 'my' or 'your' problem (an individualistic appraisal) and activate a process of shared or collaborative coping" (Lyons et al., 1998, p. 583). According to Lyons et al. (1998), the size of the group in which communal coping can occur can fluctuate between a dyad and a community. Notably, communal coping is also

viewed as distinct from social support. Lyons et al. (1998) indicate that social support does not provide coordination among individuals to achieve a mutual benefit.

With this information in mind, Lyons et al. (1998) take care to distinguish communal coping from other related coping processes. Lyons et al. (1998) indicate that communal coping is different from individual help/support provision, individualism, and help/support seeking in terms of where they fall along the stress appraisal and action (responsibility) dimensions. In *individual help/support provision*, the stress appraisal is *our problem* but *my responsibility*. *Individualism* includes *my problem* and *my responsibility*. Finally, *help/support seeking* occurs when the stress is appraised as *my problem* and *our responsibility.* Figure 1 includes a visual representation of the different appraisal and action dimensions that Lyons et al. (1998) discuss (p. 586).

To illustrate how these different coping strategies could be viewed in a reintegration context, an example from Knobloch et al. (2013) will be explored. In this work, Knobloch et al. note that when a service member returns from deployment, the family can encounter difficulties in reintegrating the service member into daily routines. To cope with this stressor, a non-deployed partner could use any of the strategies that Lyons et al. (1998) describe. In *individual help/support provision*, the partner could view this issue as affecting the entire family, and feel that s/he must create opportunities for the service member to rejoin the family. If an *individualistic* approach is used, the partner might believe that the service member is interfering with family routines that s/he established while the service member was gone, and also believe that s/he will have to try to resolve the situation for the most part alone. In *help/support seeking*, the non-deployed

partner might feel responsible for not incorporating the service member into daily activities and routines, and might ask the family to help him/her in completing this task. Lastly, a *communal coping* perspective would invite the non-deployed partner to view this concern as a family issue that should be resolved with the help of all of the family members.

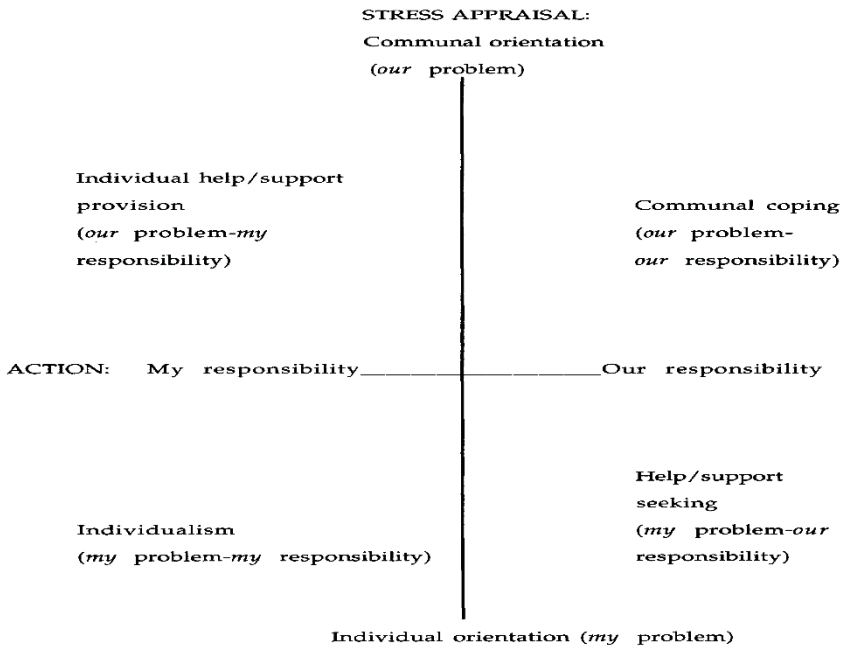

Figure 1. Individual and social coping processes (Lyons et al., 1998, p. 586).

2.2.2.2 Factors that Influence Communal Coping

Several components beyond the appraisal and action assessments influence when communal coping is likely. Lyons et al. (1998) theorize that three components must be present for communal coping to happen. First, a communal coping orientation must be present, which means at least one person must believe that benefits can result from multiple individuals collectively dealing with a problem. Second, in order for coping to

be shared, there must be communication about the stressor. Finally, cooperative action is also needed which means individuals should come together to adaptively construct strategies to take on the demands of the stressor.

Once these elements are present, communal coping might occur, but the likelihood of this is further influenced by a variety of individual and relational factors. Lyons et al. (1998) speculate on four variables that might contribute to whether communal coping happens (situational, cultural, personal relationship characteristics, and sex). In situational factors, one's perception of how an individual or network is affected by the stressor influences if communal coping is enacted. Events that affect multiple individuals might automatically prompt several individuals to work together to overcome stressors associated with these problems (e.g., floods, wildfires, and tornadoes). The cultural context is likely to influence the ways in which communal coping occurs, as well. Lyons et al. (1998) note that communal coping might be more likely in cultures that ascribe to communal responses to stressors (i.e., Amish responses to death in their communities; Bryer, 1986).

Personal relationship characteristics are also valuable contributors for understanding if communal coping is likely (Lyons et al., 1998). Communal coping is most likely with individuals who one feels a close connection to in their network. Sex is another variable that is posited to affect communal coping because men and women might employ different coping styles. Taken together, these variables indicate that communal coping is not an automatic response to stressors. Determining if communal coping will occur requires analyzing problems across several dimensions.

2.2.2.3 Limitations to Lyons et al.

Even though Lyons et al. (1998) seek to create a more comprehensive view of how coping functions, this model is not without limitations. For example, several claims are not empirically evaluated (e.g., factors that might contribute to how communal coping functions). Afifi and colleagues (2006) identify two issues with Lyons et al.'s (1998) perspective. First, Afifi et al. (2006) claim that Lyons et al. (1998) provide little information about the coping processes that groups encounter. Lyons et al. (1998) note that communal coping occurs in groups, but do not specify how. Another concern lies in how coping is assessed over time. Lyons et al. (1998) focus on coping as a "one-shot" item and do not consider how the transactional nature of coping can influence which coping options are available (Afifi et al., 2006). A transactional approach takes into account that several individuals' communication and coping styles might be continually changing as they respond to a problem over time (Afifi et al., 2006).

2.2.3 Afifi et al.'s (2006) Theoretical Model of Communal Coping

2.2.3.1 Key Concepts

With these limitations in mind, Afifi et al. (2006) created a revised model of coping processes. Similar to Lyons et al.'s (1998) characterization, communal coping is distinguished from related constructs like social support (i.e., MacGeorge, Feng, & Burleson, 2011) because social support does not include co-ownership of a problem (Afifi et al., 2006). Social support is defined as a "social network's provision of psychological and material resources intended to benefit an individual's ability to cope with stress" (Cohen, 2004, p. 676). Several qualities also distinguish Afifi et al. (2006) from prior models (e.g., Lyons et al., 1998). One change includes additional attention to

individual accountability. This change includes adding *your responsibility*, which is beyond the *my* and *our responsibility* characterization from Lyons et al.'s (1998) work. In addition, the revised model provides attention to coping as occurring between individuals. Finally, in each of the coping typologies, appraisal and action elements are considered with the context or type of stressor in mind. Taken together, Afifi et al. (2006) includes an interconnected view of how coping can occur that ranges from individualistic to communal.

Four coping types (i.e., individual coping, support seeking and directive support, communal coping, and parallelism) collectively form the theoretical model of communal coping (TMCC). In *individual coping*, the problem belongs to me and I am responsible for it (*my problem, my responsibility*). Individual coping might occur because other group members are not aware of the problem, or do not perceive the problem to be theirs. In *support seeking and contagion*, the stressor is *my problem,* but *our responsibility*. Within this coping category, other people are more aware of the problem than in individual coping, but responsibility is partially shared with others. The individual seeking support may gain help directly or indirectly from one or more group members. *Contagion* includes stress being transferred to other members. *Directive support* (*our problem, my responsibility*) is also known as *protective buffering*, in which an individual takes responsibility for a shared stressor. Protective buffering can include one or more group members asking an individual to take on stressor responsibility individually. *Parallelism* refers to *your problem* and *your responsibility*, which might take out the individual's responsibility and action from responding to the stressor. Finally, *communal coping* refers to the stressor being viewed as *our problem* and *our responsibility*. In this

perspective, communal coping is "constructed jointly among people who are coping with similar life circumstances" (Afifi et al., 2006, p. 378). A visual representation of the TMCC (Afifi et al., 2006) is presented below.

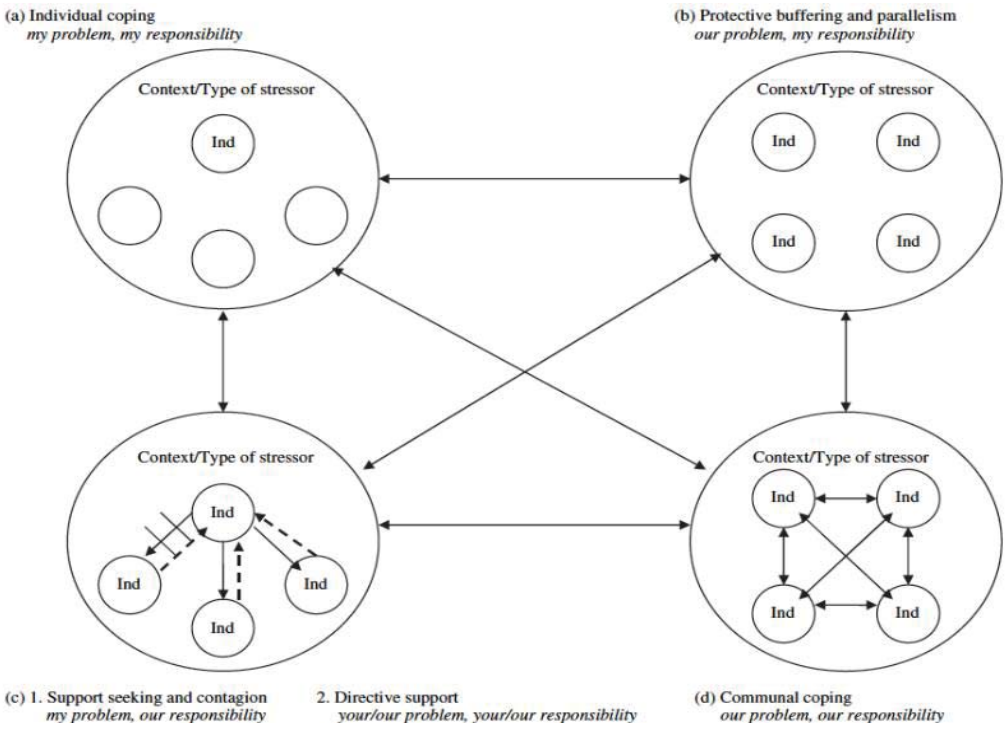

Figure 2. Theoretical model of communal coping in naturally occurring groups (Afifi et al., 2006, p. 388).

As the model includes numerous arrows between the different coping processes, valuable insight can be gained from outlining the meanings that Afifi et al. (2006) ascribe to them. The goal of these indicators is to demonstrate that multiple forms of coping can be used simultaneously depending on how stressors are appraised and reappraised. Each coping type also might include arrows within it. These arrows represent dimensions of stressor responsibility. Individual coping and protective buffering/parallelism do not include arrows within the components because stressor responsibility is not shared among group members. Support seeking and contagion's (i.e., my problem, our responsibility)

dashed arrow with lines through it indicates that one of the three group members has rejected sharing responsibility for the stressor. In this action, the remaining members might share stressor responsibility. Directive support (i.e., your/our problem, your/our responsibility) includes a dashed arrow to represent multiple members asking for a member to take responsibility for a given stressor. In comparison, communal coping has arrows between each group member because there is a shared expectation that the stressor belongs to everyone and everyone is responsible for it. Afifi et al. (2006) caution that the model (and included arrows) only references one person's perceived relationship with other group members. However, Afifi et al. (2006) also state the model has the potential to be applied to various other group contexts, as well.

2.2.3.2 Assumptions

Afifi et al. (2006) set forth five propositions to assist in determining the effectiveness of coping processes. First, stressor ownership determines the degree and effectiveness of individual, social, or communal coping that family members assume for a stressor. With this proposition in mind, one should note that additional stress can result when members disagree on stressor ownership among family members. Secondly, "group norms, rules, and power dictate the level of ownership and action that family members assume for a stressor" (p. 401). The third proposition asserts that shared understanding about stressor responsibility can increase the likelihood that communal coping will be enacted. Likewise, differences in how individuals perceive stressor ownership are more likely to create separate coping types, and to potentially add additional conflict and stress. The fourth proposition indicates that family members are interdependent in their stress and coping abilities with other family members. More recent examinations (Afifi et al.,

2012) support this claim and describe the TMCC as a combination of a family systems approach with a stress and resiliency focus (Afifi, et al., 2012). The family systems approach suggests that all family members are interdependent, and the stressors they encounter as individuals can affect other family members (Cox & Paley, 2003). Finally, the last proposition asserts that family members can change the coping they are using with other family members. Family members are not restricted to using one type of coping because multiple categories may be implemented simultaneously among members.

2.2.3.3 Model Development

The key concepts and propositions that Afifi et al. (2006) advance stem from their initial investigation of how communal coping might function in post-divorce families. Two research questions guided their study. RQ1 inquired "what novel forms or properties of communal coping reveal themselves when examined in naturally occurring social groups, such as post divorce families, and how can they be distinguished from social support and individual coping mechanisms?" (p. 382). RQ2 examined "what transactional and social properties characterize communal coping?" (p. 383).

Sixty post-divorce families (n = 130 individuals) were interviewed to assess how individuals collectively cope with post-divorce related stressors, such as stepfamily formation. Participants and their families were interviewed for approximately 4 - 7 hours. To begin the study, participants were interviewed in a group that contained the parent, child, and/or dating partner/stepparent. Participants were then individually provided with a survey that asked them to identify three stressors that they *faced as a family* and an additional three stressors that they *faced individually* since the divorce. After completing

this list, participants spoke with each other about two common stressors they faced, and how they communicatively coped with these issues. Following the group interview, each family member completed an individual interview. During this second interview, participants were asked to note all divorce related stressors they encountered, coping strategies they used, and family strengths they perceived. Interview data analysis was completed using thematic analysis and the constant comparative method (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The research members also considered coping processes from previous models (e.g., Lyons et al., 1998) throughout the selective coding process, and as they created a new communal coping model.

Before creating this model, the research team identified stressors that family members stated they faced. This point is especially important as coping processes are specific to stressors and the context in which they occur (Lyons et al., 1998). Specific attention was lent to identifying these issues separately for parents and adolescents. A few examples of the stressors that participants indicated include: finances (parents), decision making/extra responsibility (parents), living situation/visitation (adolescents), and relationship with parents (adolescents).

Afifi et al. (2006) suggest that communal coping became apparent in multiple ways for the families who experienced post-divorce stressors. A brief description of each type is included with the appropriate coded theme in parentheses. For these families, members often noted that discussions about stress, and solutions to fix this issue, often occurred in a collective setting (family problem solving about stressors). Throughout these discussions, family members also were likely to use "*we*" to discuss shared stressor ownership (direct confrontation of stressors as a family). When families created solutions

to these shared issues, they also discussed shared time management and organization (organizing, structure and planning family life). In this study, working collectively as a family included communication about privacy boundaries (e.g., co-construction of privacy boundaries). Afifi et al. (2006) also note that tackling divorce-related stressors required family members to consider rules about privacy management.

This section has reviewed the conceptual development of models of communal coping. These models have been developed, in part, because of the perceived benefits of using communal coping in response to stressors like military reintegration. Current research suggests that communal coping may have advantages, but the literature also is limited by problems with how communal coping has been measured in prior research.

2.3 Communal Coping Research

2.3.1 Communal Coping Benefits

Communal coping might occur in groups, but individuals have noted several advantages to participating in this coping style as well. One benefit is that individuals have expanded resources and abilities for coping with stressors (Lyons et al., 1998). For example, Afifi et al. (2012) examine how families respond to losses after wildfires and found that communal coping lessens the negative effects that uncertainty has on recovery efforts. Another positive outcome includes a decrease in the perception of risk associated with a stressor (Lyons et al., 1998). Afifi et al. (2006) argue that increased efficacy for resolving issues is also a likely outcome when communal coping is present. For example, Afifi and colleagues (2006) highlight that communal coping serves as a buffer against additional stress in post-divorce families. When families face stressors like divorce, many of these issues affect all family members. Afifi et al. (2006) point to research (e.g.,

Golish, 2003; Richmond & Christensen, 2000) that claims if divorced families address problems collectively, divorce demands will be easier to tackle than if the family did not join together to manage these issues. Another way in which to evaluate positive outcomes associated with communal coping is to explore the ties communal coping has with health.

Two previous studies (e.g., Koehly et al., 2008; Rohrbaugh et al., 2008) have linked the use of communal coping to positive health outcomes. In one example (Koehly et al., 2008), decreases in negative health symptoms, such as somatization and anxiety, were found when higher levels of communal coping were present (Koehly et al., 2008). In another study (Rohrbaugh et al., 2008), a spouse's use of *we*, to represent communal coping, predicted positive change in the partner's general health over the following six months. Taken together, these results provide encouraging evidence that when individuals and couples use communal coping, several benefits can result.

2.3.2 Measuring Communal Coping

Despite the numerous potential benefits that communal coping can afford, only a limited number of studies have assessed communal coping empirically to date. In some examples (e.g., Lyons et al., 1998; Lewis et al., 2006), communal coping was described, but not empirically examined. Although these studies begin to describe communal coping as a construct, they do not include validated claims about the researchers' assumptions about how communal coping functions. When empirically based examinations have been conducted, communal coping has been assessed using interviews (Afifi et al., 2006; Maguire & Sahlstein, 2012; Rohrbaugh et al., 2008; Rohrbaugh et al., 2012) or via quantitative techniques such as relational maps, word counts, or self-report

scales (Afifi et al., 2012). Each of these methods will be evaluated before concluding that self-report measures offer a valuable way to assess the communal coping construct.

When interview studies have been completed, researchers have tended to ask couples and/or families to report stressors they faced individually or collectively and then analyze themes in their reports (e.g., Afifi et al., 2006; Maguire & Sahlstein, 2012). One benefit of using interview approaches is that they offer in-depth understanding of how participants themselves conceptualize the process of communal coping. Afifi et al. (2006) integrated insights from their interview data with post-divorce families when developing their theoretical model. One limitation of such an approach, however, is that it provides limited evidence about causal relations. Maxwell (2005) suggests that qualitatively based approaches, like thematic analysis, do not allow researchers to determine if, and to what extent, a variable's variance is likely to create variance in another construct. While thematic analysis is valuable for understanding what elements commonly occur when communal coping is present, additional understanding can be gained from reviewing causal linkages among variables. Turning to quantitative perspectives might yield a better understanding of what factors commonly co-occur, and ultimately create, communal coping responses. Hence, three quantitative approaches (relationship maps, linguistic data, and self report scales) will now be reviewed.

One approach to assessing communal coping includes viewing this concept as an outcome that occurs when two individuals agree that they share resources to engage in collective coping (e.g., Koehly et al., 2008). In one example of this approach toward communal coping, Koehly et al. (2008) used a Colored Eco-Genetic Relationship Map (CEGRM) with sisters who were at a high genetic risk for developing cancer. The

CEGRM assisted in measuring reciprocity and shared support. When two participating sisters were included in the study, reciprocity suggested both sisters selected each other as providing a given support type (e.g., information, tangible aid, and/or emotional support) (Koehly et al., 2008, p. 815). Shared support refers to the number of individuals who provide support to two or more participating sisters (Koehly et al., 2008, p. 815). When sisters had overlap in their indices of reciprocity of support and shared support in their CEGRMs, investigators assessed these similarities as evidence of communal coping.

Before applying the CEGRM to assess communal coping, valuable insight can be gained from evaluating the strengths and limitations of this measure. Benefits of using a CEGRM approach include that this measure is concise, and offers a visual representation about social interaction (e.g., information, tangible services, and emotional exchanges) (Kenen & Peters, 2001; Peters et al., 2006). Unfortunately, the CEGRM's limitations outweigh the measure's strengths. In one study (Peters et al., 2004), participants stated that they felt the CEGRM was insensitive to the timing and intensity of their social interactions with others. Peters et al. (2004) recommend that if the CEGRM is to be used, additional qualitative data should also be gathered to support the CEGRM's graphic data.

In other instances, communal coping is assumed to be present when collective ownership and collective action are used to respond to an issue. Both linguistic analysis and self-report scales have been used to assess collective ownership and action. Linguistic Inquiry Word Count (LIWC; Rohrbaugh et al., 2008; Rohrbaugh et al., 2012). analyses involve coding interview transcripts for the prevalence of "we" or "I" statements to indicate communal or individual coping, respectively (e.g., Rohrbaugh et al., 2008; Rohrbaugh et al., 2012). Answers to two open-ended questions were used for LIWC

analysis: (a) “As you think back on how the two of you have coped with the heart condition, what do you think you’ve done best? What are you most proud of?” and (b) “Looking back on your own experiences, what suggestions or advice could you offer other heart patients and their families?” (Rohrbaugh et al., 2008, p. 783).

Another quantitative approach uses self-report measures to assume collective ownership and action. Rohrbaugh et al. (2008) evaluated coping strategies among individuals who suffered heart failure (HF) and their romantic partners using a 2-item scale. Patients were first asked “When you think about problems related to your heart condition, to what extent do you view those as ‘our problem’ (shared by you and your spouse equally) or mainly your own problem?” (Rohrbaugh et al., 2008, p. 784). Participants responded on a five-point scale with *1 = my problem* and *5 = our problem*. The second question asked participants to consider “when a problem related to your heart condition arises, to what extent do you and your partner work together to solve it?” (Rohrbaugh et al., 2008, p. 784). A five-point response scale was also used for the second question with *1 = not at all* and *5 = always*. Responses to these two items correlated moderately (r = .41 for patients and .26 for spouses). Responses were averaged to create a self-report communal coping score for each partner (patient: M = 4.1, SD = 1.0; spouse: M = 4.6, SD = 0.6).

A second quantitative example is found in Afifi et al. (2012). The authors developed a brief 2-item scale intended to capture evidence of communal coping with convenience samples. Afifi et al. (2012) viewed how families coped with wildfire-related losses, though they hoped to develop a scale which could be used to examine how coping occurs in regards to other stressors, as well. At the start of this assessment, individuals are

asked to select from a list whom they would turn to for emotional support during times of stress. Following this response, they are then given two additional questions. First, "with that person in mind, to what extent do you agree with the statement that you see this stressful period as something that is our issue that we faced together?" (Afifi et al., 2012, p. 335). The second question inquires how much the participant "had a real feeling they were going to work through this period together whatever the outcome"? (Afifi et al., 2012, p. 335). Questions are rated on a 5-point Likert scale that includes more communal coping (*strongly agree*) as a *5,* and less communal coping (*strongly disagree*) as a *1*.

One problem common to both LIWC analyses (Rohrbaugh et al., 2008; Rohrbaugh et al., 2012) and current self-report measures is scale validity. According to DeVellis (2012), validity questions if a measure is evaluating what it claims to assess, and follows from its reliability. A measure cannot be valid unless it is reliable because validity questions if the variable is the source of the item's covariation; hence, covariation (reliability) is necessary to address this question (DeVellis, 2012). Various types of validity exist, but the most salient concern for these two approaches is content validity. According to DeVellis (2012), content validity questions if the measurement adequately samples from the possible range of items that could be used to capture what is being assessed. To review, Afifi et al.'s (2006) communal coping characterization differentiates communal coping from other coping processes across the appraisals and actions that individuals enact about a given stressor.

If the Afifi et al. (2006) communal coping definition is employed, in which a stressor is appraised as a collective problem and responsibility, LIWC analyses are short sighted. Afifi et al. (2006) argue that communal coping is more than simply using

collective pronouns ("our") because it involves actions that are constructed jointly among individuals. As a result, LIWC analyses provide limited information about individuals' beliefs in shared problem ownership, and fail to portray the full range of responses involved in communal coping as Afifi et al. (2006) define it.

Content validity can also be a critical concern for a two-item scale, like the Rohrbaugh et al. (2008) and Afifi et al. (2012) communal coping measures. When using a two-item scale, one might question the ability of the measurement to completely capture the construct's definition. For example, the Afifi et al. (2012) scale only has 1-item for each of the appraisal and action elements. Improvements can be made to the Afifi et al. (2012) scale to improve content validity by having several items that reflect these two areas respectively. As Afifi et al. (2006) note that communal coping is not limited to only appraisal and action elements, and is a multifaceted construct, it is imperative that a measure reflects the complexities inherent within this coping process.

One additional scale for assessing communal coping is found in Afifi, Robbins, Merrill, and Davis (under review). The communal coping scale (CCS) was constructed using qualitative interview responses from 60 divorced families about challenges that they faced individually or as a family. The scale includes 21-items that are on a 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*) Likert scale. The scale was in development at the same time that this dissertation was being written. As such, very little is known about the scale. The CCS fares better in comparison to the Afifi et al. (2012) measure, but should be adapted to examine how couples cope with challenges.

When LIWC analyses and existing self-report measures are submitted to validity assessments, the described limitations indicate that a new scale should be developed. One

of the most pressing issues for this new scale is creating a measure that fares better on critiques of content validity. The Afifi et al. (2012) measure has some strengths, such as the ability of the scale to be easily adapted to convenience samples, but improvements can be made. Applying a newly developed scale to understanding how couples and families encounter additional stressors outside natural disasters would also prove to be valuable. Creating a validated communal coping scale will enable linking together the communal coping (Afifi et al. 2006; Afifi et al., 2012) and relational turbulence literatures (e.g., Knobloch et al., 2013; Knobloch & Theiss, 2011; Theiss & Knobloch, 2011). Through this union, additional questions were raised about how variables within these two areas interact. The literature review prompts several new models to be created that examine the role of relational uncertainty, communal coping, and relational satisfaction when couples are faced with reintegration stressors after a deployment.

2.4 Hypotheses and Research Questions

2.4.1 Relational Turbulence, Communal Coping, and Satisfaction

Taken together, this review of work on relational turbulence and communal coping suggests several new questions about how military partners experience their service member's reintegration. In order for communal coping to occur, individuals must be motivated to view issues as shared (i.e., action and responsibility), and thus, relationship centered, rather than individually approached. Lewis et al. (2006) posit that communal coping is only possible when both members in the dyad view a problem as having relevance for the relationship or one's partner, rather than only for oneself.

Unfortunately, creating this shared perception may be difficult for couples, especially under turbulent conditions. For many couples, creating trust and talking openly

about irritations in relationships can be challenging (Theiss & Solomon, 2006a) in the presence of relational uncertainty or perceived partner interference. For example, if non-deployed spouses are unsure about the future of their marriage, then they might be less motivated to appraise and respond to problems collectively because of uncertainty about being able to count on their service member over the long term. In addition, increased uncertainty makes individuals sensitive to minor irritations (Solomon & Knobloch, 2004), so even small irritations might be appraised as creating turmoil and hence lead military spouses to be less likely to develop a communal orientation to problem solving.

Communal coping also requires coordination between relational partners for creating shared action and responsibility appraisals (Afifi et al., 2006). Unfortunately, partner interference findings suggest that partner coordination is not always possible (Solomon & Knobloch, 2004). For example, in a military family context, approximately 11.8% of non-deployed spouses said they had problems reconnecting with their service member after the deployment ended (Knobloch & Theiss, 2012). Furthermore, approximately 5.7% of participants in the same study claimed they had problems reintegrating the service member into daily life (Knobloch & Theiss, 2012). These examples indicate two issues that couples might face that could make communal coping less likely because of the perception that one's partner is interfering with achieving daily goals. Further evidence for these assumptions is present in non-military contexts (i.e., Knobloch & Solomon, 2003) as well. In their examination, Knobloch and Solomon (2003) analyzed college students' conversations about their relational history with their romantic partners. They found that high levels of partner interference led to less dyadic

pronouns usage when participants described ownership of various relational problems with their partners. With this information in mind:

H1a: *Relational uncertainty will be inversely associated with communal coping.*[1]

H1b*: Partner uncertainty will be inversely associated with communal coping.*

H1c*: Self uncertainty will be inversely associated with communal coping.*

H2: *Partner interference will be inversely associated with communal coping.*

Several variables might influence how communal coping is formed, but one should also question how communal coping can affect other variables, like relational satisfaction. If non-deployed partners believe that they are not getting help in coping with reintegration problems from their significant other, that belief could lead them to question the benefits that the relationship offers. When individuals perceive there are few benefits, they may be less relationally satisfied as well (Rusbult, Johnson, & Morrow, 1980). Results from previous coping applications have suggested that when individuals perceive collective problem solving to be helpful, they are more likely to be relationally satisfied as well (Maguire & Kinney, 2010). Consequently,

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[1] Although relational, self, and partner uncertainty are distinct concepts, they are strongly related. Because of this, in past research Knobloch typically has tested models with partner interference and each of the three types of uncertainty separately rather than putting the three types of uncertainty together in a single model. Including the three types of uncertainty together in a single model could produce problems with multicolinearity. Several studies that include this approach to working with the relational turbulence model include Knobloch et al. (2013), Knobloch and Theiss (2011), and Theiss and Nagy (2012). This approach will be implemented in these analyses. As a result, hypotheses that involve uncertainty will have the same number but different letters (e.g., H1a, H1b, and H1c). Each hypothesis that involves the three uncertainty components will mirror this approach.

H3: *Communal coping will be positively associated with relational satisfaction.*

The logic developed to this point suggests that relational turbulence (i.e., relational uncertainty and perceived partner interference), as experienced by the romantic partners (e.g., spouses) of service members, will undermine perceptions of communal coping, which in turn may reduce spouses' relational satisfaction. To examine these issues further, a series of mediation analyses should be conducted that explore whether communal coping mediates the impact of relational uncertainty and perceived partner interference on spouse's relational satisfaction. Hayes (2013) states that when seeking to understand relationships among variables, mediation analyses can answer questions about how one variable (*X*) exerts an influence on another (*Y*) through a third (*M*).

Communal coping holds potential to mediate several of the proposed relationships. These potentially mediated relationships include: partner interference and relational uncertainty with relational satisfaction (*H4a*), partner interference and partner uncertainty with relational satisfaction (*H4b*), and partner interference and self uncertainty with relational satisfaction (*H4c*). With this information in mind:

H4a: *Communal coping will mediate the relationship between partner interference and relational uncertainty with relational satisfaction.*

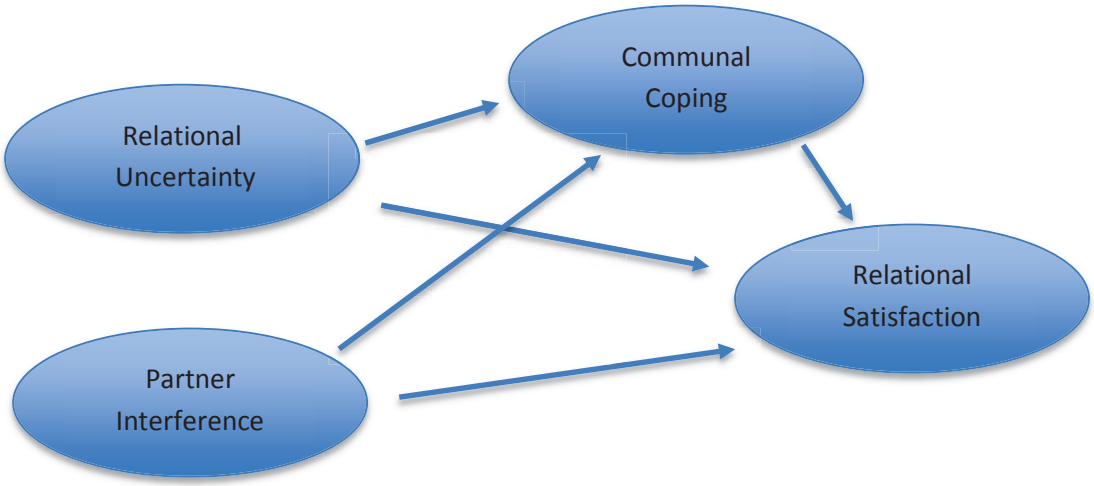

Figure 3. Visual representation of communal coping mediating the partner interference and relational uncertainty with relational satisfaction relationship.

***H4b**: Communal coping will mediate the relationship between partner interference and partner uncertainty with relational satisfaction.*

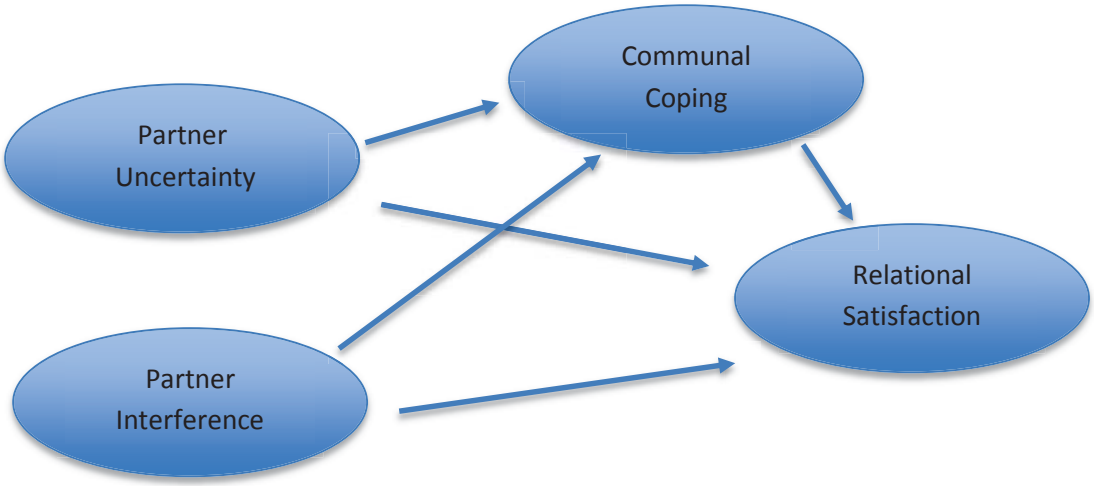

Figure 4. Visual representation of communal coping mediating the partner interference and partner uncertainty with relational satisfaction relationship.

***H4c:** Communal coping will mediate the relationship between partner interference and self uncertainty with relational satisfaction.*

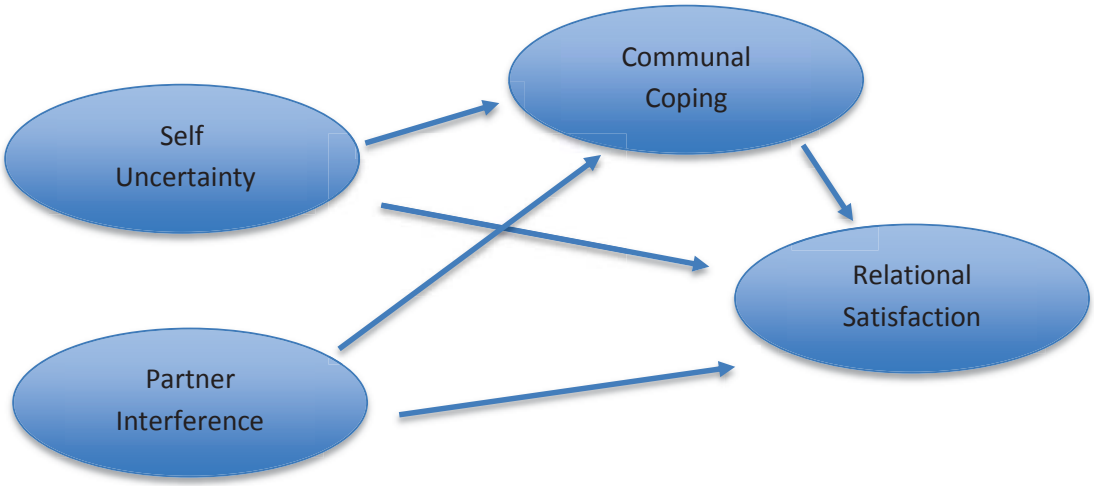

Figure 5. Visual representation of communal coping mediating the partner interference and self uncertainty with relational satisfaction relationship.

If these mediation analyses are found to be significant, additional insight can be gained in understanding communicative processes through which relational uncertainty and partner interference exert their effects. Examining these issues requires focusing on research questions related to partial and complete mediation. If partial mediation is occurring, *M* "does not entirely account for the associations between *X* and *Y*" (Hayes, 2013, p. 170). When complete mediation happens, *M* completely accounts for the relationship between *X* and *Y*.

RQ1: *Does communal coping completely or partially mediate the relationship between partner interference and relational satisfaction?*

RQ2a: *Does communal coping completely or partially mediate the association between relationship uncertainty and relational satisfaction?*

RQ2b: *Does communal coping completely or partially mediate the association between partner uncertainty and relational satisfaction?*

***RQ2c**: Does communal coping completely or partially mediate the association between self uncertainty and relational satisfaction?*

2.4.2 Stress, Relational Turbulence, and Satisfaction

Valuable insight can also be gained by examining the relationships between stress, relational turbulence, and relational satisfaction. Stress has been found to have a negative association with relational satisfaction in a reintegration context. For example, Goff, Crow, Reisbig, and Hamilton (2007) examined the effects of stress stemming from trauma on service members and their partners' with relational satisfaction. They indicate that increased stress significantly predicted decreased relational satisfaction for both the service member and their relational partner.

Prior reintegration studies have also examined how relational satisfaction can be affected by partner interference and relational uncertainty. Knobloch and Theiss (2011) examined service members' reports of depression, partner interference, relational uncertainty, and relational satisfaction following a deployment. They suggest that the negative relationship between depression and relational satisfaction is mediated by relational uncertainty and partner interference. A similar relationship might be located when stress is substituted for depression.

One reason why stress is likely to affect the relational turbulence variables (i.e., partner interference and relational uncertainty) is that stress indicates a depletion of resources (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). For military spouses, one potential source for obtaining additional resources could be one's relational partner (i.e., the service member). If service members are unable to assist with diminishing their spouse's stress by providing resources, perhaps because service members are experiencing their own

stressors associated with deployment, there could be implications for relational turbulence variables. These could include a spouse's doubts about the service member's commitment (partner uncertainty), one's own commitment (self uncertainty), or where the relationship is headed (relationship uncertainty). Service members could also be perceived as interfering with the spouse's ability to diminish stress (partner interference).

Unfortunately, little work has been completed that has attempted to combine stress, relational uncertainty and satisfaction in this context. As such, the following models and associated research questions respond to this need:

H5a: *Stress will be positively associated with relationship uncertainty.*

H5b*: Stress will be positively associated with self uncertainty.*

H5c: *Stress will be positively associated with partner uncertainty.*

H6: *Stress will be positively associated with partner interference.*

The turbulence model also predicts that relational uncertainty and partner interference tend to undermine relational satisfaction (i.e., Theiss & Knobloch, 2011). Hence,

H7a: *Relational uncertainty will be inversely associated with relational satisfaction.*

H7b*: Partner uncertainty will be inversely associated with relational satisfaction.*

H7c*: Self uncertainty will be inversely associated with relational satisfaction.*

H8: *Partner interference will be inversely associated with relational satisfaction.*

H9: *Relational uncertainty (self, other, or relationship focused) and partner*

interference will mediate the relationship between stress and relationship satisfaction.

***RQ3a-c**: Does relational uncertainty (self, other, or relationship focused) and partner interference partially or completely mediate the association between stress and relational satisfaction?*

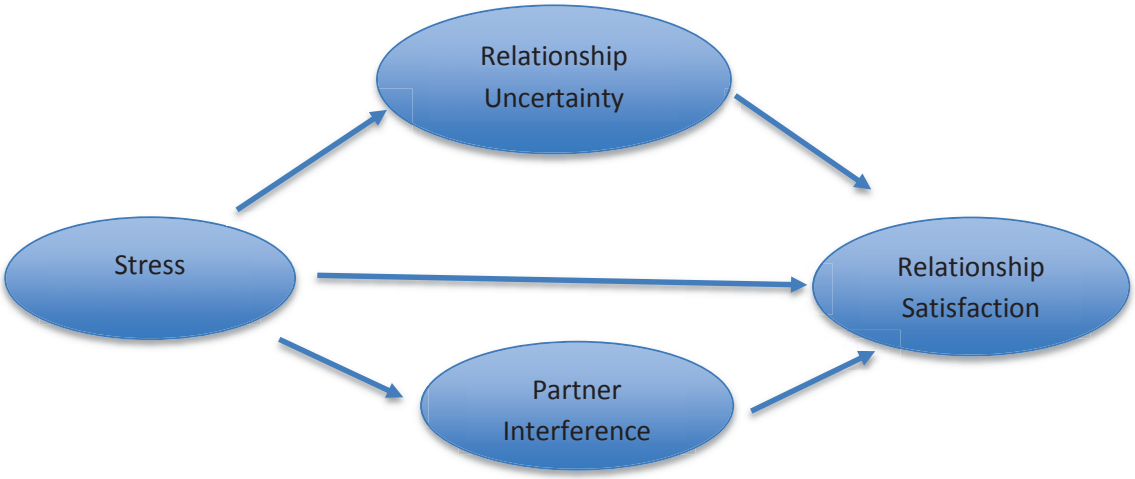

Figure 6. Visual representation of relational uncertainty and partner interference mediating the stress and relational satisfaction relationship.

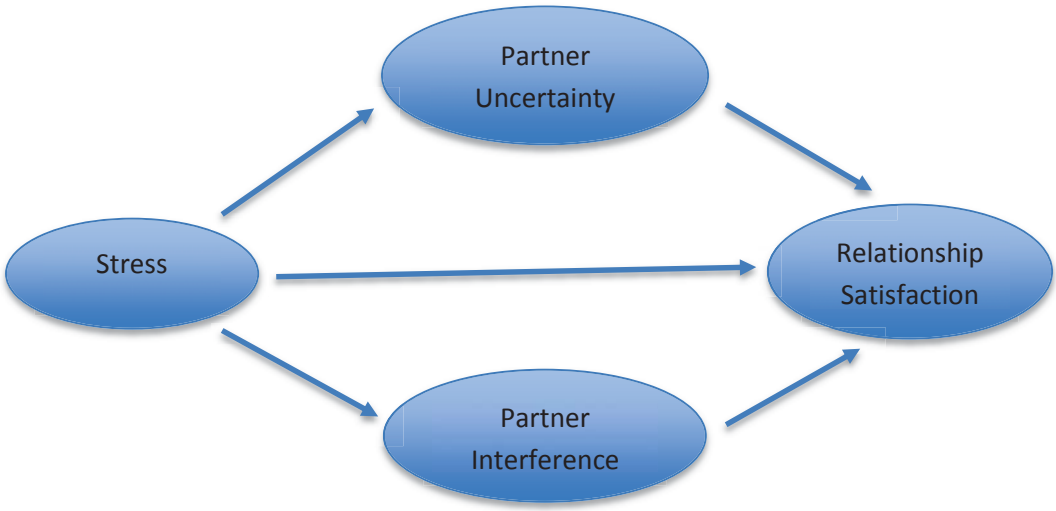

Figure 7. Visual representation of partner uncertainty and partner interference mediating the stress and relational satisfaction relationship.

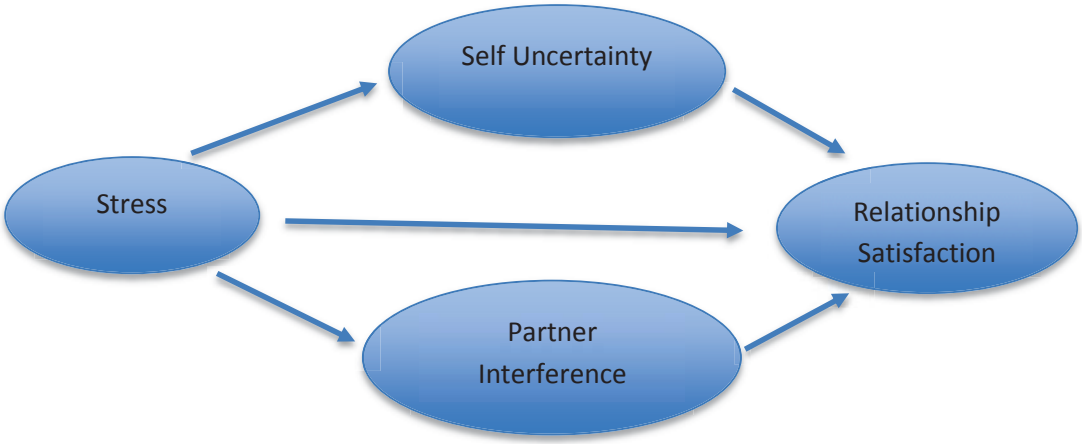

Figure 8. Visual representation of self uncertainty and partner interference mediating the stress and relational satisfaction relationship.

2.4.3 Stress, Communal Coping, and Satisfaction

Previous research has found that social support can serve as a protective factor in shielding individuals from the effects of stressful situations (Cohen & McKay, 1984; MacGeorge, Feng, & Burleson, 2011). Understanding how to mitigate stress is valuable because of the potential impact that it can have on relational health (Goff et al., 2007). The stress buffering hypothesis indicates that support from others can help to diminish the negative effects of stress on physical and mental well-being (Cohen & Wills, 1985). According to this hypothesis, buffering is most likely to occur when high levels of stress are present (Cohen, 2004; MacGeorge, Feng, & Burleson, 2011). How social support is measured also determines if the stress buffering hypothesis is present. The stress buffering hypothesis is most likely to occur when social support is measured as the perception that others will provide support (MacGeorge, Feng, & Burleson, 2011; Uchino, Cacioppo, & Kiecolt-Glaser, 1996). This approach is in comparison to measuring social support solely as received support (see MacGeorge et al., 2011).

Additional variables like communal coping should also be examined with the stress and relational satisfaction in mind. Social support and communal coping differ in their appraisals of action and responsibility, but can share a sense of being able to count on others for help when responding to challenges. As such, communal coping could also serve a similar role in the relationship between stress and relational satisfaction.

One way in which to examine these variables is with a moderation analysis. According to Hayes (2013), moderation analyses are used to "uncover the boundary conditions for an association between two variables" (p. 8). This occurs when a "moderator variable *M* influences the magnitude of the causal effect of *X* on *Y*" (p. 8). The stress buffering hypothesis typically has been statistically examined as social support moderating the effects of stress on health (Cohen, 2004). Given similarities between communal coping and social support, the stress buffering hypothesis suggests that communal coping may buffer the impact that stress would otherwise have on relational satisfaction. As such,

> ***RQ4****: Does communal coping moderate the relationship between stress and relational satisfaction?*

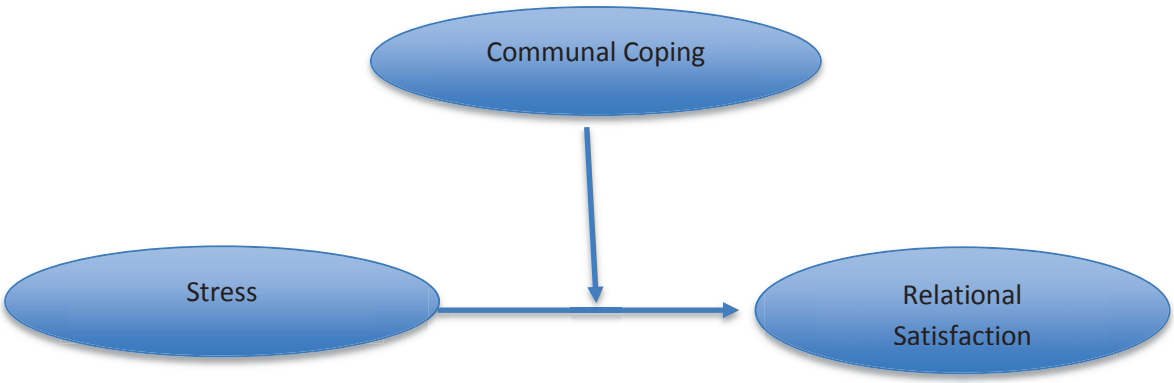

Figure 9. Visual representation of communal coping moderating the stress and relational satisfaction relationship.

This chapter has presented a review of the relational turbulence (Solomon & Knobloch, 2004) and communal coping models (Afifi et al., 2006; Afifi et al., 2012). Information about why a study is needed that examines how non-deployed relational partners experience military reintegration was also presented. Chapter 3 includes the method for this study, and contains information related to participants and measures. A data analysis plan is also noted.

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

Throughout this chapter, information will be provided that pertains to the study's participants, recruitment, procedures, and measures. All procedures, measures, and materials were approved by the Institutional Review Board for Social Scientific Research at Purdue University.

3.1 Participants

One hundred and seventy-nine romantic partners (participants; $n = 179$) were surveyed using an online questionnaire.[2] In order to participate in this study, participants had to have been *18 years of age or older* and: (a) have had an active email account, (b) have been married to or dating a service member before his/her deployment, (c) have been currently involved in that marital or dating relationship, and (d) have had their service member return from deployment within the past two years. This timeline was advanced because most reintegration issues arise after a short honeymoon period and require approximately a year to resolve (Knobloch et al., 2013; McNulty, 2005; Renshaw, Rodrigues, & Jones, 2008). All participants met these inclusion criteria.

Approximately two-thirds of the participants were female ($n = 114$), and one-third were male ($n = 65$). Participants ranged in age from 21 to 50 ($M = 30.6$; $SD = 5.0$).

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[2] Theiss and Knobloch (2011) found correlations between relational uncertainty, partner interference, and relational maintenance strategies to range from -.35 to -.69. With a sample size of 179, an a priori power analysis reported below shows that the prospective study will be well powered to detect medium and large effects such as these.

Participants' reported ethnicities included Caucasian/White (*n* = 136), Native American (*n* = 15), Hispanic (*n* = 13), African American (*n* = 9), Asian (*n* = 3), and other (*n* = 2). One participant (*n* = 1) did not disclose ethnicity. More than 60% of participants (i.e., spouses or romantic partners) were not currently in the US military (*n* = 110), but almost 40% also were currently serving in the military themselves. These demographics reflect that the sample includes a sizeable percentage (38%) of spouses/partners who are part of dual-career military couples (*n* = 69/179). In these instances, the participant is not only the partner of a service member, but a service member as well. Of these 69 participants in dual-career military relationships, 43 were male (62%) and 26 were female (38%).

Participants also reported on demographic information about their romantic partners (i.e., service members who had returned from deployment in the past two years; *n* = 179). Approximately 60% of service members were male (*n* = 114), and more than one-third were female (*n* = 65). Service members ranged in age from 21 to 50 (*M* = 30.6; *SD* = 5.0). Service members' ethnicities included Caucasian/White (*n* = 127), Native American (*n* = 22), Hispanic (*n* = 12), African American (*n* = 13), and Asian (*n* = 4). One person (*n* = 1) did not disclose the service member's ethnicity. This sample included 112 service members who were listed as active duty at the time of the survey. Thirty-six service members were reported as reserve component. The remainder of the sample (*n* = 31) reported that the service member was inactive ready reserve (*n* = 12), discharged (*n* = 7) or retired (*n* = 12).

A variety of service branches were included with the largest percentage (39.1%) being Army (*n* = 70), followed by Marines (20.1%; *n* = 36), Air Force (19.6%; *n* = 35), Army National Guard (14.5%; *n* = 26), Navy (3.9%; *n* = 7), Air National Guard (2.2%; *n*

= 4), and other (Army Reserves; 0.6%; *n* = 1). More than 80% of the service members' deployments were to Afghanistan (*n* = 106), and Iraq (*n* = 41). Other deployment locations (*n* = 30) comprised approximately 17% of deployments and included: Kuwait (*n* = 7), Liberia (*n* = 2), Kosovo (*n* = 2), Korea (*n* = 2), Romania (*n* = 1), Phillipines (*n* = 1), Japan (*n* = 1), Kyrgzstan (*n* = 1), UAE (*n* = 1), and an undisclosed location (*n* = 2). Some partners (5.5%; *n* = 9) were also on deployments at sea (e.g., 15th MEU) in which they moved to various undisclosed locations throughout the deployment. One service member (.5%; *n* = 1) experienced a state side deployment. Deployment location was missing for two service members (1.1%).

As a whole, participants and their partners represented several different couple types. Approximately 97% of the overall sample included participants reporting on heterosexual relationships (*n* = 173). Many individuals reported on the experience in which a female participant shared information about her relationship with a male service member (62%, *n* = 111). In other instances, a male participant reflected on his relationship with a female service member (35%, *n* = 62). The remaining approximately 3% of participants reported on same-sex relationships (*n* = 6), including 3 participants who were in lesbian relationships and 3 who were in gay relationships.

This sample is representative of the larger population of U.S. service members in terms of age and ethnicity. Comparisons will be made between active duty and reserve component service members from this sample with 2011 Department of Defense statistics. The average age for active duty service members is 28.6 years, and 32.1 years for reserve (DoD, 2011). In this sample, the average age for active duty service members was 30.2 years, and 32.0 years for reserve. Approximately 30.2% of active duty and

24.3% of reserve service members identify themselves as part of a racial/ethnic minority group (DoD, 2011). This sample was comprised of approximately 27% reserve component and 29% active duty minority service members.

Several larger trends about military service branch were also found in comparisons between this sample and the larger population of U.S. service members. Nationally, active duty service members are comprised of the following branches: Army (38.6%), Navy (22.1%), Marines (13.8%), Air Force (22.6%), and Coast Guard (2.9%) (DoD, 2011). In this sample, active duty service members followed larger trends regarding the Army (39.2%), and Air Force (27.8%), but this was not found for the Marines (29.9%), Navy (3.1%), or Coast Guard (0.0%). These comparisons indicate an overrepresentation for Marines, and an underrepresentation for Navy and Coast Guard members. For reserve service members, national statistics include the following branches: Army National Guard (33.8%), Army Reserve (26.7%), Air Force Reserve (9.9%), Air National Guard (9.8%), Navy Reserve (9.5%), Marine Reserve (9.3%), and Coast Guard Reserve (.9%) (DoD, 2011). This sample was reflective of those trends for the Army Reserve (34.3%), Army National Guard (31.5%), Air Force Reserves (14.3%), Marine Reserves (11.4%), Navy (5.7%), and Air National Guard (2.9%). The Coast Guard was not represented in this sample. In all of these instances, discrepancies between national statistics about reserve component service members and this sample were less than 8%.

This sample is less representative of larger DoD trends regarding gender and dual-military relationships. Approximately 85.5% of active duty and 82% of reserve service members are male (DoD, 2011). This sample included approximately 71% male active duty service members, and 60% reserve component. Participants who said that they were

in dual-military relationships in this sample reported on casual dating (3%) and serious dating (19%) relationships. The majority of participants reported that they were either engaged (16%) or married (62%). As a whole, participants who reported on *dual-military marriages* comprised 24% (43/179) of the overall sample. The Department of Defense (2011) report indicates that approximately 11.5% of married active duty service members are in dual-spouse military career marriages. Perhaps due to the over-representation of dual-career military couples, this sample also includes a larger percentage of female service members than the military as a whole. Regarding gender, approximately 85.5% of active duty and 82% of reserve service members are male (DoD, 2011). This sample included approximately 71% male active duty service members, and 60% male reservists. When possible, I will use both gender and dual-military career relationships as control variables for the results reported in Chapter 4. The discussion chapter will analyze the implications of this sample in terms of external validity (e.g., generalizability of findings).

3.2 Participant Recruitment

Participant recruitment included snowball sampling with email announcements aimed to reach family readiness officers, chaplains, and military family life personnel nationwide. These sources were asked to forward the email to service members' spouses or romantic partners who met the eligibility criteria. Following suggestions from Wilson et al. (in press), participants were recruited via emails (see Appendix A) sent to Family Readiness Group Coordinators (FRGs) and chaplains after IRB approval was received. Email addresses and names of appropriate contacts were located by searching for a variety of word combinations (e.g., "family readiness support," "FRG") in internet search

engines (e.g., Google, Yahoo, MSN). These participants were also drawn from a previous list in which FRGs/chaplains also had previously agreed to participate in prior military family research (i.e., Wilson et al., in press).

The first email to Family Readiness Coordinators/chaplains described the goals of the current study. The email texts also provided an overview of the study's procedures. This message prompted these contacts to share a link to the survey with family members and couples with whom they worked (see Appendix B). Reminder messages were also sent approximately one week after the initial message, and included a request that the survey be distributed if it has not yet been (and thanked them if the survey had been shared). The author also contacted individuals in her social networks using similar recruitment strategies, after obtaining IRB approval. These recruitment methods have been used successfully in prior studies (e.g., Knobloch & Theiss, 2012; Wilson et al., 2014).

The recruitment email was also shared privately on Facebook to blogs or websites that catered to military families. These groups were located by using search terms that included "military spouse," "military partner," "military wife," "military husband," "military girlfriend," and "military boyfriend." Nineteen separate accounts were contacted. Some examples include: "Military Spouse Central," "Family Readiness Community," "Military Spouses Coalition," and "Association of Dual Military Couples." A Google search was also conducted to locate additional blogs and/or websites. "Military blogs" was used as the search criteria. One website, "Circle of Moms," included a review of their top 25 military family blogs. Five additional websites were contacted from this

list (e.g., “Raising Monkey, Loving Sarge”). Permission from the individual or organization that moderated the blog or website was secured prior to posting the advertisement for the study.

Several surveys were excluded from the study. The criteria that were used to evaluate if a response was rejected were similar to Wilson et al. (2014). Surveys that were completed in less than 10 minutes were deemed ineligible. In these instances, participants often clicked through the questions without answering to receive the reimbursement code at the conclusion of the survey. Surveys that were completed in 50 minutes or more were also rejected. In many of these instances, surveys that had multiple hour response times included mostly blank responses. The open-ended questions were also used to filter surveys. Surveys that indicated the respondent was not at least moderately fluent in English were not accepted. For example, one question prompted participants to consider what they were most proud of during their most recent deployment. One respondent wrote “partners get feats.” Other surveys were excluded because the survey was submitted from a location (e.g., China) in which U.S. military personnel were not stationed or serving during the data collection. IP addresses were used to indicate the participant’s geographic location. Surveys also were rejected if multiple responses came from the same IP address. This requirement was implemented to decrease potential interdependence issues (i.e., surveys from two participants who were partners) as well as to avoid instances in which one person submitted multiple surveys in an attempt to secure additional compensation.

3.3 Procedures

A participant began the survey by clicking on the link that was contained either on the forwarded email message, or Facebook or blog advertisement. The first page of the survey included the selection criteria for the study. Instructions about reimbursement were also found here. The instructions also stated that participants could skip any question if they felt uncomfortable providing that information. If individuals met the selection criteria for this study and were interested in participating, they provided consent (by clicking the survey link after agreeing to participate). Participants then were asked a series of demographic questions (see Appendix C). Following this demographic information, they completed several measures that asked them to think about themselves and their relationships with their service member (Appendices D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, and M). With the exception of the demographic and open-ended questions, all of the items within each individual measure were randomized to prevent systematic ordering effects.

The study measures were presented in three blocks that included assessments of: relational satisfaction and reintegration stressors (Appendices D and E, respectively), additional main study variables (Appendices F, G, and H), and measures used to assess validity (Appendices J, K, L, and M). The first measure that followed the demographic questions always included a global assessment of participants' reported relational satisfaction with their romantic partner (Appendix D). This scale was placed at the beginning of the survey so that participants would not be biased by their responses to the questions about reintegration stressors and coping. Three open-ended items, and one closed-ended question followed this scale, and prompted participants to reflect on the

accomplishments that they and their partners achieved throughout the deployment. Participants were also provided an opportunity to consider what advice they would offer others about the experience.[3] After answering these questions, participants then were asked to rate reintegration stressors that they experienced with their service member (Appendix E).

Main study variables followed in a second block and included assessments of: communal coping (Appendix F), relational uncertainty (Appendix G), and partner interference (Appendix H). Within the second block, these measures were presented to participants in random order.

After providing responses to the main study measures, participants began a third block in which they initially rated their relational satisfaction with their partner at the current time, and prior to the deployment, using a different measure of satisfaction than the one completed in block one (Appendix I). Validity measures then followed and included: social desirability bias (Appendix J), couple identity (Appendix K; Appendix L), and depression symptoms (Appendix M). These latter measures were also presented to participants in random order within the third block.

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[3] Adapted from Rohrbaugh et al. (2012), these questions included: "As you think back on the most recent deployment what do you think you and your partner have done best?", "What are you most proud of?", and "Looking back on your own experiences, what suggestions or advice could you offer other military couples and their families about reintegration?". Responses to these open-ended questions offer insights that helped to contextualize or interpret the quantitative findings. In the future (i.e., after this dissertation is completed), LIWC software could be used to assess the number of collective (e.g., "we") versus individual (e.g., "he" or "I") pronouns present in participants' open-ended responses as a second measure of communal coping. In the future, such data could help support the convergent validity of the new communal coping scale (DeVellis, 2012).

At the conclusion of the study, participants were thanked for their participation in the study and their service to the country. They were then provided with a code that would be emailed to the researcher. Once the researcher verified that the response met the inclusion criteria, a $10 gift card was emailed to the participant.

3.4 Measures

Throughout the study, participants were asked to complete 10 measures, in addition to demographic information. All continuous variables were approximately normally distributed (skew within -1 to +1; kurtosis within -2 to +2). Data that reflects number of items, mean, standard deviations, Cronbach's alpha, skew, and kurtosis, for each measure can be located in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1. Main Study Variables Reliability and Distribution Statistics

Scale	*Items*	*Range*	*α*	*M*	*SD*	*Skew*	*Kurtosis*
Self Uncertainty	4	1, 6	.86	2.4	1.2	.48	-.77
Partner Uncertainty	4	1, 6	.86	2.5	1.2	.39	-.79
Relationship Uncertainty	4	1, 6	.83	2.5	1.2	.44	-.79
Partner Interference	6	1, 6	.91	3.2	1.3	-.24	-.98
Relationship Satisfaction	7	1, 7	.95	5.4	1.3	-.37	-1.1
Stressors	13	1, 9	.92	4.8	1.9	-.10	-.58
Communal Coping	22	1, 7	.96	5.1	1.1	-.18	-.84

Table 2. Validity Reliability and Distribution Statistics

Scale	*Items*	*Range*	*α*	*M*	*SD*	*Skew*	*Kurtosis*
Couple Identity	6	1, 7	.77	4.9	1.2	.29	- 1.2
Depression	10	0, 30	.77	8.6	4.7	.69	.43

3.4.1 Demographic Information

At the start of the survey, participants responded to a series of demographic questions that asked about themselves (i.e., "Are you in the US military?"), their service member who had been deployed (i.e., "Which branch of the military are/were they in?"), and the relationship that they have with the service member (i.e., "Do you and your relational partner live together in the same home?"). They were also asked to report their own and partner's (service member's) gender, age, ethnicity, and military status. Additional questions inquired about the deployment location, length, and mission.

3.4.2 Dependent Variable: Relational Satisfaction

Relationship satisfaction was assessed with two measures. After responding to demographic questions, participants initially completed the Quality of Marriage Index (QMI; Norton, 1983; Appendix D). The QMI is the third most widely cited measure of satisfaction with over 221 citations (Funk & Rogge, 2007). This scale requires individuals to report on their overall relational satisfaction and was originally constructed to address problems associated with other relational satisfaction scales (i.e., DAS; Spanier, 1976). High QMI scores indicate increased relational satisfaction. The QMI uses a 7-point Likert scale for the first five questions. Participants are asked to provide ratings from *1* (*very strongly disagree*) to *7* (*very strongly agree*). Item 5, "I really feel like part of a team with my partner," was cut from this assessment. This item was eliminated because the content is similar to the communal coping definition that Afifi et al. (2006) advance; hence, including it might artificially inflate the any relationship between communal coping and relationship satisfaction. As a result, only the first four-items from the QMI were used for this analysis. In a previous study that assessed relational

satisfaction among husbands and wives, the QMI had high internal consistency (α = .96 for both husbands and wives; Fincham, Paleari, & Regalia, 2002). In this study, the first four items in the QMI measure were found to have strong internal consistency (α = .93).

A subsection of Fletcher, Simpson, and Thomas' (2000) Perceived Relationship Quality Component (PRQC) Inventory also was used to measure relational satisfaction during the third block of questionnaires. The total PRQC includes 18-items that ask participants to rate their current partner and the relationship. Responses are provided on a 7-point Likert scale with *1 = not at all* to *7 = extremely*. The relationship satisfaction element (see Appendix I) of the larger scale includes three items that assess the participant's satisfaction, contentment, and happiness with their current relationship. To assess satisfaction, the results of the sub-scale are averaged. Previous application of the relational satisfaction sub-scale of the PRQC yielded high internal consistency (α = .96) (Knobloch & Theiss, 2011).

For the purpose of this study, the participant completed the three-item measure in terms of their relationship satisfaction (a) prior to the deployment (α = .88), and (b) currently (α = .93). A bivariate correlation was conducted to assess the relationship between prior (recalled) and current satisfaction. Satisfaction at the two time-periods was highly correlated (r = .71). In addition, a paired t-test was computed to see if levels of satisfaction differed at the two periods of time. The results of the paired sampled t-test indicated a statistically significant difference in scores from prior (M = 5.5, SD = 1.1) and current (M = 5.2, SD = 1.4) ratings of relational satisfaction, t (178) = -4.3, $p < .01$ (two-tailed). The mean decrease in relational satisfaction scores was -.33 with a 95%

confidence interval ranging from -.49 to -.18. The eta squared statistic (.09) indicated a moderate effect size.

Because relationship satisfaction *at the current point in time* was assessed using two different measures, an exploratory principal-axis factor analysis with direct oblimin rotation was conducted on the 4-items from Norton's (1983) QMI measure and the 3-items from Fletcher et al. (2012) PRQC measure. Four criteria were used to determine how many factors to retain (see Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). The first indicator was the number of factors with an eigenvalue greater than 1.0. The percentage of inter-item variance explained by each factor was also used. The visual results from scree tests were also examined to make this decision. The number of items that load cleanly on each factor was also considered. For the purpose of this investigation, a .60 .40 rule was implemented for interpreting factor loadings. According to McCroskey and Young (1979) when a solution contains two or more factors, an item loads cleanly on a factor if it "has a primary loading on one factor of at least .60, and no secondary loadings on another factor with a value above .40" (p. 380).

The factor analysis output was evaluated with these items in mind. A one factor solution with an eigenvalue > 1.0 emerged, which explained 73.9% of the total inter-item variance. The pattern matrix revealed that many items contained high loadings on one factor. Table 3 contains factor loadings and eigenvalues for this analysis. A scree plot is available in Appendix T and supports the single factor solution.

Table 3. Factor Analysis of Relational Satisfaction

	1
% of variance	73.90
Cumulative %	73.90
Current time, how…	
happy are you with your relationship?	.876
Current time, how…	
satisfied are you with your relationship?	.864
Current time, how…	
content are you with your relationship?	.862
We have a good relationship.	.862
My relationship with my partner makes me happy.	.861
Our relationship is strong.	.858
My relationship with my partner is very stable.	.837

Based on these analyses, the two measures were combined to form an overall measure of relational satisfaction ($\alpha = .95$). This combined scale was used in all hypothesis tests below because it focused on participants' current evaluations of their relational satisfaction. Items that evaluated the participants' previous satisfaction were not included. Items were summed and divided by the number of items to retain the 1-7 scale. Participants in general currently had high levels of relationship satisfaction (see Table 1) even though they rated their current satisfaction slightly lower than what they retrospectively recalled their satisfaction to have been before the most recent deployment.

3.4.3 Independent and Mediating/Moderating Variables: Reintegration Stressors

After completing the first relational satisfaction measure, participants were then asked to check from a list of potential stressors that they could have experienced when the service member came home from deployment (see Appendix E). Participants were asked to consider the first year after the service member returned. Thirteen different

reintegration stressors comprised this list (e.g., problems reconnecting, difficulty communicating, and increased conflict). These items were drawn from open-ended data reported by Knobloch and Theiss (2012), who asked their participants to describe "in what ways, if any, did your relationship change after deployment compared to before deployment?" (p. 429).

Participants indicated how stressful each issue has been on a scale of *1* (*not very stressful*) to *10* (*very stressful*) for each of the 13-items. If a reintegration stressor did not happen, participants were asked to rate that item as a 1 (*not very stressful*). After rating these reintegration stressors, participants then were asked to complete two additional open-ended questions: "Since your service member came home, have the two of you experienced any other major stressors not on this list?," and "If so, what are they?" Means and standard deviations for the 13 individual stressors can be located in Table 4.

Table 4. Reintegration Stressors

Item	*M*	*SD*
Problems reintegrating the service member into daily life and routines	5.39	2.34
Uncertainties about the service member's military career or possible future deployments.	5.36	2.70
Problems with parenting children together	5.27	2.64
Challenges arising from the service member having missed major life events while on deployment.	5.06	2.40
Increased conflict	4.97	2.64
Changes in finances and employment	4.97	2.82
Problems reconnecting	4.87	2.59
Problems with service member withdrawing (e.g., from family and/or social events)	4.82	2.58
Changes in sexual behavior	4.81	2.62

Table 4 Cont. Reintegration Stressors

Item	*M*	*SD*
Difficulty communicating	4.72	2.40
Difficulties with healthcare and /or health insurance	4.36	2.85
Talk about separation or divorce	4.28	2.93
Problems with excessive drinking and/or drug use.	4.25	2.75

The dimensionality of the stressor measure was evaluated using an exploratory principal-axis factor analysis with direct oblimin rotation. Two factors contained eigenvalues greater than 1 (see Appendix N for scree plot). The scree plot also supported this conclusion. One and two-factor solutions were analyzed using all four criteria. The first and second factors accounted for 49.4% and 3.9%, respectively, of the variance. These factors jointly accounted for 53.3% of the cumulative variance. The pattern matrix revealed that many items contained high loadings on the first factor. Based on these findings, an additional exploratory factor analysis was completed with direct oblimin rotation with a single factor forced. This single factor solution accounted for 49.1% of the cumulative variance. After comparing these two analyses, a single factor solution was chosen because of the small amount of additional explained variance in the second factor. This conclusion was also reached because only one item loaded cleanly on the second factor in the two-factor solution. Factor analysis loadings and eigenvalues can be found in Table 5 and Table 6. The 13-item measure contained high internal consistency ($\alpha = .92$).

Table 5. Factor Analysis of Reintegration Stressors

	1	*2*
% of variance	49.40	3.90
Cumulative %	49.40	53.31
Problems reconnecting.	.826	.002
Difficulty communicating.	.812	-.156
Talk about separation or divorce.	.797	-.011
Increased conflict.	.782	.057
Service member having missed major life events while on deployment.	.579	.085
Problems reintegrating the service member into daily life and routines	.540	.194
Changes in sexual behavior.	.537	.293
Problems with excessive drinking and/or drug use.	.529	.258
Problems with service member withdrawing.	.514	.365
Difficulties with healthcare or health insurance.	.164	.532
Problems with parenting children together.	.151	.546
Uncertainties about the service member's military career or possible future deployments.	.041	.442
Changes in finances and employment.	-.085	.844

Table 6. Factor Analysis of Reintegration Stressors – 1 Factor Forced

	1
% of variance	49.10
Cumulative %	49.10
Problems with service member withdrawing.	.822
Increased conflict.	.809
Problems reconnecting.	.801
Changes in sexual behavior.	.781
Talk about separation or divorce.	.762
Problems with excessive drinking and/or drug use.	.742
Problems reintegrating the service member into daily life and routines.	.697
Difficulty communicating.	.646

Table 6 Cont. Factor Analysis of Reintegration Stressors – 1 Factor Forced

	1
Changes in finances and employment.	.639
Challenges arising from the service member having missed major life events while on deployment.	.638
Difficulties with healthcare or health insurance.	.623
Problems with parenting children together.	.621
Uncertainties about the service member's military career or possible future deployments.	.425

3.4.4 Independent and Mediating/Moderating Variables: Relational Uncertainty

Relational uncertainty (see Appendix G) includes three areas (self, partner and relationship) and was measured using a short form of Knobloch and Solomon's (1999) scales. Individuals responded on a 6-point scale (*1 = completely or almost completely uncertain*, *6 = completely or almost completely certain*) to items with the stem "How certain are you about…?"

Self uncertainty includes four items: (i) how you feel about your relationship, (ii) your goals for the future of the relationship, (iii) your view of the relationship, and (iv) how important your relationship is to you. *Partner uncertainty* spans: (i) how your partner feels about your relationship, (ii) your partner's goals for the future of your relationship, (iii) your partner's view of your relationship, and (iv) how important your relationship is to your partner. Finally, *relationship uncertainty* inquires how certain you feel about: (i) the current status of your relationship, (ii) how you can or cannot behave around your partner, (iii) the definition of your relationship, (iv) the future of your relationship. Items are reverse-scored so higher values represent greater relational uncertainty. Knobloch and Knobloch-Fedders (2010) indicate internal consistency scores

for males and females across these three dimensions, including self uncertainty (males: α = . 83; females: α = .89), partner uncertainty (males: α = .88; females: α = .93) and relationship uncertainty (males: α = .86; females: α = .86).

Items for each of the three types of uncertainty (i.e., self, partner, relationship) were analyzed separately in three different confirmatory principal-axis factor analyses with direct oblimin rotation. Self uncertainty contained one factor with an eigenvalue greater than 1.0, which accounted for 67.77% of the total variance. Partner uncertainty also contained a single factor with 67.24% of the cumulative variance. Lastly, a single factor was located for relational uncertainty (64.51% of the total variance). A complete list of factor loadings and eigenvalues for the three uncertainty areas is located in Tables 7, 8, and 9. The visual scree plot output supports a single factor solution across all three types of uncertainty (Appendices P, Q, and R). High internal consistency was located for all three areas, which included self (α = .86), partner (α = .86), and relationship (α = .83)[4]. Scores for each type of uncertainty were summed and then divided by the number of items (4) to retain the original 1 - 6 scale. The sample, in general, reported fairly low levels of relational uncertainty ($M \leq 2.5$ for all three dimensions of relational uncertainty, see Table 1).

[4] In order to maintain consistency with prior research assessing the relational turbulence model, the three types of uncertainty were analyzed in separate models. Consistent with prior research, scores on the three types of uncertainty were highly correlated (see Table 14).

Table 7. Factor Analysis of Self Uncertainty

	1
% of variance	67.77
Cumulative %	67.77
How important your relationship is to you?	.856
How you feel about your relationship?	.838
Your view of the relationship?	.821
Your goals for the future of your relationship?	.775

Table 8. Factor Analysis of Partner Uncertainty

	1
% of variance	67.24
Cumulative %	67.24
How important your relationship is to your partner?	.864
How your partner feels about your relationship?	.840
Your partner's view of your relationship?	.818
Your partner's goals for the future of your relationship?	.754

Table 9. Factor Analysis of Relationship Uncertainty

	1
% of variance	64.51
Cumulative %	64.51
The current status of your relationship?	.897
The future of your relationship?	.840
The definition of your relationship?	.749
How you can or cannot behave around your partner?	.713

3.4.5 Independent and Mediating/Moderating Variables: Perceptions of Interference

To assess partner interference, a shortened version of Solomon and Knobloch's (2001) partner's influence and interference scale was used that focuses on the interference portions (Appendix H). Knobloch and Theiss (2011) revised the scale to understand perceptions of interference for service members who had returned home in the previous 6-months. The scale asks participants to rate their agreement on a 6-point scale (*1 = strongly disagree*, *6 = strongly agree*), following the stem, "my romantic partner…". Items include: (a) interferes with the plans I make, b) causes me to waste time, c) interferes with my career goals, d) interferes with the things I need to do each day, e) makes it harder for me to schedule my activities, f) interferes with whether I achieve the everyday goals I set for myself (e.g., goals for exercise, diet, entertainment), and g) makes it harder for me to be a good parent. The "makes it harder for me to be a good parent" was eliminated from this assessment because being a parent was not a requirement for inclusion in this study. Knobloch and Theiss' (2011) application indicated strong internal consistency scores for this measure ($\alpha = .92$).

Items from this partner interference measure were also submitted to an exploratory principal-axis factor analysis with direct oblimin rotation. One factor with an eigenvalue > 1.0 emerged that accounted for 63.26% of the total variance. Table 10 contains factor loadings and eigenvalues relevant to this analysis. The visual output from the corresponding scree plot supported this single factor solution (Appendix S). High internal consistency was also observed for this 6-item scale ($\alpha = .91$). Reponses were summed and divided by the number of items to retain the 1-6 scale. Perceptions of

partner interference were moderate for the sample as a whole (see Table 1).

Table 10. Factor Analysis of Partner Interference

	1
% of variance	63.26
Cumulative %	63.26
Interferes with the plans I make.	.850
Interferes with the things I need to do each day.	.810
Interferes with my career goals.	.808
Makes it harder for me to schedule my activities.	.790
Causes me to waste time.	.773
Interferes with whether I achieve the everyday goals I set for myself.	.737

3.4.6 Independent and Mediating/Moderating Variables: Communal Coping

Several of the measures that are included in this study have been examined in prior research with military partners in mind (e.g. partner interference; Knobloch & Theiss, 2011). However, little work has been completed to understand how individuals who have experienced a deployment cope with reintegration stressors. Completing this task requires addressing DeVellis's (2012) guidelines for scale development. In the first step, one must clearly determine what is to be measured. In completing this task, one needs to identify boundary phenomenon, with a theoretical model in mind. This step allows researchers to distinguish between the measured construct and other related variables. For the purpose of this scale, Afifi et al.'s (2006) communal coping conceptualization places boundaries between the responsibility and action components to create the four coping types (i.e., individual coping, protective buffering and parallelism,

support seeking and contagion, and communal coping). However, this study will not assess all four coping styles that Afifi and colleagues include. The focus of this investigation was the degree to which non-deployed partners believed they and their service members were engaging in communal coping as a response to reintegration challenges. Afifi et al. (2006) assert that communal coping is increasingly likely when there is shared understanding about stressor responsibility. They indicate that how one individual copes with a stressor has potential to affect another person who is also responding to the same issue. I supplemented the Afifi et al. (2006) conceptualization by initially drawing from Afifi et al.'s (2012) 2-item measure, and a longer scale reported in Afifi, Robbins, Merrill, and Davis (under review).

Stage two includes developing an item pool that reflects the item of interest (DeVellis, 2012). In this pool, several items might be redundant. DeVellis (2012) suggests it is not unusual to develop up to a 40-item pool, if one is aiming for a final 10-item scale. Fifteen items were drawn from Afifi, Robbins, Merrill, and Davis (under review). The original items included a family focus (e.g., "We try to do things together that help us feel like a family"). The adapted scale includes attention to couples (e.g., "We try to do things together that helps us feel like a couple"). During this phase, one should be less interested in item quality and more on developing ideas that express what is to be measured. Items should also be assessed for item length and reading difficulty (goal of 5th to 7th grade). DeVellis (2012) also cautions against using a stem, such as "When I think about it…" before all items, as reliability will be inflated. For this study, an initial pool of 40-items was included. To assess if the current measure meets these suggested criteria, the present scale was submitted to a readability analysis (Scott, n. d.).

Results suggested that the current measure is appropriate for use with an approximately 8th grade reading level (ages 12 – 14).

Stages three and four of scale development include determining a measurement format and having the initial item pool reviewed by experts. Participants were asked to rank their agreement on a 7-point scale with *1* indicating *strongly disagree* and *7* referencing *strongly agree*. This format was used in Afifi et al. (under review). Four experts (i.e., doctoral graduate students in interpersonal communication) were provided with a description of communal coping and were asked to evaluate the proposed scale. At the beginning of their assessment, they evaluated the dimensionality of the proposed measure by grouping items into larger categories (e.g., collaborative communication about stressors, viewing problems as having shared responsibility, taking communal action to resolve problems). After reviewing these documents further, they suggested adding several scale items to better represent a global assessment of communal coping (e.g., "I don't feel alone in handling these issues"). For example, they encouraged the inclusion of several items about nonverbal communication as evidence of communal coping (e.g., "Even a hug from my partner sometimes lets me know that we are dealing with these problems together"). They also simplified language and eliminated repetitive word choices throughout the scale. In several items, they also changed the stem "we" to "I" or "my partner and I" to increase diversity throughout the measure.

DeVellis (2012) also recommends including validation items, such as the social desirability scale. This measure can potentially be included as a control variable as individuals might view communal coping as something that denotes increased cohesion

within the couple, and hence as more desirable than individual efforts to cope with concerns. Details about the social desirability measure are provided below.

Following these assessments, stage five involves administering the new measure to a developmental sample (DeVellis, 2012). During this phase, the Military Family Research Institute (MFRI) at Purdue University was contacted to obtain access to individuals who had previously experienced deployment and reunion with their romantic partners. Three individuals were briefly interviewed and asked to provide feedback regarding the proposed coping scale. Sample interview prompts included, "Are the items clear?" and "Could you suggest another way of asking this question?" Suggestions from the MFRI interviews were used to improve the communal coping scale before the measure was administered in the main study. The final version of the adapted communal coping scale included 22-items (see Appendix F).

Items from the revised communal coping scale were submitted to an exploratory principal-axis factor analysis with direct oblimin rotation. Two factors had eigenvalues greater than 1 (see Appendix O for scree plot). The first factor accounted for 50.45% of variance within the data. The second factor contained an additional 2.67% of variance, for a combined 53.11% of variance. Table 11 contains factor loadings for this initial analysis. Low factor loadings were observed on the second factor, which supported the visual output from the scree plot. Interpretations were completed through the pattern matrix. No factors loadings higher than -.39 were located on any item for the second factor. As a result, a second exploratory principal-axis factor analysis for communal coping was completed with a single dimension forced (see Table 12). Approximately 50.32% of the total variance was accounted for by this single factor. The loadings for this

analysis can be found in Table 11. A single factor solution is advanced for several reasons. The second factor contributed a small amount of additional explained variance, and had few items load cleanly on the second factor. The scree plot was also evaluated to make this decision. High internal consistency was observed for this 22-item scale (α = .96). To compute a total score, responses were summed and then divided by the total number of items (22) to retain the original 1 - 7 scale. Perceptions of communal coping, on average, fell above 5.0 for the sample as a whole (see Table 1).

Table 11. Factor Analysis of Communal Coping

	1	*2*
% of variance	50.45	2.67
Cumulative %	50.45	53.11
We work together to solve problems no matter how hard it can be sometimes.	.830	.011
We cope with stressful situations as a couple.	.781	-.012
We talk about taking responsibility for our problems and behaviors as a couple.	.778	.113
Sharing time together as a couple when we're stressed helps us stay connected.	.771	.184
We join forces to tackle our problems together.	.770	-.004
We try and come together to help each other out when we're stressed.	.754	.055
We help each other out when we are stressed.	.752	.034
We talk through our problems together and attempt to come to solutions as a couple.	.750	.016

Table 11 Cont. Factor Analysis of Communal Coping

	1	*2*
There is a feeling that we're going to be stronger as a result of working through this together.	.713	-.271
We try and brainstorm different solutions to our problems as a couple.	.702	.035
We talk to one another about how we're going to get through this no matter what.	.699	-.033
Doing things together when we're stressed helps us build a daily routine or "rhythm" as a couple.	.698	.147
We work as a team when challenges happen.	.681	-.098
We talk about how we both are responsible for the stressful events in our lives.	.676	.216
We come together as a couple to try and organize our daily lives.	.672	.050
There is a real sense that we're going to work through our problems together.	.663	-.164
Doing things together as a couple when we're stressed helps us feel close.	.627	-.108
We know that the problems that create stress in our lives belong to both of us.	.604	-.139
We emphasize that we are there for each other whatever the outcome.	.595	-.385
We try to do things together that help us feel like a couple.	.581	-.111

Table 11 Cont. Factor Analysis of Communal Coping

	1	*2*
Even a hug from my partner sometimes lets me know that we are dealing with problems together.	.560	-.399
We tell one another that everything is going to work out for the better.	.530	-.344

Table 12. Factor Analysis of Communal Coping – 1 Factor Forced

	1
% of variance	50.32
Cumulative %	50.32
We work together to solve problems no matter how hard it can be sometimes.	.824
There is a feeling that we're going to be stronger as a result of working through this together.	.806
We cope with stressful situations as a couple.	.784
We join forces to tackle our problems together.	.770
We talk through our problems together and attempt to come to solutions as a couple.	.743
We help each other out when we are stressed.	.739
We talk about taking responsibility for our problems and behaviors as a couple.	.734
We try and come together to help each other out when we're stressed.	.733

Table 12 Cont. Factor Analysis of Communal Coping – 1 Factor Forced

	1
We emphasize that we are there for each other whatever the outcome.	.724
There is a real sense that we're going to work through our problems together.	.720
We work as a team when challenges happen.	.715
We talk to one another about how we're going to get through this no matter what.	.710
Sharing time together as a couple when we're stressed helps us stay connected.	.701
Even a hug from my partner sometimes lets me know that we are dealing with problems together.	.694
We try and brainstorm different solutions to our problems as a couple.	.688
Doing things together as a couple when we're stressed helps us feel close.	.664
We know that the problems that create stress in our lives belong to both of us.	.653
We come together as a couple to try and organize our daily lives.	.652
We tell one another that everything is going to work out for the better.	.647
Doing things together when we're stressed helps us build a daily routine or "rhythm" as a couple.	.642
We try to do things together that help us feel like a couple.	.620
We talk about how we both are responsible for the stressful events in our lives.	.617

3.4.7 Validity Variables: Social Desirability

To assess social desirability bias among participants, the Stöber (2001) Social Desirability Scale-17 (SDS-17) was used (see Appendix J). The SDS-17 was developed to respond to low internal consistency scores in the Marlowe-Crowne (1960) measure (see Crowne & Marlowe, 1960). The SDS-17 asks participants to respond to 17 questions that ask how much each statement describes them. Responses are either true or false. Items 1, 4, 6, 7, 11, 15, and 17 are reverse scored. Stöber (2001) notes that item 4 (illegal drug use) should be removed from additional applications of the scale because of problems with internal consistency. As a result, the SDS-17 only includes 16 questions. Previous applications (i.e., Blake et al., 2006) with an American population indicate that the scale approaches acceptable internal consistency ($\alpha = .75$). Unfortunately, the scale demonstrated consistently low reliability ($\alpha = .27$) in the present sample, even when items with low item-total correlations were deleted.

An exploratory principal-axis factor analysis with direct oblimin rotation was used to examine the dimensionality of the social desirability measure. Six factors emerged that contained eigenvalues greater than 1 (see Appendix U for scree plot). The scree plot also supported these findings. The first six factors accounted for approximately 8.4%, 6.9%, 5.5%, 2.8%, 2.0%, and 1.9% respectively of the variance. The factors collectively accounted for 27.6% of the cumulative variance. The pattern matrix revealed that only two of the items (i.e., “I always admit my mistakes openly and face the potential negative consequences” on factor 1, and “There has been at least one occasion when I failed to return an item that I borrowed” on factor 4) met the .60 .40 rule. This scale was not used in this study’s analyses. This decision stems from a lack of cleanly

loading items in the factor analysis, and low scale reliability with this sample.

Table 13. Factor Analysis of Social Desirability

	1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*
% of variance	8.40	6.91	5.52	2.80	2.03	1.94
Cumulative %	8.40	15.31	20.82	23.61	25.64	27.59
I always admit my mistakes openly and face the potential negative consequences.	.639	-.070	.095	-.006	-.074	-.285
In traffic I am always polite and considerate of others.	.463	.069	.006	.053	-.034	.176
I always eat a healthy diet.	.397	.078	-.171	.055	-.004	.130
There has been an occasion when I took advantage of someone else.	-.009	.585	.106	-.011	-.058	-.037
Sometimes I only help because I expect something in return.	.077	.497	-.173	.042	-.158	.021
I occasionally speak badly of others behind their back.	-.072	.357	.009	-.060	.063	.008
I sometimes litter.	.195	.335	.084	-.185	.159	.028
I never hesitate to help someone in case of emergency.	-.090	-.086	.360	-.147	-.124	-.146
I always accept others' opinions, even when they don't agree with my own.	.020	.041	.356	-.019	-.177	-.073
I take out my bad moods on others now and then.	-.137	.130	.320	.142	.140	-.138
When I have made a promise, I keep it –no ifs, ands, or buts.	.038	-.010	.285	.029	.025	.050
There has been at least one occasion when I failed to return an item that I borrowed.	-.146	.150	-.111	-.624	.103	.011
During arguments I always stay objective and matter-of-fact.	-.007	.045	.009	.062	-.449	.043
I always stay courteous with other people, even when I am stressed out.	.178	-.031	.123	-.267	-.328	.034
I would never live off other people.	.089	-.027	.061	.016	.065	-.538
In conversations I always listen attentively and let others finish their sentences.	.287	-.121	.259	.015	.001	.420

3.4.8 Validity Variables: Inclusion of Other in Self

To understand how closely participants believed that their self identity overlapped

with their partner, they were asked to complete an inclusion of the other in the self scale (Aron, Aron, & Smollan, 1992; Appendix K). Participants were asked to select the one image from seven that best describes their current relationship with their romantic partner. The circles are a series of Venn-like diagrams that differ amongst the degree in which the "self" circle overlaps the "other" circle. This variable was included primarily to help validate the new measure of communal coping. As expected, the couple identity and communal coping scales share a medium, positive correlation (r = .37).

3.4.9 Validity Variables: Couple Identity

Participants also were asked to complete the Couple Identity subscale of the Commitment Inventory Scale (Stanley & Markman, 1992; Appendix L). Six items comprise this scale, with responses from *1 = strongly disagree* to *7 = strongly agree*. Higher scores indicate stronger couple identities. Rhoades, Stanley, and Markman (2010) found high internal consistency (α = .88) in their sample.

An exploratory principal-axis factor analysis with direct oblimin rotation was used to explore the factor structure of the Couple Identity scale. The first factor accounted for 39.5% of the total variance, while the second factor accounted for 13.7%. These two factors collectively accounted for 53.2% of the total variance. Visual output (Appendix V) included two factors that had eigenvalues larger than one. The pattern matrix indicated that three items loaded cleanly on the first factor, and the remaining three items also loaded cleanly on the second factor. The scores on the two factors shared a moderate, inverse relationship (r = -.46). The two factors appear to reflect different item wording rather than two different substantive concepts, in that the reverse scored items all load on factor 1 and the positively-worded items load on factor 2. Because of this, items

were collapsed into an overall score. Table 14 includes the factor loadings for the principal-axis factor analysis forcing one factor. The 6-item measure reached acceptable internal consistency (α = .77). After reverse coding appropriate items, responses were summed and divided by the number of items to retain the original 1 - 7 scale. Higher scores indicate a greater sense of couple identity. As expected, a significant, medium, positive correlation was located between couple identity and communal coping (*r* = .46).

Table 14. Factor Analysis of Couple Identity

	1	*2*
% of variance	39.50	13.68
Cumulative %	39.50	53.17
I am more comfortable thinking in terms of "my" things than "our" things.	.839	.089
I want to keep the plans for my life somewhat separate from my partner's plans for life.	.760	-.004
I do not want to have a strong identity as a couple with my partner.	.685	-.165
I am willing to have or develop a strong sense of an identity as a couple with my partner.	.029	.851
I tend to think about how things affect "us" as a couple more than how things affect "me" as an individual.	.007	.583
I like to think of my partner and me more in terms of "us" and "we" than "me" and "him/her".	-.044	.552

3.4.10 Validity Variables: Depression Symptoms

The short form of the Radloff (1977) Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale (CES-D 10) was also administered to participants (Appendix M) as another validity check. Segrin (2000) found that depressed individuals have difficulties in providing and obtaining social support when stressors arise. Communal coping requires

individuals to view issues as shared in both the action and responsibility components. If individuals with depression have difficulties in providing social support, it is unlikely that they will be able to respond to problems with a communal approach.

When completing the CES-D 10, participants are asked to select how frequently during the past week they felt each of ten different symptoms (e.g., "I had trouble keeping my mind on what I was doing," "I felt depressed," and "I felt hopeful about the future"). Items 5 and 8 ("I was happy" and "I felt hopeful about the future") are reverse scored. Participants can select "*rarely or none of the time* (*less than 1 day*)," "*some or a little of the time* (*1 – 2 days*)," "*occasionally or a moderate amount of time* (*3 – 4 days*)," or "*almost all of the time* (*5 – 7 days*)." The score is the sum of all 10 items, with a score of 10 as considered depressed. If more than 2 items are missing, then the response should not be scored (Galbraith, n.d.). Previous applications of the CES-D 10 yielded high internal consistency ($\alpha = .86$) (Andersen, Byers, Friary, Kosloski, & Montgomery, 2013).

To maintain consistency with prior studies, all 10-items were retained for analyses that involved the depression variable. Participants' responses were recoded so that a total depression score could be computed. Items 5 ("I felt hopeful about the future") and 8 ("I was happy"), were rescored. For these two items, "rarely or none of the time" was rescored 3, "some or a little of the time" was recoded 2, "occasionally or a moderate amount of the time" was 1, and "all of the time" was 0. For the remaining items, "rarely or none of the time" was 0, "some or a little of the time" was 1, "occasionally or a moderate amount of time" was 2, and "all of the time" was recoded as 3. The items are then summed to compute a total score for depression. A score of 10 or higher is

considered depressed.[5] Of the 165 participants who completed this measure, approximately 36% (n = 60) met the criteria for depression (M = 8.6, SD = 4.7). Previous applications of the CES-D 10 yielded high internal consistency (α = .86) (Andersen, et al., 2013).

Table 15 includes correlations between the depression items and main study variables. Many of these correlations support prior work that has included bivariate correlations between relational turbulence items and depression (e.g., Knobloch & Theiss, 2011). Knobloch and Theiss (2011) found depressive symptoms to be correlated with self uncertainty (r = .45, p < .001), partner uncertainty (r = .51, p < .01), relationship uncertainty (r = .52, p < .01), partner interference (r = .48, p < .01), and relationship satisfaction (r = -.46, p < .01). Similar, albeit slightly weaker, associations between depressive symptoms and relational turbulence variables as well as relationship satisfaction in the present sample (see Table 15).

Finally, communal coping and depression shared an inverse association (r = -.25, p < .01). This finding helps to additionally validate the revised communal coping scale used in this study. Analyses that include depression as a predictor or outcome variable will not be contained in this dissertation. These data will be analyzed separately at a later time.

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[5] These statistics can be compared to prior studies which have examined depression in military spouses and romantic partners. Eaton and colleagues (2008) found that 12.2% of the 940 military spouses in their sample screened positively for depression. Mansfield et al. (2010) found that 23.7% of military wives who had experienced a spousal deployment were diagnosed with depression.

3.5 Data Analysis

3.5.1 Power Analysis

Before gathering data, a power analysis was conducted with the aid of PowMedR (Kenny, 2013) for the hypothesized relationships in Figures 3, 4, and 5. In each figure, communal coping is posited to serve as a mediating variable for one of the three types of uncertainty (relational, partner, self) and partner interference, with relational satisfaction as the outcome. The following effect sizes were used for these analyses: small (.1), medium (.3), and large (.5) (Cohen, 1988; Shrout & Bolger, 2002).

Power analyses for all analyses included a sample size of 165, desired power of .80, and alpha at .05. Low power was observed for small effects (.1) across several hypothesized paths: path c is .29, a is .25, b is .25, c' is .25, and ab is .06. The study is well powered for detecting medium (.3) and large effects (.5). Medium effects include the following estimates: path c is virtually 1, a is .98, b is .99, c' is .99, and ab is .96. All paths that are estimated to have large effects (.5) have a power of virtually 1.

Table 15. Pearson product moment correlations for main study variables.

	Stress	**Coping**	**Interference**	**Satisfaction**	**Self Uncertainty**	**Partner Uncertainty**	**Relationship Uncertainty**	**Depression**
Stress	--	-.365	.719	-.434	.485	.495	.482	.464
Coping		--	-.464	.837	-.666	-.720	-.671	-.247
Interference			--	-.508	.533	.490	.493	.509
Satisfaction				--	-.716	-.739	-.720	-.310
Self Uncertainty					--	.840	.886	.300
Partner Uncertainty						--	.874	.330
Relational Uncertainty							--	.333
Depression								--

Note 1. All of the correlations are statistically significant at the $p < .01$ level (2-tailed).
Note 2. $N = 179$ except for the depression item ($N = 165$).

3.5.2 Analysis Plan

3.5.2.1 Turbulence, Communal Coping, and Relationship Satisfaction

To evaluate whether the impact of relational uncertainty and perceived goal interference on satisfaction is mediated by communal coping (see Figures 3-5), suggestions from Hayes (2013) were implemented regarding the use of simple mediation models with multiple independent variables. Hayes (2013) notes that models that include multiple independent variables can be evaluated by regressing the variables on the other factors that cause them. When multiple *X* variables are included in the model, "estimates about one *X*'s effects on *Y* (directly and indirectly through *M*) that is unique to that *X* relative to the other *X*s in the model" can be obtained (Hayes, 2013, p. 195). In addition, there are direct and indirect effects for each of the *k X* variables that are included in the model.

For this study, the two *X* variables include relational uncertainty (relational, partner, or self) and partner interference. As Figures 3-5 demonstrate, each type of uncertainty (X_1) was entered into a mediation model individually with partner interference (X_2), communal coping as a mediator (*M*), and relational satisfaction as the outcome (*Y*). Knobloch (2007) notes that all three types of uncertainty (relational, partner, and self) are highly correlated. Consistent with virtually all prior relational turbulence studies, each type of uncertainty was assessed individually along with partner interference to explore their combined influence on relational satisfaction. The three types of uncertainty were assessed individually rather than all together in one model to avoid problems with multicollinearity.

Evaluating the proposed hypotheses also requires attention to the indirect and direct effects within each model. Hayes (2013) summarizes indirect effects as the effects of X_i on Y through M as a_ib, and the direct effect as c'. The total effect of this model can be calculated as a sum of direct and indirect effects: $c_i = c'_i + a_ib$. Hypotheses 1a, 1b, and 1c represent a_1, *H2* illustrates a_2, and *H3* indicates b. The mediation analyses (*H4a, H4b,* and *H4c*) collectively include these pathways (e.g., a_i x b or c'_i), so these hypotheses were examined when the mediation models were evaluated. The four research questions (*RQ1* and *RQ2a-c*) examine if partial or complete mediation accounts for the relationships between *X*, *Y*, and *M*.

In order to examine if communal coping serves as a mediating variable, bootstrapping techniques (Hayes, 2009) were used. When bootstrapping occurs, a sampling distribution of the indirect effect (e.g. a_i x b) is created by treating the obtained sample size (*n*) as a miniature population representation (Hayes, 2009). The sample is resampled with replacement, so a new sample size (*n*) is "built by sampling cases from the original sample but allowing any case once drawn to be thrown back to be redrawn as the resample of size *n* is constructed" (Hayes, 2009 p. 412). The resampling process is completed *k* times. Hayes (2009) suggests *k* should at the minimum be 1,000 times, but a resampling of 5,000 is recommended. After this resampling is completed, *k* estimates of the indirect effect are available. The distribution of the *k* samples represents an approximation of the indirect effect's sampling distribution when one takes a sample of *n* from the original population. The *k* estimates are sorted from smallest to largest to estimate a *ci*% confidence interval. If zero is not contained between the lower and upper bounds of the confidence interval, then an indirect effect can be assumed with *ci*%

confidence. When estimating indirect effects, PROCESS uses bias-corrected bootstrap confidence intervals. "Bias-corrected bootstrap confidence intervals are like percentile confidence intervals but the endpoints are adjusted as a function of the proportion of *k* values of *ab** that are less than *ab*, the point estimate of the indirect effect calculated in the original data" (Hayes, 2013, p. 111).

3.5.2.2 Stress, Turbulence, and Satisfaction

This study also explores whether the impact of stress on relational satisfaction is mediated by relational uncertainty and/or perceived goal interference (see Figures 6-8). Hence, parallel mediator models were used to test these predictions (*H5a, H5b, H5c, H6, H7a, H7b, H7c, H8, H9,* and *RQ3a-c*). A parallel multiple mediator model occurs when "antecedent variable *X* is modeled as influencing consequent *Y* directly as well as indirectly through two or more mediators, with the condition that no mediator causally influences another" (Hayes, 2013, p. 125). In this type of model, the mediators are not assumed to be independent, and are often correlated (Hayes, 2013). In this study, the parallel models include: *X* is stress, *M1* is uncertainty (self, partner, or relational), *M2* is partner interference, and *Y* is relationship satisfaction. Each of the three models was tested with a different type of uncertainty (e.g., self uncertainty for *H5b*).

3.5.2.3 Stress, Coping, and Satisfaction

The third type of model that is included in this analysis involves moderation (see Figure 9). According to Hayes (2013), the relationship between two variables (*X* and *Y*) is moderated when "its size or sign depends on a third variable or set of variables *M*" (p. 8). In this study, *RQ4* asks if communal coping (*M*) moderates the relationship between stress (*X*) and relational satisfaction (*Y*).

To assist with these analyses, Hayes' (2013) PROCESS macro once again was used. PROCESS completes multiple regressions simultaneously, estimates the proposed model, and provides statistical inference output. Moderation involves the interaction between the independent variable (stress) and the moderator (communal coping) in terms of their impact on the dependent variable (satisfaction). To test moderation, the model includes both the main effects for stress and communal coping as well as a product term (stress x coping) that represents the interaction effect. PROCESS tests whether the interaction is significant, which is similar to multiple regression. PROCESS also provides several additional types of output. For example, PROCESS will report slopes for the independent variable on the dependent variable at different levels of the moderator variable (e.g., 10^{th}, 50^{th}, and 90^{th} percentile). PROCESS will also show at exactly what levels of the moderator the relationship between the independent and dependent variable is, and is not, statistically significant. PROCESS provides several types of output for helping to interpret significant interaction effects when they occur.

This chapter has presented information about this study's participants, recruitment procedures, and measures. Appendix items for each of the proposed measures have also been noted. A data analysis plan for exploring the included hypotheses, research questions, and models was also included. Chapter 4 contained the study's results

CHAPTER 4. FINDINGS

Throughout this chapter, I present the results that relate to the hypotheses and research questions that were advanced in Chapter 2. I begin by examining the hypotheses and research questions that inquire about the associations between turbulence variables (i.e., partner interference, all types of uncertainty), communal coping, and relationship satisfaction (*H1a, H1b, H1c, H2, H3, H4a, H4b,* and *H4c*). *RQ1* and *RQ2a-c* are also used to evaluate these relationships. I then report analyses that explore the next set of hypotheses and research questions in terms of associations between stress, turbulence variables, and relational satisfaction (*H5a, H5b, H5c, H6, H7a, H7b, H7c, H8, H9,* and *RQ3a-c*). The chapter concludes by addressing if communal coping moderates the stress and relational satisfaction relationship (*RQ4*). Prior to testing these models, analyses were conducted to see which demographics might need to be included as control variables.

4.1 Associations Between Demographics and Main Study Variables

Before beginning the mediational analyses, demographic data were analyzed to examine the relationships with main study variables. Main study variables included communal coping, partner interference, relational satisfaction, self uncertainty, partner uncertainty, relationship uncertainty, stress, and depression. A variety of demographic items were included in the study (see Appendix C). Length of the most recent deployment, age, gender, and cohabitation status were examined as potential control

variables. Dual and single military career couples were also compared across these areas. When appropriate, Pearson product-moment correlations or independent samples t-tests were completed to assess these relationships. Correlational analyses between main study variables themselves can be located in Table 15.

4.1.1 Deployment Length

Pearson product-moment correlations were used to explore the relationships between the length of the most recent deployment and main study variables. Non-significant relationships were found when examining communal coping (r = -.09, n = 176, p = .22), relational satisfaction (r = -.13, n = 176, p = .09), self uncertainty (r = .14, n = 176, p = .06), partner uncertainty (r = .08, n = 176, p = .30), relationship uncertainty (r = .10, n = 176, p = .20), and depression (r = .09, n = 162, p = .24). A small, significant relationship was found between deployment length and stress (r = .21, n = 176, p = .01). A medium, positive correlation was located when partner interference was analyzed (r = .32, n = 176, $p < .001$). As the length of the service member's most recent deployment increased, participant reports of reintegration stressors as well as interference by the service member with the participant's goals and routines increased.

4.1.2 Age

The relationships between self-reported age (participant and partner) were also analyzed using Pearson product-moment correlations. For the participant's own age, stress (r = -.10, n = 179, p = .17), communal coping (r = .12, n = 179, p = .12), partner interference (r = -.09, n = 179, p = .22), relational satisfaction (r = .13, n = 179, p = .10), partner uncertainty (r = -.05, n = 179, p = .51), and depression (r = -.06, n = 165, p = .48) all were non-significant. Self uncertainty (r = -.14, n = 179, p = .06), and relationship

uncertainty (r = -.10, n = 179, p = .20) were also not significant. Interestingly, reported service member's age was significant across all analyses except for depression (r = -.13, n = 165, p = .09): stress (r = -.22, n = 179, p = .004), communal coping (r = .21, n = 179, p = .005), partner interference (r = -.20, n = 179, p = .006), relational satisfaction (r = .21, n = 179, p = .005), self uncertainty (r = -.26, n = 179, p < .001), partner uncertainty (r = -.21, n = 179, p = .006), and relationship uncertainty (r = -.21, n = 179, p = .004). Participants in relationships with older service members reported less uncertainty, less interference, and greater communal coping and relational satisfaction.

4.1.3 Gender

Independent-samples *t*-tests were analyzed with reported participant gender. Table 16 contains a summary for each variable for male and female participants. Significant differences were located for all main study variables with participant gender. Male participants scored significantly higher than female participants on measures of partner interference, self uncertainty, partner uncertainty, relationship uncertainty, stress and depression. Medium effect sizes were found for all types of uncertainty and depression. Large effects were found for partner interference and stressors. Female participants scored significantly higher than male participants on measures of communal coping and relational satisfaction. Small effect sizes were found for communal coping. Medium effect sizes were located for uncertainty and relational satisfaction, whereas large differences occurred for reintegration stressors and partner interference.

Table 16. Independent Samples *t*-tests by Gender.

	Female (*M*, *SD*)	Male (*M*, *SD*)	*t*	*p*	Eta squared
Stress	4.3, 1.8	5.8, 1.6	5.7	< .001	.16
Relational Uncertainty	2.3, 1.3	2.9, 1.1	3.2	< .001	.05
Partner Uncertainty	2.3, 1.3	2.9, 1.0	3.5	< .01	.06
Self Uncertainty	2.1, 1.2	2.9, 1.0	4.3	< .01	.09
Partner Interference	2.8, 1.3	3.7, .92	5.8	< .01	.16
Communal Coping	5.2, 1.2	4.9, .90	-2.1	.04	.02
Relational Satisfaction	5.6, 1.3	4.9, 1.1	-3.8	< .01	.08
Depression	1.8, .46	2.0, .51	3.2	< .01	.05

Note. $N = 114$ for female participants. $N = 65$ for male participants except for depression ($n = 107$ for female participants, $n = 58$ for male participants).

4.1.4 Dual-Military Career Couples

Several independent-samples *t*-tests were conducted to explore how dual and single career military couples responded to main study variables. No significant differences were located for participants in dual career and single career couples for communal coping, relationship uncertainty, self uncertainty, partner uncertainty, or relational satisfaction. Significant differences were observed for stress, partner interference, and depression. Dual-military career couples reported higher stress, partner interference, and depression scores than single military career couples. A medium effect size was observed for stress, partner interference, and depression. Table 17 contains a summary for each variable for dual and single-military career couple participants.

Table 17. Independent Samples *t*-tests for Military Career Couple Status.

	Dual (*M*, *SD*)	Single (*M*, *SD*)	*t*	*p*	Eta squared
Stress	5.6, 2.0	4.4, 1.6	4.5	< .01	.10
Relational Uncertainty	2.7, 1.2	2.4, 1.2	1.5	.15	.01
Partner Uncertainty	2.6, 1.1	2.4, 1.3	.62	.53	.01
Self Uncertainty	2.5, 1.1	2.3, 1.1	1.3	.23	.01
Partner Interference	3.6, 1.2	2.9, 1.2	3.8	< .01	.08
Communal Coping	5.3, .95	5.0, 1.2	1.6	.12	.01
Relational Satisfaction	5.3, 1.2	5.4, 1.4	-.47	.64	.001
Depression	2.1, .60	1.8, .37	3.5	< .01	.07

Note. $N = 110$ for single military career participants. $N = 69$ for dual-military career participants, except for depression ($n = 103$ for single military career participants, $n = 62$ for dual military career participants).

4.1.5 Cohabitation

Independent-samples *t*-tests were analyzed with reported cohabitation status. Table 18 summarizes each variable for cohabitation status. No significant differences were located for participants who cohabitated in comparison to those that did not for depression. Significant differences were located for the remainder of the main study variables with cohabitation status. Higher communal coping scores were exhibited by participants who lived together in comparison to those who did not for communal coping and relational satisfaction. Large effect sizes were detected for communal coping and relational satisfaction. Couples who did not live together reported higher mean scores than couples who lived together for stress, relationship uncertainty, partner uncertainty, self uncertainty, and partner interference. Small effect sizes were located for stress.

Medium effect sizes were found for partner interference. Large effect sizes were found for relationship uncertainty, partner uncertainty, and self uncertainty.

Table 18. Independent Samples *t*-tests for Cohabitation Status.

	Cohabitating (*M*, *SD*)	Non-cohabitating (*M*, *SD*)	*t*	*p*	Eta squared
Stress	4.7, 2.0	5.3, .92	-2.4	.02	.03
Relational Uncertainty	2.3, 1.3	3.2, .66	-5.9	< .01	.16
Partner Uncertainty	2.3, 1.2	3.3, .76	-5.9	< .01	.16
Self Uncertainty	2.2, 1.2	3.2, .77	-6.4	< .01	.19
Partner Interference	3.0, 1.3	3.6, .62	-3.8	< .01	.07
Communal Coping	5.3, 1.1	4.2, .73	7.1	< .01	.22
Relational Satisfaction	5.6, 1.1	4.1, 1.1	7.4	< .01	.23
Depression	1.9, .53	2.0, .33	-1.3	.19	.01

Note. $N = 143$ for cohabitating couples. $N = 36$ for non-cohabitating couples except for depression ($n = 129$ for cohabitating couples, $n = 36$ for non-cohabitating couples).

4.1.6 Covariates

Given these results, several demographic variables were used as controls. Specifically, length of the most recent deployment, service member age, participant gender, couple type (i.e., dual-career vs. single-career), and cohabitation status were included as control variables in the mediation and moderation analyses reported below. Participant and service member age were highly correlated ($r = .83$), so only the service member's age was used as a control. Service member gender was not used as a control variable given the high percentage of heterosexual relationships that were reported in this sample. Because depression was not a demographic factor, it was not included as a control variable; however, it will be explored in post-dissertation analyses of the data.

4.2 Relational Turbulence, Communal Coping, and Satisfaction

Relational uncertainty (i.e., relationship, partner, and self), communal coping, and relational satisfaction were analyzed to evaluate *H1a-c, H2, H3, H4a-c, RQ1,* and *RQ2a-c.* Figures 10, 11, and 12 provide a visual representation of these results.

Each of the models in Figures 10, 11, and 12 contained two predictor variables. When this occurs, two separate analyses are calculated in which one of the predictors is controlled (Hayes, 2013). The models and corresponding hypotheses that examine partner interference included a control for each type of uncertainty. Partner interference hypotheses and research questions used uncertainty items as controls.

The models included in Figures 10, 11, and 12 include two *a* pathways (a_1 and a_2), one *b* pathway, two direct effects (c'_1 and c'_2), and two indirect effects (a_1b_1 and a_2b_2). The individual pathways and corresponding hypotheses were analyzed first. Unstandardized regression coefficients were used for each of the pathways in the forthcoming models. The direct and indirect effects followed with attention to relevant hypotheses and research questions. As noted in Chapter 3, bootstrapping (i.e., N = 10,000 resamples) was used to create bias-corrected CI95s in order to test the indirect effects.

4.2.1 Relational Uncertainty, Interference, Coping, and Satisfaction

Figure 10 examined if communal coping mediated the relationship between relational uncertainty and partner interference with relational satisfaction.

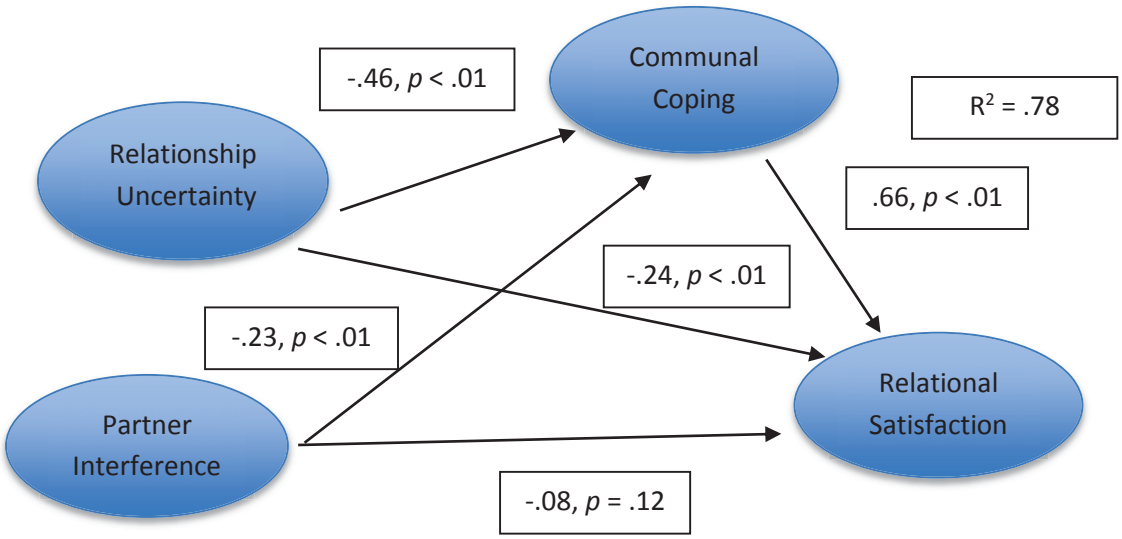

Figure 10. Visual representation of communal coping mediating the partner interference and relational uncertainty with relational satisfaction relationship.

In this model, the path from relational uncertainty to communal coping was a_1. Hypothesis 1a suggested that relational uncertainty was inversely associated with communal coping. This hypothesis was supported (*H1a*; $a_1 = -.46$, $p < .01$, 95% CI = -.569 to -.342). Hypothesis 2 indicated that partner interference was inversely associated with communal coping. This hypothesis was supported ($a_2 = -.23$, $p < .01$, 95% CI = -.350 to .112). Hypothesis 3, which posited that communal coping was positively associated with relational satisfaction, also was supported ($b = .66$, $p < .01$, 95% CI = .538 to .782).

Hypothesis 4a suggested that communal coping would mediate the relationship between relational uncertainty and partner interference with relational satisfaction. The indirect effect of relational uncertainty on relational satisfaction (a_1b_1) was comprised of the product of a_1 (relational uncertainty to communal coping) and b (communal coping to relational satisfaction). This effect represented the relationship from relationship

uncertainty to relational satisfaction through communal coping. The second indirect effect in Figure 10 (a_2b_2) was partner interference to relational satisfaction through communal coping. This effect was calculated as the product of a_2 (partner interference to communal coping) and b (communal coping to relational satisfaction). Bootstrapping analyses indicated that the first indirect effect was significant (a_1b_1 = -.30, 95% CI = =.431 to -.200). The second indirect effect was also significant (a_2b_2 = -.15, 95% CI = -.274 to -.067). These findings support *H4* and indicate that the relationships between the relational turbulence items and relational satisfaction occur through communal coping.

RQ1 inquired if communal coping completely or partially mediated the relationships between partner interference and relational satisfaction. Field (2013) claims that complete mediation is likely when the relationship between the predictor and outcome is "completely wiped out by including the mediator in the model" (p. 408). As can be seen in Figure 10, the direct effect of partner interference on relationship satisfaction was not significant in this model (c'_2 = -.08, p = .12, 95% CI = -.172 to .021) Hence, the relationship between partner interference and relational satisfaction was completely mediated by communal coping, such that partner interference did not exert any additional impact on satisfaction beyond the indirect effect via communal coping.

Research question 2a asked if communal coping completely or partially mediated the association between relationship uncertainty and relational satisfaction. The direct effect of relational uncertainty on relationship satisfaction (c'_1 = -.24, p < .01, 95% CI = -.344 to -.131) was statistically significant. In other words, the relationship between relationship uncertainty and relational satisfaction was only partially mediated by communal coping. The R^2 in Figure 10 indicates that relationship uncertainty, partner

interference, and communal coping together explain more than three quarters of the variance in relational satisfaction.

4.2.2 Partner Uncertainty, Interference, Coping, and Satisfaction

Figure 11 included communal coping as a mediator in the relationship between partner uncertainty and partner interference with relational satisfaction.

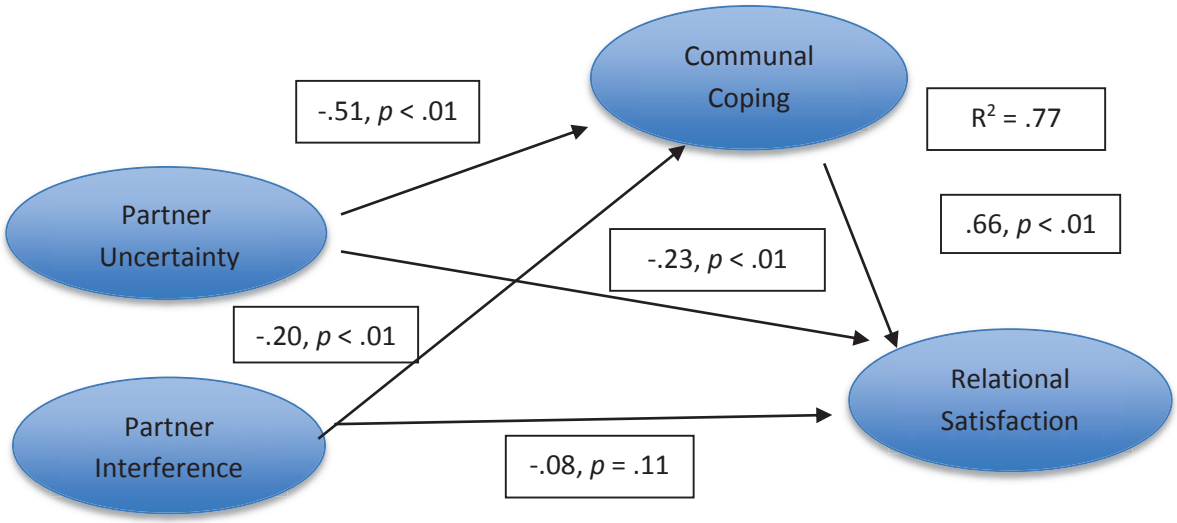

Figure 11. Visual representation of communal coping mediating the partner interference and partner uncertainty with relational satisfaction relationship.

As can be seen, the results for this model are virtually identical to those for the model that included relational uncertainty (Figure 10). Both turbulence variables predicted communal coping, which in turn predicted relationship satisfaction.

Hypothesis 4b suggested that communal coping would mediate the relationship between partner uncertainty and relational satisfaction. The indirect effects for Figure 11 (a_1b_1 and a_2b_2) were calculated similarly to the indirect effects for Figure 10. The only difference was that partner uncertainty was substituted for relational uncertainty. The first indirect effect was significant (a_1b_1 = -.33, 95% CI = = -.462 to -.238). The second indirect effect was also significant (a_2b_2 = -.13, 95% CI = -.257 to -.050).

RQ 1 inquired if communal coping completely or partially mediated the relationships between partner interference and relational satisfaction. The direct effect (c'_2 = -.08, p = .11, 95% CI = -.179 to .017) of partner interference on relational satisfaction was not statistically significant; hence, the relationship between partner interference and relational satisfaction was completely mediated by communal coping.

Research question 2b explored if communal coping completely or partially mediated the association between partner uncertainty and relational satisfaction. The direct effect (c'_1 = -.23, p < .01, 95% CI = -.341 to -.112) of partner uncertainty on relationships satisfaction was statistically significant, which indicates that communal coping only partially mediated the associations between partner uncertainty and relational satisfaction.

4.2.3 Self Uncertainty, Interference, Coping, and Satisfaction

Figure 12 explored if communal coping mediated the relationship between self uncertainty and partner interference with relational satisfaction.

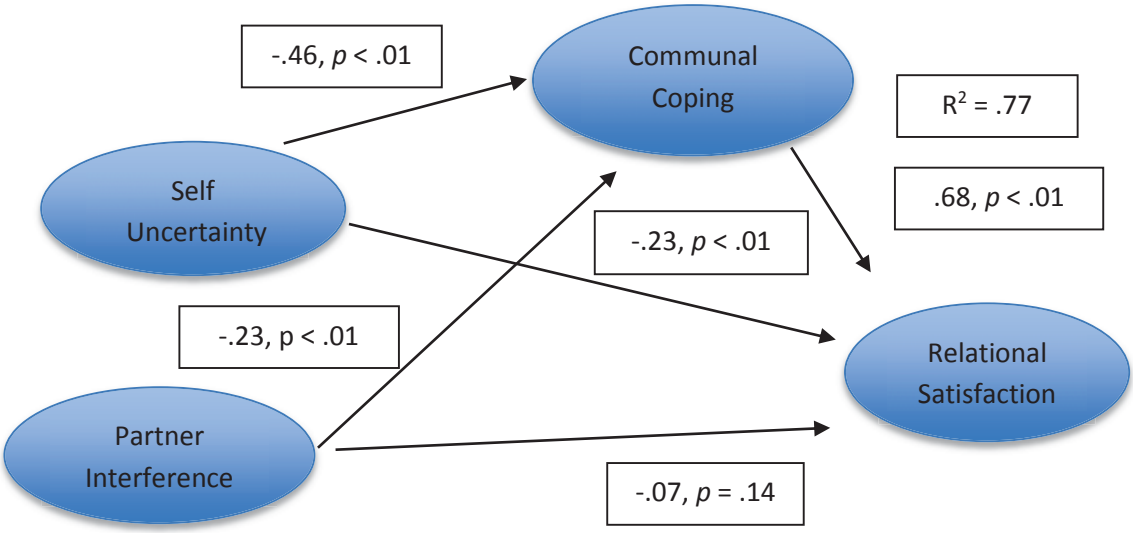

Figure 12. Visual representation of communal coping mediating the partner interference and self uncertainty with relational satisfaction relationship.

Once again, the results for this model are virtually identical to those for the model that included relational uncertainty (Figure 10). Both turbulence variables predicted communal coping, which in turn predicted relationship satisfaction.

Hypothesis 4c posited that communal coping mediated the relationship between self uncertainty and relational satisfaction. Results for self uncertainty mirrored those for the other two types of uncertainty. The first indirect effect was significant (a_1b_1 = -.31, 95% CI = =.451 to -.201). The second indirect effect was also significant (a_2b_2 = -.16, 95% CI = -.279 to -.068). These findings collectively provide support for the conclusion that communal coping mediates the relationship between the relational turbulence items with relational satisfaction.

RQ1 inquired if communal coping completely or partially mediated the relationships between partner interference and relational satisfaction. Once again, the direct effect of partner interference on satisfaction (c'_2 = -.07, p = .14, 95% CI = -.172 to .025) was not statistically significant, which indicates complete mediation.

Research question 2c examined if communal coping completely or partially mediated the association between self uncertainty and relational satisfaction. The direct effect of self uncertainty on relational satisfaction (c'_1 = -.23, p < .01, 95% CI = -.338 to -.115) was statistically significant. Communal coping only partially mediated the associations between self uncertainty and relational satisfaction in Figure 5.

4.3 Stress, Relational Turbulence, and Satisfaction

Stress, relational turbulence, and relationship satisfaction were analyzed to examine *H5a, H5b, H5c, H6, H7a, H7b, H7c, H8, H9,* and *RQ3a-c*. Figures 13, 14, and 15 provide a visual representation of these results.

The models included in Figures 13, 14, and 15 all include two *a* pathways (a_1 and a_2), two *b* pathways (b_1 and b_2), one direct effect (c'_1), and two indirect effects (a_1b_1 and a_2b_2). The individual pathways and corresponding hypotheses were analyzed first. The findings that were relevant to the direct and indirect effects followed and included attention to the associated hypotheses and research questions.

4.3.1 Stress, Relational Uncertainty, Interference, and Satisfaction

Figure 13 contained a model in which the association between stress and relationship satisfaction was mediated by relationship uncertainty and partner interference.

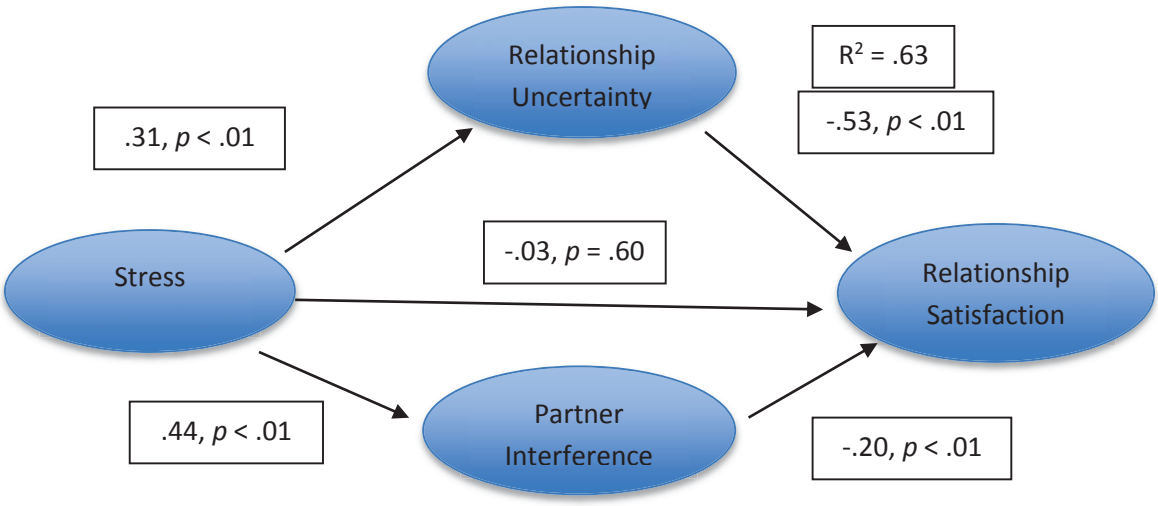

Figure 13. Visual representation of relationship uncertainty and partner interference mediating the stress and relational satisfaction relationship.

Hypothesis 5a included that stress was positively associated with relationship uncertainty. As can be seen in Figure 13, stress was significantly, positively associated with relationship uncertainty (a_1 = .31, p < .01, 95% CI = .213 to .399). Hypothesis 6 suggested that stress was positively associated with partner interference (a_2). This hypothesis was supported (a_2 = .44, p < .01, 95% CI = .361 to .516). Hypothesis 7a, which inquired if relationship uncertainty was inversely associated with relational satisfaction, also was supported (b_1 = -.53, p < .01, 95% CI = -.651 to -.410). Hypothesis 8 predicted that partner interference would be inversely associated with relational satisfaction (b_2). This hypothesis was also supported (b_2 = -.20, p < .01, 95% CI = -.354 to -.063).

H9 examined if relational uncertainty and partner interference would mediate the relationship between stress and relationship satisfaction. Bootstrapping analyses indicated that the indirect effects of stress on satisfaction through relationship uncertainty (a_1b_1 = -.16, 95% CI = -.238 to -.010), and through partner interference (a_2b_2 = -.09, 95%

CI = -.181 to -.019), both were statistically significant. These findings suggested that the relationship between stress and relationship satisfaction flows through relational uncertainty and partner interference.

The first element in the third research question (*RQ3a*) asked if relationship uncertainty and partner interference would partially or completely mediate the associations between stress and relationship satisfaction. The direct effect from stress to relationship satisfaction (*c'*) was not significant (*c'* = -.03, *p* = .60, 95% CI = -.123 to .071). This means that the association between stress and relationship satisfaction was completely through relationship uncertainty and partner interference. The R^2 in Figure 13 shows that stress, relationship uncertainty, and partner interference together explain about two-thirds of the variance in relationship satisfaction.

4.3.2 Stress, Partner Uncertainty, Interference, and Satisfaction

Figure 14 was similar to Figure 13, except for the inclusion of partner uncertainty in place of relationship uncertainty.

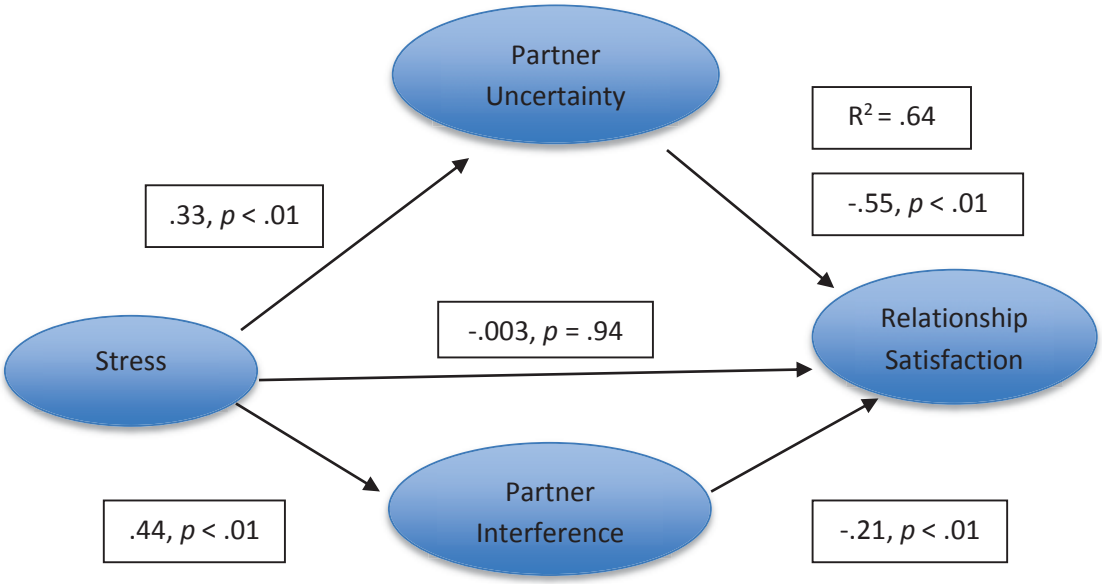

Figure 14. Visual representation of partner uncertainty and partner interference mediating the stress and relational satisfaction relationship.

Results for this model are very similar to the previous one that included relational uncertainty. Stress significantly predicted both turbulence variables, which in turn each explained unique variance in relationship satisfaction.

H9 examined if partner uncertainty and partner interference mediated the association between stress and relationship satisfaction. The indirect effects of stress on satisfaction through partner uncertainty, (a_1b_1 = -.18, 95% CI = -.262 to -.116) and through partner interference, (a_2b_2 = -.09, 95% CI = -.184 to -.027), both were statistically significant. These findings support *H9*.

RQ3b examined if the relationship between stress and relational satisfaction was partially or completely mediated by partner uncertainty and interference. The direct effect from stress to relationship satisfaction (*c'*) was not significant (*c'* = -.003, *p* = .94, 95% CI = -.101 to .094), indicating complete mediation. Figure 15 included self uncertainty.

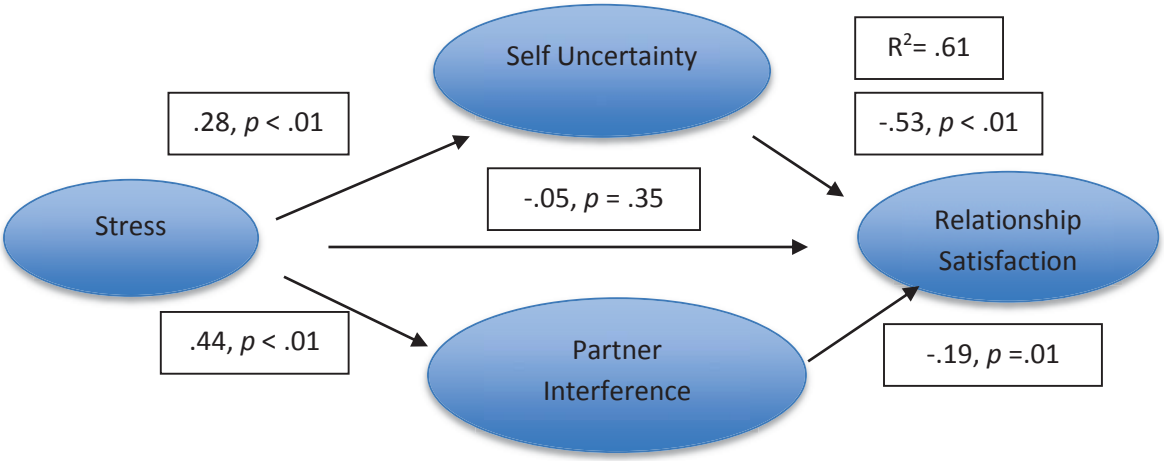

Figure 15. Visual representation of self uncertainty and partner interference mediating the stress and relational satisfaction relationship.

4.3.3 Stress, Self Uncertainty, Interference, and Satisfaction

Once again, the findings for this model are very similar to the previous two models. Stress significantly predicted both turbulence variables, which in turn each explained unique variance in relationship satisfaction.

H9 assessed if self uncertainty and partner interference would mediate the relationship between stress and relationship satisfaction. The indirect effects from stress to relationship satisfaction through self uncertainty (a_1b_1 = -.15, 95% CI = -.220 to -.092) and partner interference (a_2b_2 = -.08, 95% CI = -.176 to -.012) both were statistically significant, indicating that the relationship between stress and relationship satisfaction is mediated by self uncertainty and partner interference.

RQ3c includes a research question which examined if relationship and partner interference were partially or completely mediated by self uncertainty and partner interference. Once again, the direct effect from stress to relationship satisfaction (*c'*) was

not significant (*c'* = -.05, *p* = .35, 95% CI = -.145 to .052), indicating complete mediation.

4.4 Moderation Analyses

RQ4 asked if communal coping moderated the relationship between stress and relational satisfaction. As noted in Chapter 3 (see "data analysis plan"), these analyses also were conducted using Hayes (2013) PROCESS model. Results are shown in Figure 16.

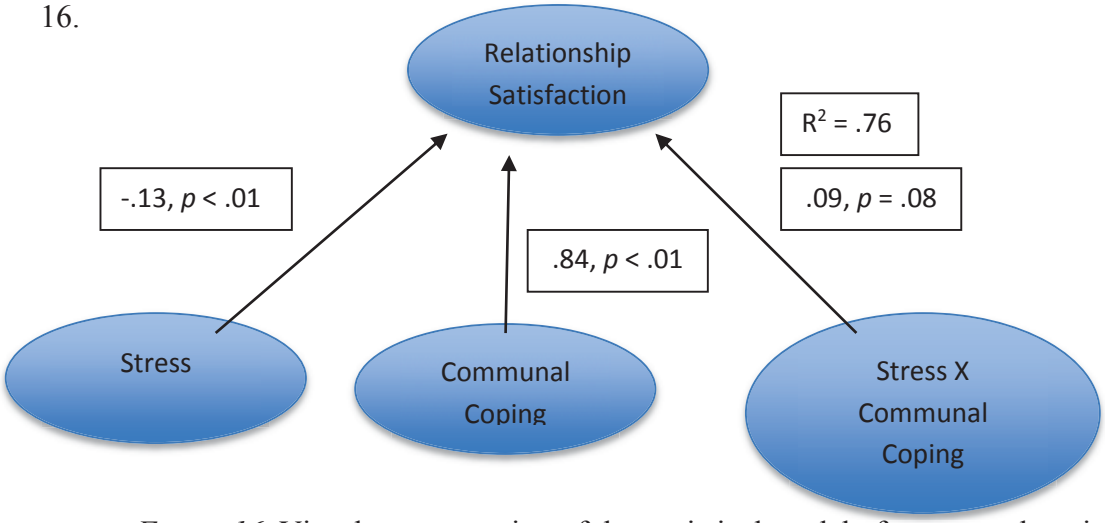

Figure 16. Visual representation of the statistical model of communal coping moderating the stress and relational satisfaction relationship.

Although not shown in Figure 16, these analyses were conducted with the same control variables (i.e., deployment length, service member age, participant sex, cohabitation status, and dual-/single-career military couple) as were included in the earlier mediation analyses. Path coefficients in Figure 16 are unstandardized regression coefficients. Consistent with earlier results, communal coping as a main effect is positively associated with relational satisfaction whereas stress is inversely associated with satisfaction. Most relevant to *RQ4*, the stress x communal coping interaction (i.e., product term) approached but did not reach conventional levels of statistical significance,

(b = .09, p = .08, 95% CI = -.009 to .187). The model as a whole explains approximately three-quarters of the variance in participants' relational satisfaction, though the interaction term (stress x coping) explains only 1.1% of the variance in relationship satisfaction above that already accounted for by the control variables and main effects for stress and communal coping.

Cohabitation status was the only control variable associated with relationship satisfaction in the model; hence, a second moderation analysis was conducted without cohabitation status. Results from this second analysis revealed that the interaction term was significant (b =.11, p = .04, 95% CI = .004 to .208) even after accounting for the five remaining control variable as well as the main effects for stress and communal coping.

Given these findings, several follow-up procedures in PROCESS were used to probe the nature of this tentative interaction. Results from these follow-up analyses were virtually identical regardless of whether cohabitation status was included in the model; thus, the findings reported here include cohabitation among the control variables. First, relational satisfaction was regressed onto stress at low, moderate, and high levels of communal coping, where these three levels were operationalized as the values of -1*SD* below the sample mean, the sample mean, and +1*SD* above the sample mean for communal coping. Consistent with a stress-buffering perspective, a statistically significant, inverse association between stress and relationship satisfaction occurred at low, b =-.23, p = .02, 95% CI = -.43 to -.03, and moderate, b =-.13, p = .049, 95% CI = -.23 to -.04, levels of communal coping. In contrast, stress and relationship satisfaction were not associated at high levels of communal coping, b =-.03, p = .30, 95% CI = -.09 to +.03. Second, the Johnson-Neyman technique was used to probe the exact regions of

communal coping where the association between stress and relationship satisfaction was statistically significant. Table 19 shows the conditional effects of stress on satisfaction at 22 different levels of communal coping, ranging from -3.34 *SD*s below the sample mean to +1.89 *SD*s above the sample mean.

As can be seen in Table 19, stress is inversely associated with relational satisfaction at all levels of communal coping up to .88 *SD* above the mean, after which the association becomes non-significant. Once again, these findings are consistent with a stress-buffering role for communal coping.

Table 19. Johnson-Neyman Analysis Output

Coping	Effect	se	*t*	*p*	LLCI	ULCI
-3.34	-.43	.21	-2.04	.04	-.840	-.015
-3.09	-.40	.20	-2.06	.04	.-791	-.017
-2.82	-.38	.18	-2.08	.04	-.743	-.019
-2.56	-.36	.17	-2.10	.04	-.694	-.021
-2.30	-.33	.16	-2.12	.04	-.645	-.023
-2.04	-.31	.14	-2.15	.03	-.597	-.025
-1.78	-.29	.13	-2.18	.03	-.549	-.027
-1.51	-.26	.12	-2.21	.03	-.500	-.029
-1.25	-.24	.11	-2.26	.03	-.452	-.031
-.99	-.22	.09	-2.32	.02	-.404	-.032
-.73	-.20	.08	-2.38	.02	-.357	-.034
-.47	-.17	.07	-2.47	.01	-.309	-.034
-.20	-.15	.06	-2.57	.01	-.263	-.035
.06	-.13	.05	-2.69	.01	-.217	-.033
.32	-.10	.04	-2.80	.01	-.174	-.030
.58	-.08	.03	-2.73	.01	-.136	-.022
.84	-.06	.03	-2.14	.03	-.107	-.0043
.88	-.05	.03	-1.97	.05	-.103	.000
1.11	-.03	.03	-1.11	.27	-.090	.025
1.37	-.01	.04	-.25	.80	-.082	.064
1.63	.01	.05	.30	.77	-.079	.107
1.89	.04	.06	.64	.53	-.078	.153

CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION

One goal of this research was to understand how romantic partners of recently returning service members cope with challenges during the reintegration period. One hundred and seventy-nine relational partners were surveyed for this study. Participants provided demographic information before they responded to main study items. The online questionnaire evaluated participants' perceptions of post-deployment stress, relational satisfaction, communal coping, uncertainty, and partner interference. A new communal coping measure was developed for this study, so several validity scales were also included (e.g., social desirability and couple identity).

This research provided several theoretical and practical contributions. From a theoretical perspective, this study brought together the relational turbulence model (Solomon & Knobloch, 2004) with the theoretical model of communal coping (TMCC; Afifi et al., 2006). These frameworks had not been previously joined with the goal of examining how military partners cope with challenges during the reintegration period. This work is especially needed because very limited research to date has explored how post-deployment stressors affect military couples (Dimiceli, Steinhardt, & Smith, 2010). Another theoretical contribution is that this study tested an expanded communal coping measure. Previous communal coping measures (e.g., Afifi et al., 2006; Afifi et al., 2012) contained challenges with regard to measurement validity. One additional theoretical contribution is that the study helped to extend findings in the relational turbulence

literature that examines how service members and their relational partners communicate during the post deployment transition (e.g., Knobloch et al., 2013, Knobloch & Theiss, 2011; Theiss & Knobloch, 2013). This research expanded upon previous findings through assessing how relational partners perceive post-deployment communication with the service members, and identified stressors that are commonly faced during this transition. Practical contributions are noted in the form of a potential training program for military couples who are experiencing post-deployment stress. The goal of this program is to encourage military couples to strengthen their communal coping skills. These items are discussed throughout this chapter.

The first portion of this chapter summarizes key research findings. These findings will be grouped into larger areas that reflect the hypotheses and research questions that were included at the conclusion of Chapter 2, as well as findings that occurred for control variables. The next section of this chapter discusses theoretical contributions to the relational turbulence (Solomon & Knobloch, 2004) and communal coping (Afifi et al., 2006; Afifi et al., 2012) literatures. The practical implications of this study follow the theoretical contributions. This chapter closes by identifying limitations of the current study, and possible future research directions.

5.1 Study Findings

Seventeen hypotheses and eight research questions were used to evaluate the associations between the multiple variables that comprise the relational turbulence and communal coping frameworks. Hypotheses and research questions explored the relationships between relational turbulence, communal coping, relational satisfaction, and stress. The results from this study were evaluated across three larger areas. The first area

evaluated models that contained relational turbulence, communal coping, and relational satisfaction. The second theme contained assessments of the associations between stress, relational turbulence, and relational satisfaction. The third inquired if the relationship between stress and satisfaction depended on different levels of communal coping. Each area will be briefly discussed.

5.1.1 Relational Turbulence, Communal Coping, and Satisfaction

One theme in this dissertation's findings relates to differences in how the relational turbulence constructs (i.e., uncertainty and partner interference) predicted relational satisfaction through communal coping. Relational uncertainty and partner interference are both elements in the relational turbulence model, but they reacted differently in their associations with coping and satisfaction. In particular, communal coping completely mediated the association between partner interference and relational satisfaction. Perhaps the primary reason why perceived goal interference holds the potential to reduce relational satisfaction is because it decreases the spouse's perception that the participant and his or her partner (service member) are handling reintegration issues jointly. In contrast, communal coping only partially mediated the association between uncertainty (relational, partner, or self) and relational satisfaction. This finding indicated that communal coping is only part of the reason why participants who have doubts about their relationships are less satisfied. This finding suggests that relational uncertainty likely also reduces relational satisfaction for reasons that were not analyzed in this study.

One element that was not assessed in this analysis, but could assist in creating additional understanding, are relational maintenance behaviors. Bowling and Sherman

(2008) and Vormbrock (1993) suggest that relational maintenance behaviors are important for couples especially during reintegration. Theiss and Knobloch (2011) found the relational turbulence variables to be inversely associated with positive communication maintenance behaviors (e.g., sharing feelings about the relationship, providing reassurances about one's commitment, expressing a positive and optimistic attitude when problems arise) for service members and their partners. These findings suggest a need for additional research that explores how communal coping influences which relational maintenance strategies are used during reintegration.

5.1.2 Stress, Relational Turbulence, and Satisfaction

The second theme is that relational turbulence variables completely mediate the relationship between stress and relational satisfaction. Participants' reports of reintegration stressors did not have direct effects on relational satisfaction; rather, perceived stressors appear to increase both relational uncertainty (i.e., doubts about one's own and the service member's commitment to the relationship, as well as about the future of the relationship) and perceived goal interference (i.e., perceptions that the service member interferes with one's goals and routines), which in turn reduce relational satisfaction. This investigation's findings are valuable to compare with Knobloch and Theiss (2011). Knobloch and Theiss (2011) found that the association between depressive symptoms and relational satisfaction were mediated by the relational turbulence items. Their study was completed through surveying service members. This study parallels those results by seeking to understand how a wide array of different reintegration stressors can negatively impact satisfaction from the at-home partner's point of view.

Taken together, the findings from both studies suggest that reintegration stressors hold potential to affect the service member and his or her partner's evaluation of relationship satisfaction.

5.1.3 Partial and Complete Mediation

Valuable insight can be gained from examining the differences in how communal coping mediated the relational turbulence variables. Communal coping completely mediated the association that partner interference had with relationship satisfaction. Interestingly, communal coping only partially mediated the associations between the uncertainty variables and relationship satisfaction. This partial mediation was found for all three types of uncertainty. Understanding why these differences occurred required examining the relationships among these variables further.

One possible explanation for these differences is that scores on relational uncertainty variables (i.e., relationship uncertainty, partner uncertainty, and self uncertainty) contained higher levels of variability than those for partner interference. The data in Table 1 indicated that the standard deviations for these two variables are similar. For example, self uncertainty ($M = 2.4$, $SD = 1.2$), and partner interference ($M = 3.2$, $SD = 1.3$) contain few differences in in terms of variance. These findings rule out the possibility that the differences in how communal coping mediates the relational turbulence variables are due to differences in variability for relational uncertainty vs. partner interference (which could impact the strength of association between these variables and outcomes like relational satisfaction).

Another possibility is that the partner interference variable correlates strongly with coping, and the uncertainty variables do not. The data contained in Table 15

demonstrated that communal coping has negative associations with partner interference (r = -.46), self uncertainty (r = -.67), partner uncertainty (r = -.72), and relationship uncertainty (r = -.67). Yet again, the data does not support this explanation for why there are differences in how communal coping mediates the associations between the relational turbulence variables and relational satisfaction. Additional research is needed to understand why communal coping mediates the associations between the relational turbulence items and relational satisfaction differently. For example, perhaps relational uncertainty impacts a broader range of communication processes (e.g., not only communal coping, but relational maintenance or information management) than perceived partner interference, and hence relational uncertainty may have multiple rather than a single pathway in terms of how it reduces relational satisfaction.

5.1.4 Stress, Communal Coping, and Satisfaction

One final theme concerns the role that communal coping and cohabitation status have in the relationship between stress and relational satisfaction. The results from *RQ4* indicated that the relationship between stress and relational satisfaction varied depending upon different levels of coping, although this finding only approached conventional levels of statistical significance. Consistent with the logic of stress buffering models (Cohen & Wills, 1985), significant inverse associations between reintegration stressors and relational satisfaction were located at low and moderate levels of communal coping, but not at high levels. For participants who perceived that they and their partner (service member) viewed reintegration issues as "our problem" and "our responsibility to address," stress did not undermine relational satisfaction. This finding points to the

potentially important role that communal coping plays in helping military couples manage stressors that are common during the first year of reintegration.

5.1.5 Control Variables

Discussion of this study's findings would not be complete without attention to the role of demographic variables that were included as controls in the mediational and moderation models. Two demographic variables exerted statistically significant, and often medium-sized, effects on all of the main study variables: participant gender and cohabitation status. Regarding gender, male participants, who in nearly all cases were partners of female service members, reported higher levels of stress, uncertainty, and perceived goal interference in comparison to female participants, who in nearly all cases were partners of male service members. Female participants also reported significantly higher levels of communal coping and satisfaction than male participants.

Several possible explanations exist for these findings. One reason is that male participants might have had less support from their social networks during deployment than female participants. This issue might have been the most salient during the reintegration transition. Many Family Readiness Groups (FRGs) are composed of women, and are also led by women. With this structure, male participants might not feel as if they fit into these support groups. If male participants feel this way, then they are also likely to miss out on additional support from other partners of service members. Another potential reason is that male participants also might feel that being the "at home" parent is not consistent with societal gender roles. This belief could lead to increases in stress and turbulence during reintegration. One example could be that there is an expectation for the female service member to immediately take over the parenting or

housework upon returning home from the deployment. This expectation could exist even if the female service member is not ready for these responsibilities. Both explanations highlight the importance of continuing to explore these issues in future research.

Second, cohabitation status also influenced all of the main study variables. In this study, participants who indicated that they lived with their relational partner reported significantly higher mean scores for communal coping and relational satisfaction, as well as significantly lower stress and relational turbulence. One possibility in explaining these collective findings is that the act of sharing a home with one's relational partner creates opportunities for couples to practice communally responding to somewhat insignificant issues. For example, cohabitating couples might communally negotiate how household chores are managed. This in turn could encourage partners to be more likely to take a communal approach to larger stressors because they typically respond to issues collectively. Another possibility is that cohabitation status reflects differences that existed prior to the most recent deployment. For example, couples who were cohabiting, which included married couples, prior to the most recent deployment already may have had greater levels of commitment to their relationship than those who were not cohabiting, (which included couples who were dating but not necessarily engaged or married), which could explain why they were experiencing less turbulence following the most recent deployment. These findings point to the importance of studying how couples in a variety of romantic relationships, and not just married couples, experience deployment and reunion.

Given the over-representation of dual-career military couples in this sample, it is important to note that type of military couple (i.e., single vs. dual-career) exerted far

fewer effects on the main study variables as compared to gender or cohabitation status. Although participants in dual-career military relationships (i.e., they and their recently-returned partner both were service members) reported higher levels of stress and perceived interference than participants in single-career military relationships (i.e., civilians in a relationship with a recently returned service member), the two groups did not differ on any type of uncertainty nor on communal coping or relationship satisfaction. Participants in dual-career military relationships, on average, appeared to be "coping together" as well as those in single-career military relationships. Future research might explore the unique strengths (e.g., participants can understand the partner's deployment experience) and challenges (e.g., participants may relive their own deployment stressors when talking about similar stressors experienced by the recently-returned partner) faced by dual-career military couples.

In sum, several control variables, especially gender and cohabitation status, impacted relational turbulence and communal coping. Having said this, predictions about how stress and relational turbulence would impact communal coping and satisfaction, for the most part, were obtained even when controlling for these factors.

5.2 Theoretical Contributions

5.2.1 Communal Coping

This study provides notable theoretical contributions for the communal coping literature. One contribution is the development of a communal coping scale that can be used with romantic partners. This revised scale offers dimensions of communal coping that have not been previously examined (e.g., non-verbal communal coping). For example, "Even a hug from my partner sometimes lets me know that we are dealing with

problems together," provides a non-verbal example of a behavior that can lead to increased perceptions of communal coping. The communal coping scale in this study also is theoretically sound. The measure correlates with constructs that exemplify a shared action and responsibility perspective when problems arise. For example, the measure correlates positively with couple identity, and negatively with depression, as expected.

Another contribution is that this examination responds to Afifi et al.'s (under review) call for communal coping analyses to be contextualized. This research presented a very specific context, (i.e., reintegration), in which relational partners were handling a variety of stressors. This analysis then explored how coping was perceived to occur in this context. As evidenced in Table 1, participants as a group perceived high levels of communal coping (M = 5.1) as they considered how they and their service member responded to reintegration stress. Despite this, there also was variability in communal coping, which played an important role in mediating the impact of relational turbulence constructs on satisfaction and moderating the impact of stress on satisfaction.

5.2.2 Relational Turbulence Model

This study also assists with understanding the unique challenges that at-home romantic partners face when their service member returns from deployment. One way in which this study contributes is by offering additional support to studies that have previously evaluated relational turbulence and reintegration stressors (e.g., Knobloch & Theiss, 2012; Theiss & Knobloch, 2014). The findings from this study suggest that service members and their partners experience a range of potential stressors when the service member returns from a deployment. Several of the reintegration stressors that participants rated as most stressful affect both the service member and partner (e.g.,

"problems reconnecting" and "changes in sexual behavior"). In other instances, participants shared the challenges that they faced because of uncertainty and partner interference. Reintegration does not only involve the service member's transition from a deployment, as these findings indicate. Prior research indicates that relational turbulence variables impact the degree to which couples use relationships maintenance strategies or constructive conflict management strategies (e.g., Theiss & Knobloch, 2013; 2014) during reintegration. Future research could explore whether these changes reflect the impact of relational turbulence on the degree to which couples engage in communal coping. In sum, these analyses highlight the need for researchers to continue to examine how at-home partners also experience reintegration along with their service member.

5.3 Practical Contributions

These results also offer practical value for individuals who work directly with service members and their loved ones (e.g., Military Spouses Coalition, and Family Readiness Coordinators). These findings can be used to help provide additional understanding of the challenges that military couples can face after a deployment ends. Before indicating how these results might be implemented to create a revised skills based training program[6], it is important to note one issue in current reintegration programs.

When training programs attempt to resolve reintegration issues, several do not tackle the myriad challenges that couples can face using a collective stance. For example, the Army's "Comprehensive Soldier and Family Fitness" program asks participants to

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[6] The suggestions that are included in this section have not been constructed with the assistance of a clinician. These comments are intended to provide discussion points for clinicians who directly work with this population. I do not have the relevant training and certification to make clinical recommendations.

work on developing their skills at an individual level to benefit their relationships with others (U.S. Army, 2014). In this program, individuals fill out an online survey, the "Global Assessment Tool" (GAT), to identify where they have strengths and weaknesses in their lives. They then are redirected to various online training tools to help strengthen their resilience to challenges associated with military life. This training might be helpful for some individuals, but does not encourage a dyadic approach to resolving problems.

An alternative to this individual approach is for couples to take a collective stance in responding to reintegration challenges. Scholars are beginning to analyze the utility of couple's therapy as a framework for helping military service members and their partners navigate reintegration stressors (Sayers, 2011); hence, communal coping might be integrated into these larger programs. As previous literature indicates, communal coping is most likely when individuals perceive that there are shared action and responsibility components. Communal coping also was endorsed highly by participants in this study. As a result, a skills training program which included the theoretical model of communal coping (TMCC) as a guide might provide many benefits for military couples who are handling reintegration issues.

This program could occur in several steps. The training could begin by asking participants to identify common reintegration stressors. These stressors could be written anonymously and then shared with the group to protect participants' privacy. Participants would then receive a list of common stressors, and be asked to identify if they feel individual or collective action and responsibility for each of the stressors. The instructor could then outline reasons why coping with challenges as a unit is helpful during reintegration. During the next portion of the training, the instructor could then identify

how couples can cope communally using verbal, nonverbal, and behavioral approaches. This section of the training would also include a time in which couples could reflect on how they have successfully resolved issues together in the past. Following this instruction, partners could practice providing more and less supportive messages that inform the other person that he or she is not alone in handling the problem (e.g., "We talk through our problems together and attempt to come to solutions as a couple."). The couples could also rate how helpful these messages are and discuss reasons why.

This training might also benefit participants by including a discussion about roadblocks to communal coping. For example, participants would be invited to discuss why verbalized support is sometimes difficult to provide to a relational partner. The instructor could then highlight that non-verbal behaviors can help indicate shared action and responsibility for challenges. In other instances, there might be times in which simply reinforcing the bond that one has with his or her partner is valuable. For example, some participants in this study indicated completing activities together that helped them to feel like a couple (e.g., walking together) was evidence of communally coping with reintegration stressors.

The final portion of the training could help to identify resources that are available to military couples for additional training. Each couple could leave the program with a collaboratively created list of common issues that are faced during deployment. Participants also would have collectively practiced providing messages to their partners that indicate communal coping. Future research should explore the potential utility of including communal coping within programs working with military couples.

5.4 Limitations

The results from this study should be interpreted in light of several limitations. One limitation is that participants were asked to retrospectively recall challenges faced during reintegration. The inclusion criteria for the study indicated that participants must have experienced reintegration within the past two years. This restriction required participants to think back to challenges that might have happened many months prior to the participant's enrollment in this study. Participants might have provided responses in which they recalled only the most hurtful, or most significant, challenges during their reintegration transition. This approach might have limited participants from recalling less extreme challenges that they might have faced. Participants might also have been biased toward reporting only those issues that occurred most frequently, and not problems that were less pervasive in their relationship with the deployed service member.

Another concern relates to participant demographics. One of the largest concerns with interpreting the data concerns the high percentage of dual-military partners (40%). Dual-military partners are likely to approach reintegration stressors with a different understanding than single-career military couples. One reason for this is that dual-military couples include both partners having experienced deployment from a service member's perspective. This limitation represents a challenge in terms of external validity. Having said this, the analyses controlled for this variable with the goal of diminishing this issue.

Participant demographics regarding depression should also be examined in light of the study findings. As previously reported, of the 165 participants who completed the depression measure, approximately 36% (n = 60) met the criteria for depression (M = 8.6,

SD = 4.7). There are many possible reasons why a large percentage of participants in this study were above the threshold for depression. One reason may be that many participants in this study had already experienced deployment previously. In this sample, approximately 29.6% of participants shared that the most recent deployment was their second reintegration experience. An additional 22.3% of participants indicated that the most recent deployment was their third or more. Given the variety of reintegration stressors that participants reported throughout their reintegration experiences (see Table 4), is noteworthy that about half of the study participants were dealing with these stressors for the second or third time. Another reason for the high percentage of participants reporting scores above the depression cut-off may be that male at-home partners and partners in dual-career military relationships were over-represented in this sample relative to DoD statistics, and these subgroups scored significantly higher on depression than their female at-home partners and partners in single-career military relationship counterparts (see Table 16 and 17). Taken together, these findings echo Verdeli et al. (2011) that additional support is needed for programs that attempt to treat depression in service members' spouses and romantic partners.

Another limitation is that the data were cross sectional, which does not permit causal relationships from being established. In several of the hypotheses, the relational turbulence items were predicted to influence relational satisfaction. Since the data are cross-sectional, it is possible that the model works in the opposite direction. For example, it is possible that low relationship satisfaction undermines perceptions of communal coping, which in turn increases relationship uncertainty and perceived interference. Likewise, low relationship satisfaction could lead to doubts about the relationship

(uncertainty) and perceptions of partner interference, which in turn could increase perceived reintegration stressors. Longitudinal analyses are one way in which to examine direction of cause over time. Fortunately, several longitudinal studies currently are underway, including one led by Leanne Knobloch at the University of Illinois, which includes measures of relational turbulence and satisfaction. A second study is being led by Shelley MacDermid Wadsworth of Purdue University. This study includes measures of dyadic coping and relationship satisfaction that are taken at multiple points during deployment and reunion (personal communication with principal investigators).

5.5 Future Directions

5.5.1 Longitudinal Analysis

One way in which to potentially resolve these limitations is through a longitudinal analysis. The aforementioned longitudinal studies hold potential for handling the outlined issues regarding cross sectional data. This type of analysis could also be used to examine if communal coping can persist long term, or if it is specific to certain stressors or specific moments during the reintegration process. This information could be used for both theoretical and practical contributions to the communal coping and relational turbulence literatures.

5.5.2 Interview Study

Future studies could also benefit from an in-depth interview study that examined what communal coping meant to participants and how it occurred during reintegration. This approach would assist with understanding the contextual factors that led to communal coping being perceived as present. This type of study could build from the

pre-study interviews that were conducted with participants who met the inclusion criteria for this study. Questions could also be posed that examine when using communal coping to respond to challenges is not evaluated as an effective coping strategy.

5.6 Conclusion

This study provides promising findings for many military couples who are coping with reintegration challenges. Many of the participants in this study indicated a variety of issues that they faced during the reintegration period. However, these individuals remained resilient to these stressors when communal coping was employed. Additional research can assist both scholars and practitioners in understanding how communal coping occurs with military couples throughout reintegration. Through this work, couples can gain insight into how they can collaboratively provide support to each other even during difficult times.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Sample Recruitment Emails to Family Readiness Coordinators/Chaplains

First Email

Email Title: Military Family Research Help Needed

Greetings M. _____, (Name of FRG Coordinator or Chaplain)

My team and I at Purdue University are researching how romantic partners cope with reintegration challenges, so we are writing to you today to ask for your help with an important research project about military families. Our purpose is to gain a deeper understanding of how service members communicate support to their romantic partners during reintegration. Our research results may inform programs whose mission it is to assist military families.

We are asking for your help in passing our survey along to the families of service members with whom you work. Participation is voluntary and open to individuals at least 18 years old who: (a) have an active email account, (b) have been married to or dating service members before their deployments, (c) are currently involved in those marital or dating relationships, and (d) have had their service members return from deployment within the past year. Also, participation is confidential and participants will receive a $10 Amazon gift card for completing the survey.

We know that your work is instrumental in the lives of military families and their service members. Because my own stepson has been deployed twice to Iraq, I know that you play a key role in communicating with military families. We hope you will consider sending the following message to your contacts.

We thank you in advance for your help. If you have any questions please feel free to contact us.

Steve Wilson
Professor, Brian Lamb School of Communication
Faculty Associate, Military Family Research Institute
Purdue University
militarycouplespurdue@gmail.com; 765-414-0094

Follow-up Email
Title: Reminder:Military Family Research Help Needed

Greetings M. _____, (Name of FRG Coordinator or Chaplain)

About a week ago we wrote to ask for your help with an important research project about military couples. My team and I at Purdue University are researching how romantic partners cope with reintegration challenges

If you have already forwarded this email to the military families that you serve—thank you! Could you please forward the email below one more time to remind them about the opportunity to participate in the research?

If you have not yet had the chance to do so, we would greatly appreciate it if you would let your families know about their opportunity to participate in this research by forwarding the email below. Participation is voluntary and open to individuals at least 18 years old who: (a) have an active email account, (b) have been married to or dating service members before their most recent deployments, (c) are currently involved in those marital or dating relationships, and (d) have had their service members return from those deployment within the past year. Also, participation is confidential and participants will receive a $10 Amazon gift card for completing the survey. Our research results may inform programs whose mission it is to assist military couples.

If you have not forwarded this email yet because you have questions, please feel free to contact us for more information about the research project.

Steve Wilson
Professor, Brian Lamb School of Communication
Faculty Associate, Military Family Research Institute
Purdue University
militarycouplespurdue@gmail.com; 765-414-0094

Appendix B

Email to be forwarded to Relational Partners

Email Title: Reintegration Survey

Greetings Military Family Member,

You have been selected to take part in a study being conducted by researchers from Purdue University. The purpose of the research is to better understand how romantic partners cope with reintegration challenges. Our purpose is to understand how service members communicate support to their romantic partners during reintegration.

To thank you for completing the survey, you will receive a **$10 Amazon gift card**!

Please check out the following information before getting started:

What will I be doing?
Taking an online survey that asks about your ideas and experiences as a military family member (takes about 30 - 45 minutes to complete). You will mainly be asked about your experiences during reintegration with your service member.

Who is eligible?
Participation is voluntary and open to individuals ***at least 18 years old*** who: (a) have an active email account, (b) ***have been married to or dating your service member before his or her most recent deployment***, (c) are ***currently involved*** in those marital or dating relationships, and (d) have had your service member ***return from deployment within the past year.*** This person could be your spouse, partner, boyfriend, girlfriend, or other dating partner.

Why would I do this?
Our research results may inform programs whose mission it is to assist military families. You will receive a $10 Amazon gift card for doing the survey!

Do I have to do this?
Participation is voluntary and open to all military dating or martial partners who are age 18 and older. You are free to stop taking the survey at any time or to skip any questions that you do not wish to answer.

Who is going to see my answers?
Only the researchers will be allowed to see the information you provide, except as may be required by law. The survey is anonymous, so the researchers will not ask for your name or any other identifying information. The person who sent you the link to the survey (e.g., your Family Readiness Coordinator/Chaplain) will not know if you've done the survey nor will they have access to your answers. No military organizations will have access to this data. If a report of this study is published or presented at a professional conference, no identifying information will be used.

I have some questions about this research. Who can I ask?
Steve Wilson, Professor
Purdue University, Brian Lamb School of Communication
militarycouplespurdue@gmail.com; 765-414-0094

If you have questions about your rights while taking part in the study or have concerns about the treatment of research participants, please call the Human Research Protection Program at (765) 494-5942, or email (irb@purdue.edu).

I'm in! How do I take this survey?
If you're willing to participate, please click here:
https://purdue.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_cT3CfDtMG4YV2lf

Appendix C

Demographics

Q1 Thank you very much for your interest in taking part in this important research! Participation in this research project is voluntary and open to those aged 18 and older. The researchers at Purdue have no way of knowing your identity. The person who forwarded the email about this survey to you (e.g., FRO, chaplain, friend) will not know whether you completed the survey. Should any of the questions make you uncomfortable, you are free to skip that question or stop taking the survey at any time. You will receive instructions for claiming your $10 Amazon gift card at the end of the survey. Thanks for helping us learn more about military couples.

Note: In the case of multiple deployments, please consider the ***most recent deployment*** when answering the following questions.

Q2 Are you in the U.S. Military?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q3 Are you currently in a romantic relationship (e.g., marriage, dating)?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q4 Has your relational partner returned from a deployment in the past year?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q5 If yes, where was this deployment?

- Iraq (1)
- Afghanistan (2)
- Please specify. (3)

Q5a How long was your relational partner's deployment (in months)?

Q6 Were you in a relationship with this person before he or she deployed?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q7 Which of the following best describes the status of your relationship with your partner:

- Casual dating partner (1)
- Serious dating partner (2)
- Engaged to be married (3)
- Married (4)
- Civil Union (5)

Q8 Which branch of the military is/was your partner in?

- Air Force (1)
- Army (2)
- Marines (3)
- National Guard - Air National Guard (4)
- National Guard - Army National Guard (5)
- Navy (6)
- Other; please specify (7) _____

Q9 What is your relational partner's current status in the military?

- Active (1)
- Reserves (2)
- Inactive Ready Reserves (3)
- Discharged (4)
- Retired (5)
- Other; please specify (6) _____

Q10 How many times has your relational partner been deployed overseas in total?

- zero (1)
- once (2)
- twice (3)
- three or more times (4)

Q11 What was the date when your partner left on his or her most recent deployment? Enter mm/dd/yyyy (if unsure of day, please estimate)

Q 12 Has your relational partner returned from the most recent deployment?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q 13 If yes, when did he or she return from the most recent deployment? Enter mm/dd/yyyy (if unsure of exact date, please estimate)

Q14 What was the primary mission for your relational partner's unit during this deployment?

- Combat Zone (1)
- Peacekeeping (2)
- Relief Effort (3)
- Other (4)

Q15 Will your partner be redeployed in the next year?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Not Sure (3)

Q16 What is ***your age***, in years?

Q17 What is ***your ethnicity***? Please mark all that apply.

- African American (1)
- Asian (2)
- Caucasian/White (3)
- Hispanic (4)
- Native American (5)
- Other (6)

Q18 What is ***your sex***?

- Male (1)
- Female (2)

Q19 What is your ***relational partner's age***, in years?

Q20 What is your ***relational partner's ethnicity***? Please mark all that apply.

- African American (1)
- Asian (2)
- Caucasian/White (3)

- Hispanic (4)
- Native American (5)
- Other (6)

Q21 What is your ***relational partner's*** sex?

- Male (1)
- Female (2)

Q22 Do you and your relational partner live together in the same home?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q23 Are you and your partner the custodial parents of any children?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Not Applicable (3)

Q24 If yes, please list the age and sex of each child, starting with the oldest.

Appendix D

Norton (1983) Quality of Marriage Index (QMI)

Instructions: This questionnaire asks about relational attitudes and behaviors. Try to answer all questions as honestly as possible. Do not spend too much time on any one question. Give each question a moment's thought and then answer it.

Answer all of the questions with your partner in mind, unless directed otherwise. Please answer the questions independent of your partner. Your partner should not see or help with the answers.

1. We have a good relationship.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Strongly Disagree **Strongly Agree**

2. My relationship with my partner is very stable.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Strongly Disagree **Strongly Agree**

3. Our relationship is strong.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Strongly Disagree **Strongly Agree**

4. My relationship with my partner makes me happy.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Strongly Disagree **Strongly Agree**

Appendix E

Reintegration Stressors

Military couples often say that they have issues trying to renew their relationship when a service member comes back from a deployment. Reunions may start with lots of excitement, but couples can find it hard to connect again after this short honeymoon is over. This is very normal, and military couples may cope with problems like this in many ways. Below is a list of things couples sometimes have to deal with when they are back together again after a deployment. For each topic, please indicate how stressful on a scale of 1 – 10, each issue has been, where *1* indicates *not very stressful* and *10* is *very stressful*. If something on the list hasn't happened at all, rate it 1 (*not very stressful*).

Please focus on the first year after your service member came home as you answer:

1. Problems reconnecting
2. Difficulty communicating
3. Changes in finances and employment
4. Changes in sexual behavior
5. Problems reintegrating the service member into daily life and routines
6. Increased conflict
7. Talk about separation or divorce
8. Problems with parenting children together – skip this item if you do not have children
9. Problems with excessive drinking and/or drug use
10. Problems with service member withdrawing (e.g., from family and/or social events)
11. Difficulties with healthcare or health insurance
12. Uncertainties about the service member's military career or possible future deployments
13. Challenges arising from the service member having missed major life events while on deployment

Since your service member came home, have the two of you experienced any other major stressors not on this list?

If so, what are they? (Please list). If you have not experienced any additional stressors, please write "N/A":

Appendix F

Communal Coping Measure

Instructions: We would like you to think about how you and your partner handle stressful events or difficult times that arise in life. Focus especially on the time period since your partner returned from his/her most recent deployment. With that in mind, please indicate the best response that represents how you and your partner handle stress and adversity.

1. We help each other out when we are stressed.
   Strongly 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Strongly**
   Disagree **Agree**

2. We talk to one another about how we're going to get through this no matter what.
   Strongly 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Strongly**
   Disagree **Agree**

3. We tell one another that everything is going to work out for the better.
   Strongly 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Strongly**
   Disagree **Agree**

4. Doing things together when we're stressed helps us build a daily routine or "rhythm" as a couple.
   Strongly 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Strongly**
   Disagree **Agree**

5. Doing things together as a couple when we're stressed helps us feel close.

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**Strongly**
Disagree								**Agree**

6. We talk through our problems together and attempt to come to solutions as a couple.

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**Strongly**
Disagree								**Agree**

7. We talk about taking responsibility for our problems and behaviors as a couple.

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**Strongly**
Disagree								**Agree**

8. We come together as a couple to try and organize our daily lives.

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**Strongly**
Disagree								**Agree**

9. We join forces to tackle our problems together.

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**Strongly**
Disagree								**Agree**

10. We try and come together to help each other out when we're stressed.

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**Strongly**
Disagree								**Agree**

11. We try to do things together that help us feel like a couple.

Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**Strongly Agree**

12. There is a real sense that we're going to work through our problems together.

Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**Strongly Agree**

13. There is a feeling that we're going to be stronger as a result of working through this together.

Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**Strongly Agree**

14. Sharing time together as a couple when we're stressed helps us stay connected.

Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**Strongly Agree**

15. We try and brainstorm different solutions to our problems as a couple.

Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**Strongly Agree**

16. We work as a team when challenges happen.

Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**Strongly Agree**

17. We emphasize that we are there for each other whatever the outcome.

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**Strongly**
Disagree								**Agree**

18. We talk about how we both are responsible for the stressful events in our lives.

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**Strongly**
Disagree								**Agree**

19. We cope with stressful situations as a couple.

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**Strongly**
Disagree								**Agree**

20. We work together to solve problems no matter how hard it can be sometimes.

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**Strongly**
Disagree								**Agree**

21. We know that the problems that create stress in our lives belong to both of us.

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**Strongly**
Disagree								**Agree**

22. Even a hug from my partner sometimes lets me know that we are dealing with problems together.

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**Strongly**
Disagree								**Agree**

Appendix G

Knobloch and Solomon (1999) Relational Uncertainty Scale

Instructions: Please indicate how certain you feel about each of the following items.

How certain are you about…?

Self Uncertainty

1) How you feel about your relationship?

1	2	3	4	5	6
completely or almost completely uncertain					*completely or almost completely certain*

2) Your goals for the future of your relationship?

1	2	3	4	5	6
completely or almost completely uncertain					*completely or almost completely certain*

3) Your view of the relationship?

1	2	3	4	5	6
completely or almost completely uncertain					*completely or almost completely certain*

4) How important your relationship is to you?

1	2	3	4	5	6
completely or almost completely uncertain					*completely or almost completely certain*

Partner Uncertainty

1) How your partner feels about your relationship?

1	2	3	4	5	6
completely or almost completely uncertain					*completely or almost completely certain*

2) Your partner's goals for the future of your relationship?

1	2	3	4	5	6
completely or almost completely uncertain					*completely or almost completely certain*

3) Your partner's view of your relationship?

1	2	3	4	5	6
completely or almost completely uncertain					*completely or almost completely certain*

4) How important your relationship is to your partner?

1	2	3	4	5	6
completely or almost completely uncertain					*completely or almost completely certain*

Relationship Uncertainty

1) The current status of your relationship?

1	2	3	4	5	6
completely or almost completely uncertain					*completely or almost completely certain*

2) How you can or cannot behave around your partner?

1	2	3	4	5	6
completely or almost completely uncertain					*completely or almost completely certain*

3) The definition of your relationship?

1	2	3	4	5	6
completely or almost completely uncertain					*completely or almost completely certain*

4) The future of your relationship?

1	2	3	4	5	6
completely or almost completely uncertain					*completely or almost completely certain*

Appendix H

Brief Version of Solomon and Knobloch (2001) Partner Interference scale

Instructions: Please indicate your agreement with the following items about your romantic partner's interference.

"My romantic partner…"

1) interferes with the plans I make

1 2 3 4 5 6

Strongly Disagree **Strongly Agree**

2) causes me to waste time

1 2 3 4 5 6

Strongly Disagree **Strongly Agree**

3) interferes with my career goals

1 2 3 4 5 6

Strongly Disagree **Strongly Agree**

4) interferes with the things I need to do each day

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree					**Strongly Agree**

5) makes it harder for me to schedule my activities

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree					**Strongly Agree**

6) interferes with whether I achieve the everyday goals I set for myself (e.g., goals for exercise, diet, entertainment)

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree					**Strongly Agree**

Appendix I

Fletcher, Simpson, and Thomas (2000) Relational Satisfaction Scale

Instructions: Please rate your current partner and relationship on each item.

"Individuals responded to three items introduced by the stem "At the current time, how are…" (1 = not at all, 7 = extremely):

At the *current time*, how…

1) satisfied are you with your relationship?

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Extremely**

2) content are you with your relationship?

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Extremely**

3) happy are you with your relationship?

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Extremely**

Prior to your partner's most recent deployment, how…

1) satisfied were you with your relationship?

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Extremely**

2) content were you with your relationship?

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Extremely**

3) happy were you with your relationship?

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Extremely**

Appendix J

Stöber (2001) Social Desirability Scale-17 (SDS-17)

Instructions: Below you will find a list of statements. Please read each statement carefully and decide if that statement describes you or not. If it describes you, select the word "true"; if not, select the word "false".

1. I sometimes litter.

2. I always admit my mistakes openly and face the potential negative consequences.

3. In traffic I am always polite and considerate of others.

4. I always accept others' opinions, even when they don't agree with my own.

5. I take out my bad moods on others now and then.

6. There has been an occasion when I took advantage of someone else.

7. In conversations I always listen attentively and let others finish their sentences.

8. I never hesitate to help someone in case of emergency.

9. When I have made a promise, I keep it--no ifs, ands or buts.

10. I occasionally speak badly of others behind their back.

11. I would never live off other people.

12. I always stay friendly and courteous with other people, even when I am stressed out.

13. During arguments I always stay objective and matter-of-fact.

14. There has been at least one occasion when I failed to return an item that I borrowed.

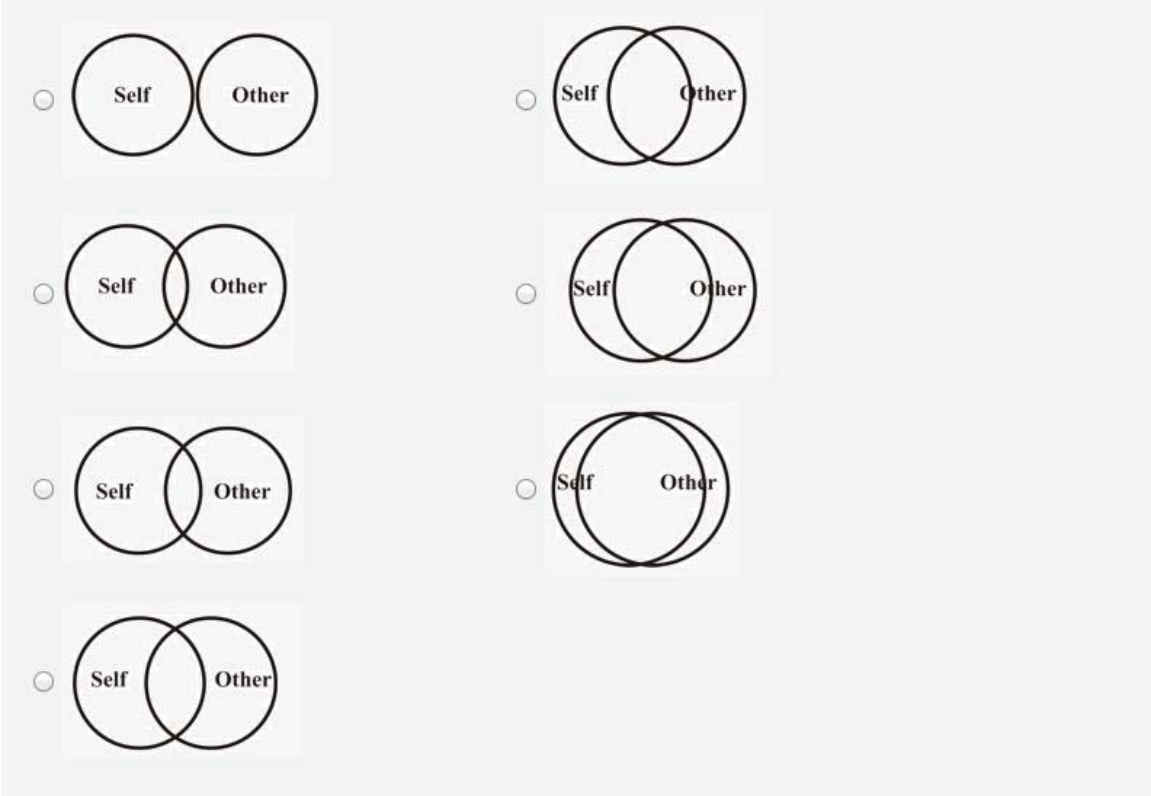
15. I always eat a healthy diet.

16. Sometimes I only help because I expect something in return.

Appendix K

Aron, Aron, and Smollan (1992) Inclusion of the Other in the Self Scale

Instructions: Please select the picture that best describes your current relationship with your romantic partner.



Appendix L

Stanley and Markman (1992) Couple Identity Subscale of the Commitment Inventory Scale

Instructions: Think about how you think about yourself and your relationship with your partner and indicate which responses best represent how you see yourself.

1. I want to keep the plans for my life somewhat separate from my partner's plans for life.

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**Strongly**
Disagree								**Agree**

2. I am willing to have or develop a strong sense of an identity as a couple with my partner.

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**Strongly**
Disagree								**Agree**

3. I tend to think about how things affect "us" as a couple more than how things affect "me" as an individual.

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**Strongly**
Disagree								**Agree**

4. I like to think of my partner and me more in terms of "us" and "we" than "me" and "him/her".

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**Strongly**
Disagree								**Agree**

5. I am more comfortable thinking in terms of "my" things than "our" things.

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**Strongly**
Disagree								**Agree**

6. I do not want to have a strong identity as a couple with my partner.

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**Strongly**
Disagree								**Agree**

Appendix M

Radloff (1977) Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale (CES-D 10) Short Form

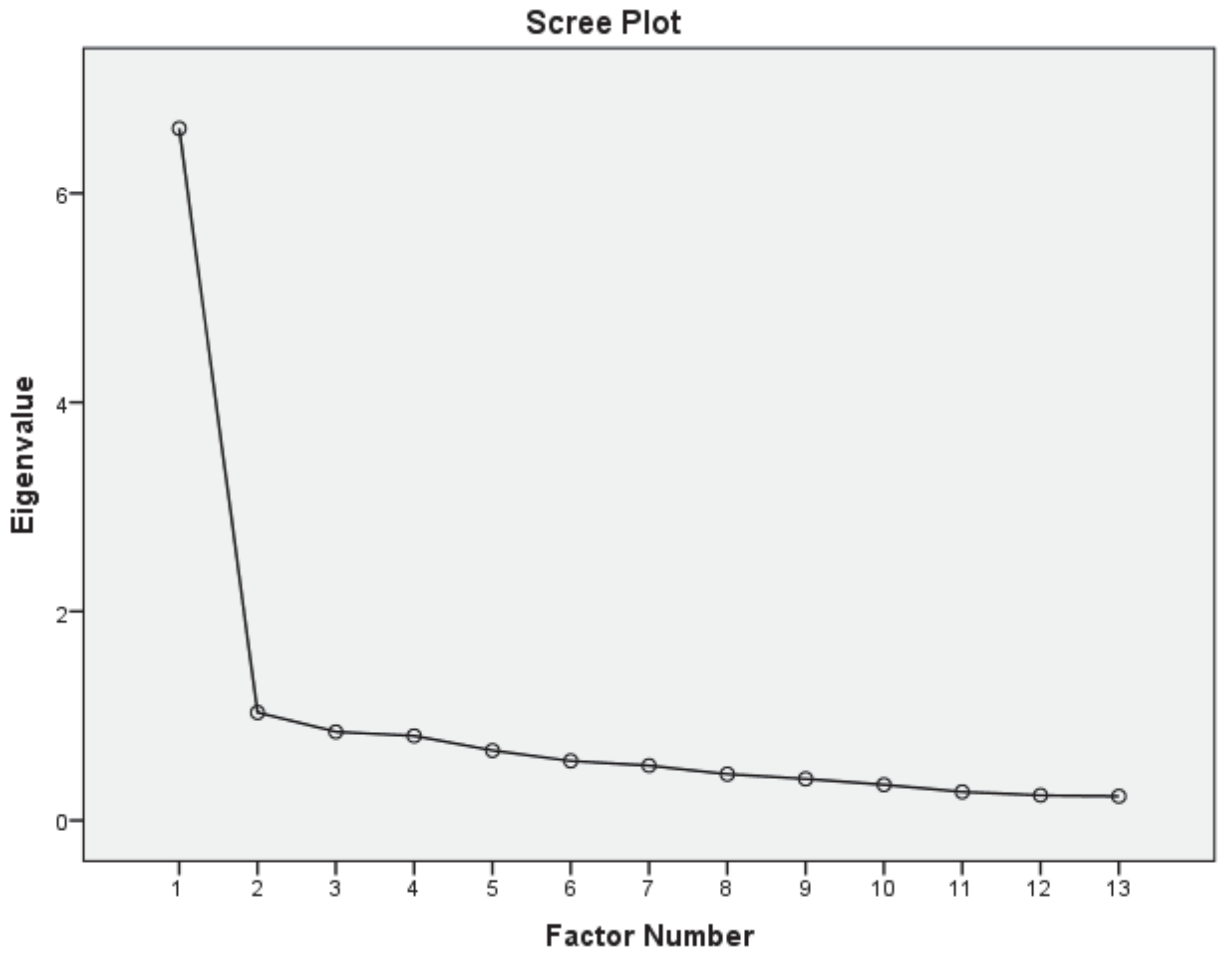
Instructions: Below is a list of some of the ways you may have felt or behaved. Please indicate how often you have felt this way during the past week by checking the appropriate box for each question.

Items:	**Rarely or none of the time** (less than 1 day)	**Some or a little of the time** (1-2 days)	**Occasionally or a moderate amount of time** (3-4 days)	**All of the time** (5-7 days)
1. I was bothered by things that usually don't bother me.				
2. I had trouble keeping my mind on what I was doing.				
3. I felt depressed.				
4. I felt that everything I did was an effort.				
5. I felt hopeful about the future.				
6. I felt fearful.				
7. My sleep was restless.				
8. I was happy.				

9. I felt lonely.				
10. I could not "get going."				

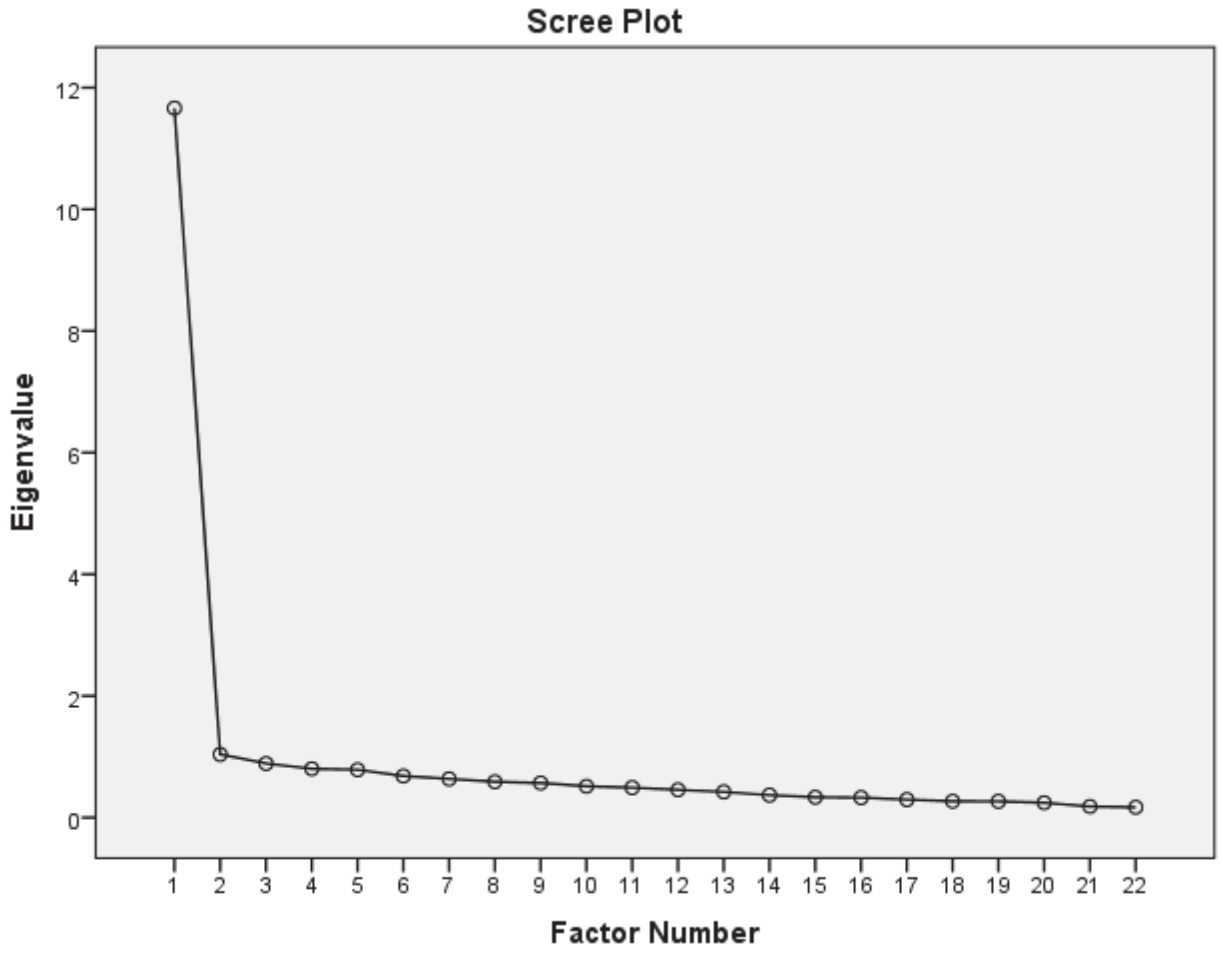
Appendix N

Scree Plot for Stressors Factor Analysis



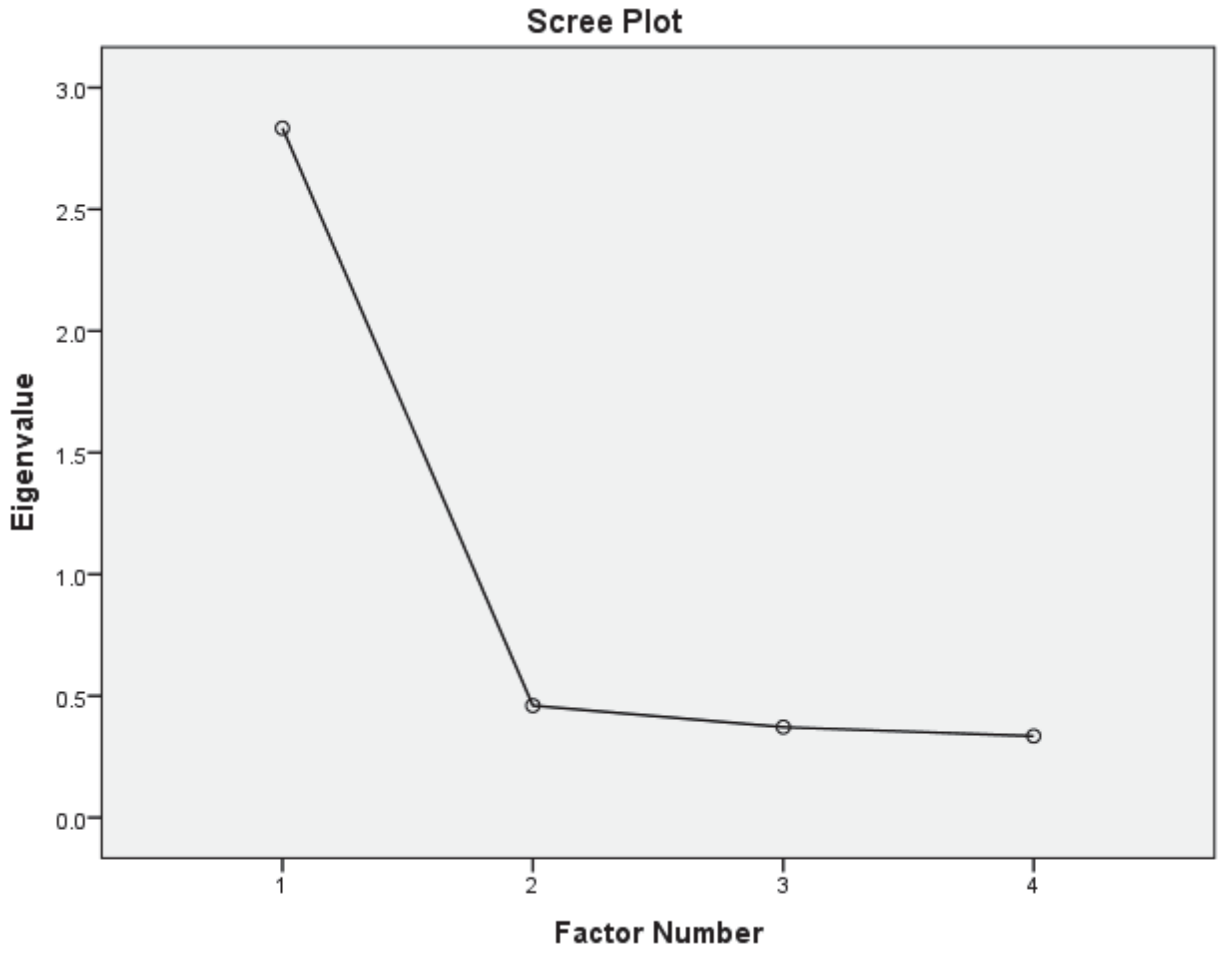
Appendix O

Scree Plot for Communal Coping Factor Analysis



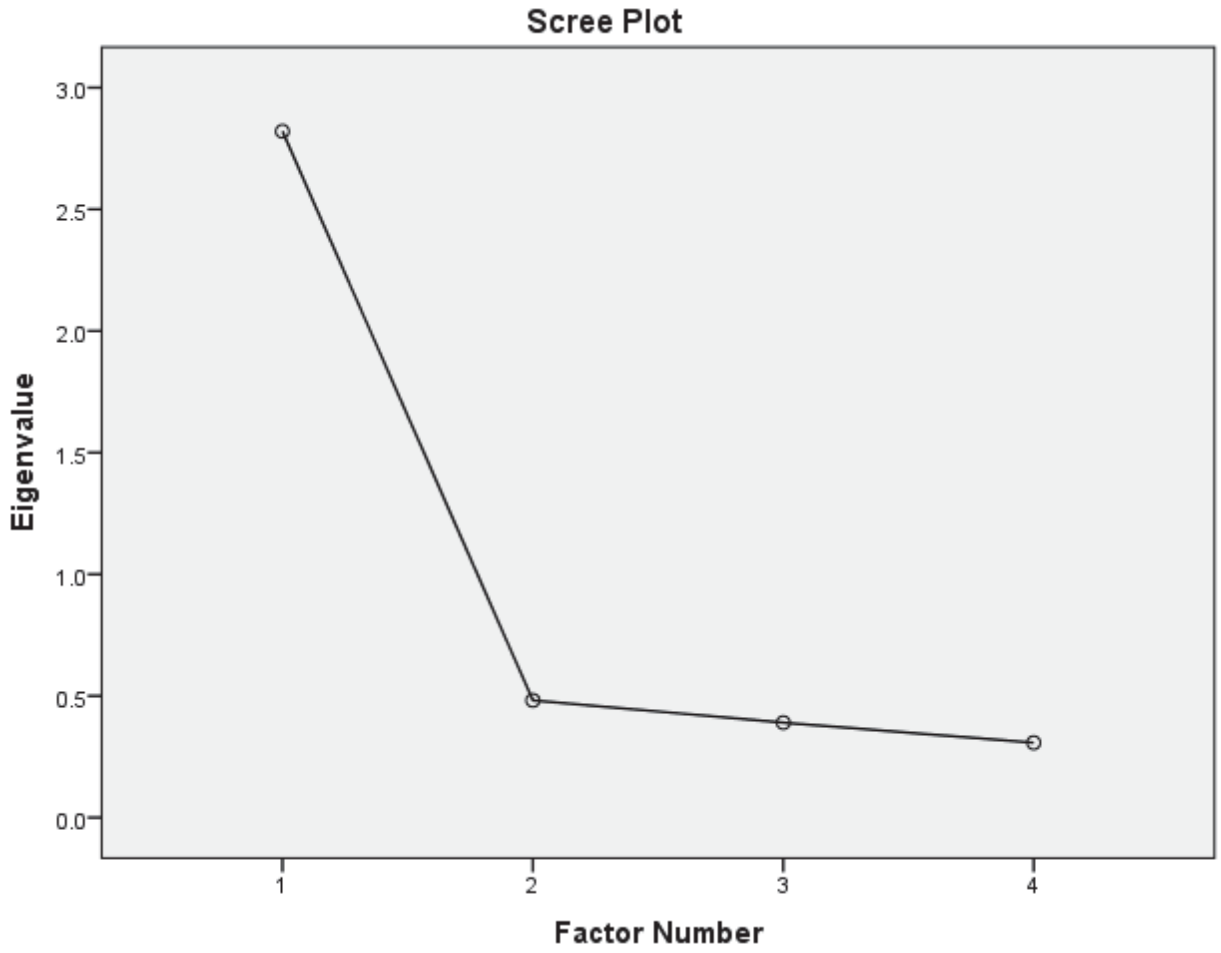
Appendix P

Scree Plot for Self Uncertainty Factor Analysis



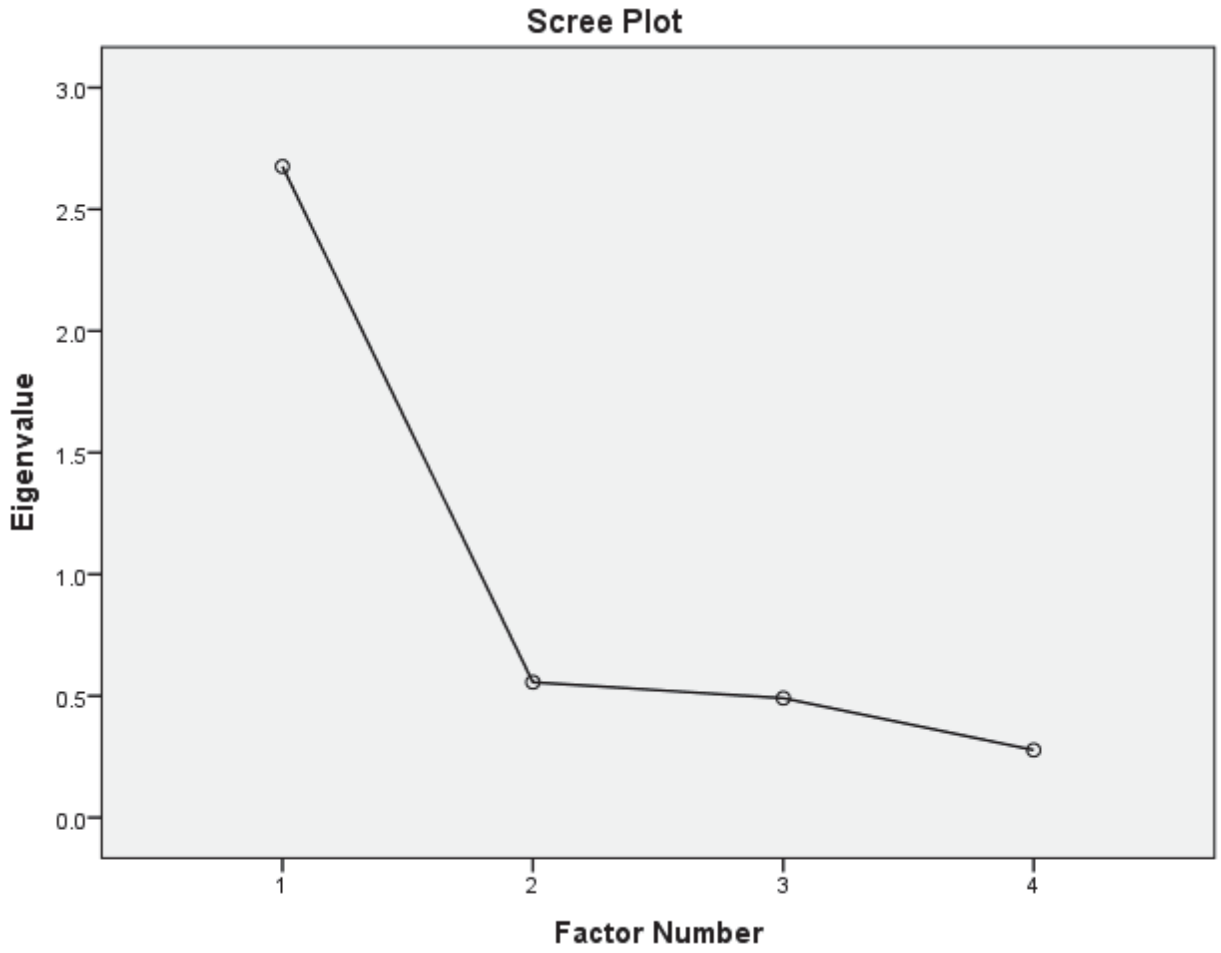
Appendix Q

Scree Plot for Partner Uncertainty Factor Analysis



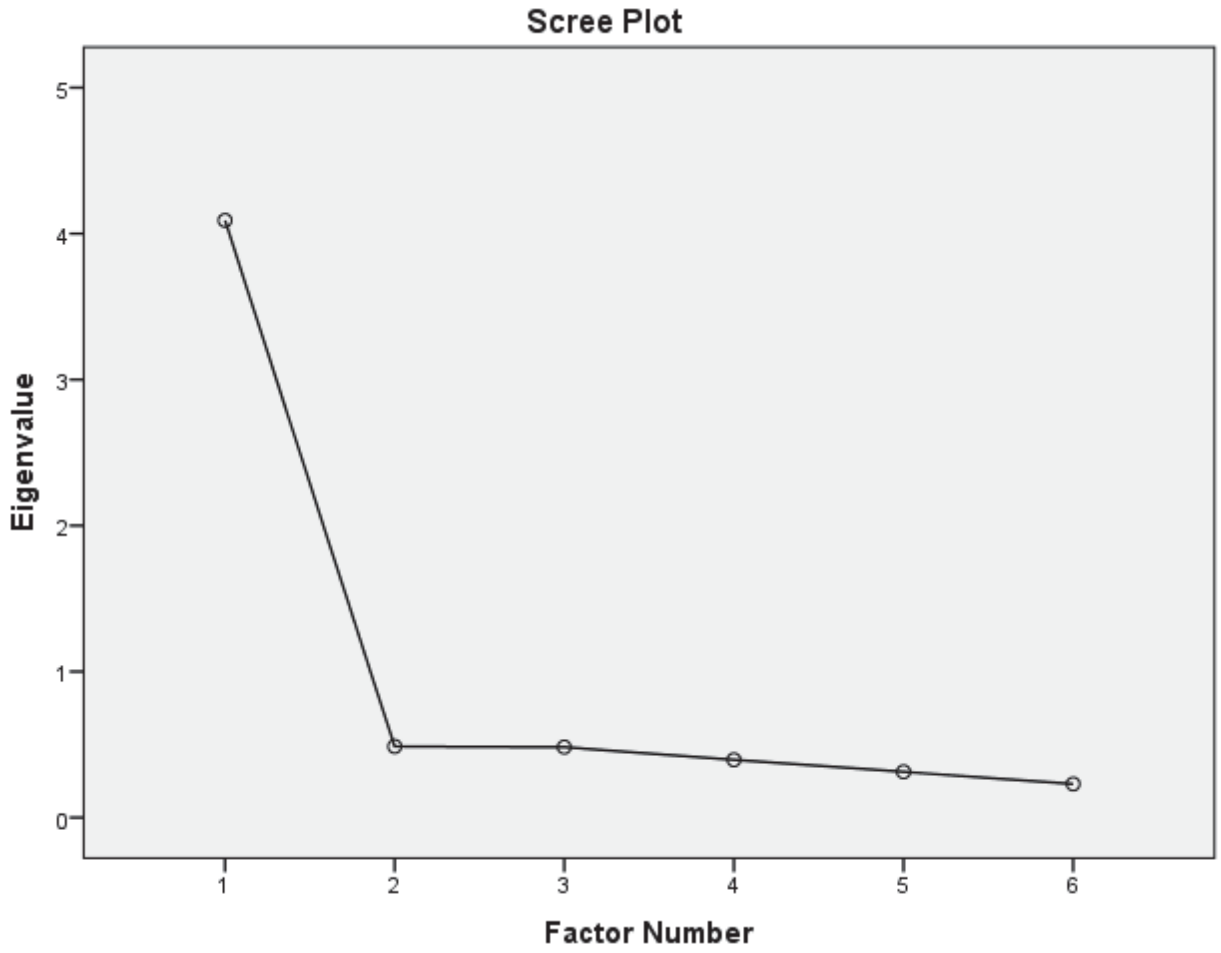
Appendix R

Scree Plot for Relationship Uncertainty Factor Analysis



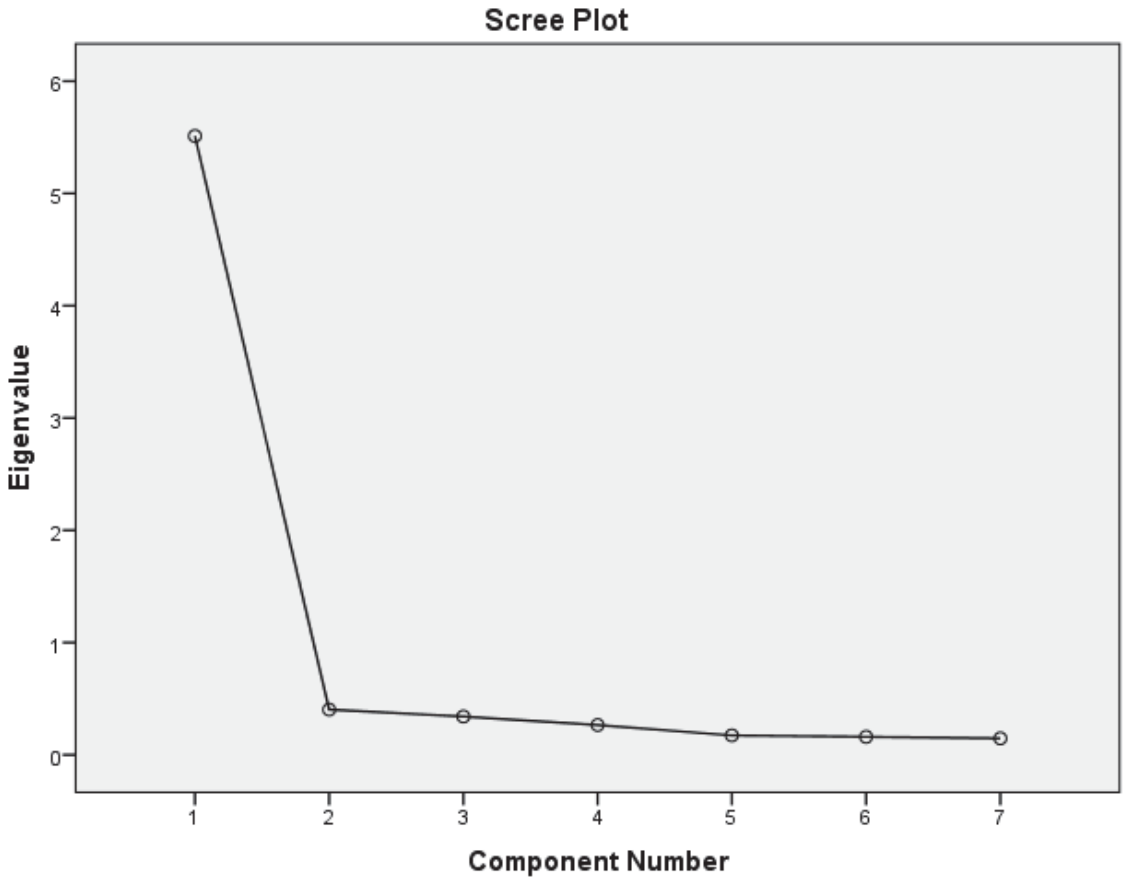
Appendix S

Scree Plot for Partner Interference Factor Analysis



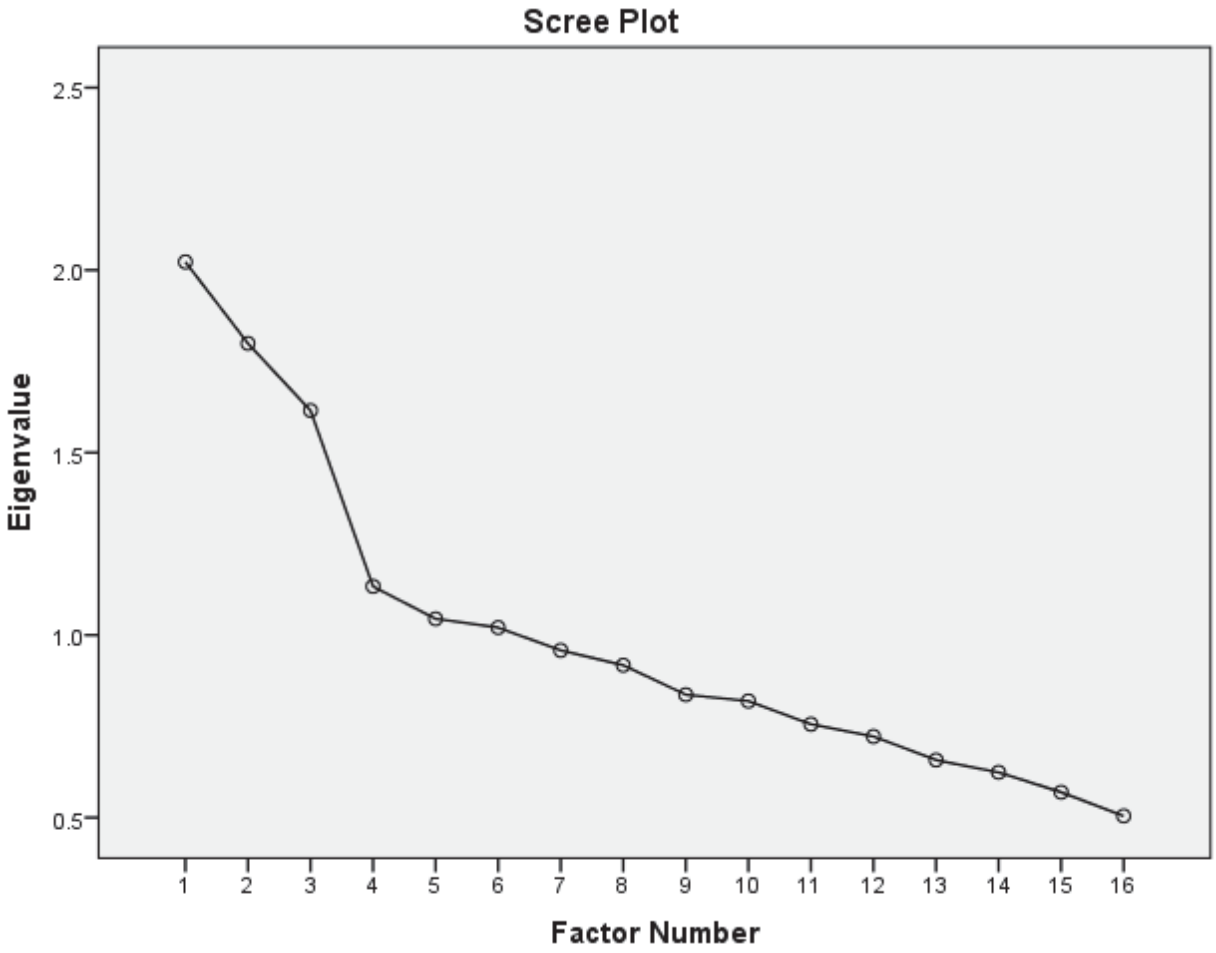
Appendix T

Scree Plot for Relational Satisfaction Factor Analysis



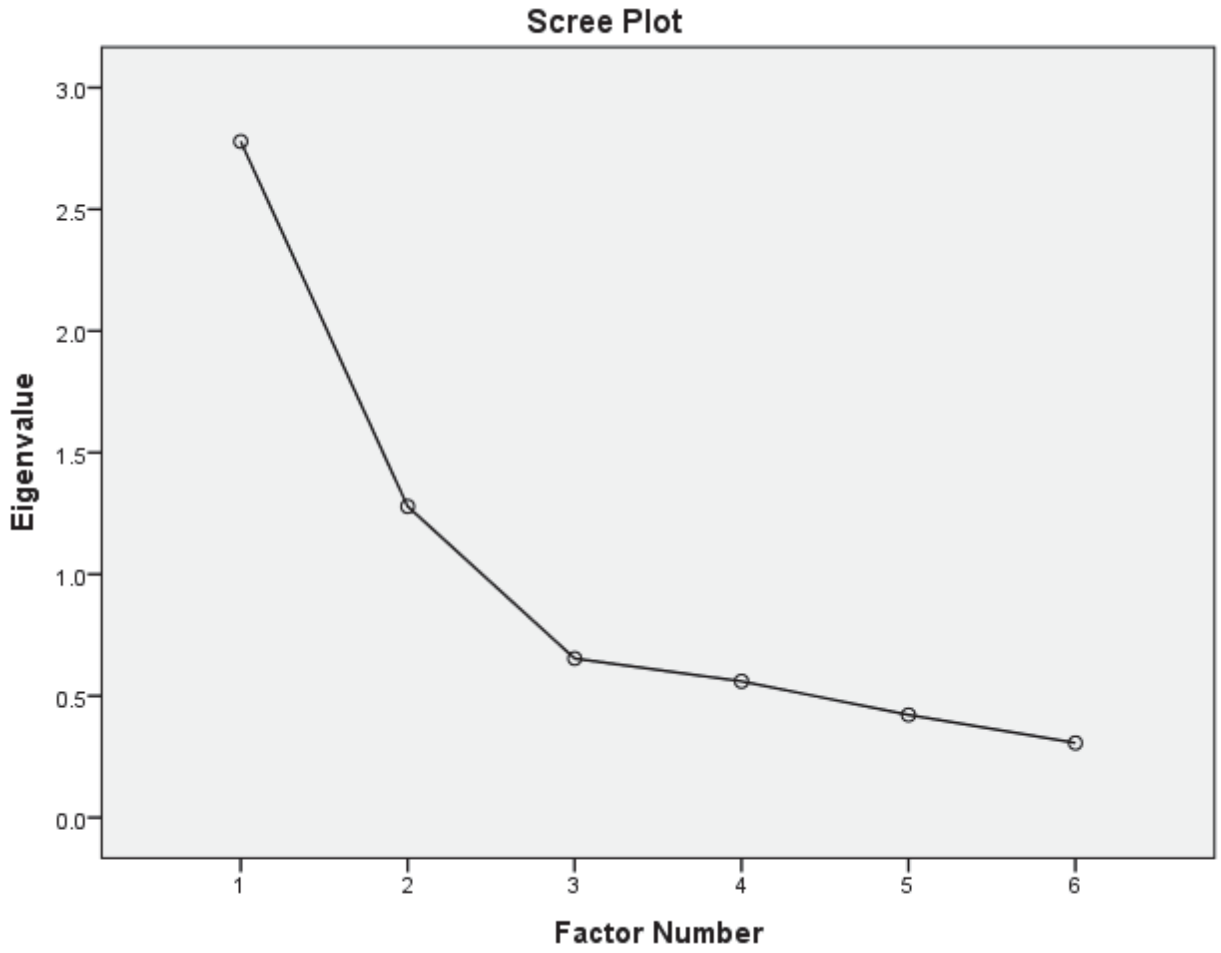
Appendix U

Scree Plot for Social Desirability Factor Analysis



Appendix V

Scree Plot for Couple Identity Factor Analysis



VITA

VITA

Jennifer S. Owlett

Education

Ph.D. — **Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN**
December 2014

Brian Lamb School of Communication (BLSC)

(expected)

Advisor: Steve Wilson
Committee: Maria Venetis, Felicia Roberts, and Heather Servaty-Seib
Dissertation Title: Supporting Partners: Coping with Relational Turbulence During Military Reunions (in progress)
Area of Specialization: Interpersonal Communication
Minor: Social Relationships and Health
Minor: Research Methodology

M.A. — **University of Delaware, Newark, DE**
2010

Advisor: Charlie Pavitt
Committee: Scott Caplan and John Courtright
Thesis Title: Understanding Romantic Jealousy: An Analysis of Partners' Perspectives Using an Attribution Framework.

Both

Honors B.A. — **The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA**
2008
With Distinction

Advisor: Denise Solomon
Thesis Title: Communication During Hurtful Episodes
Major: Communication Arts and Sciences

Academic Appointments

Fall 2014 – present	**Instructor**, William Paterson University Department of Communication
Fall 2013 – Spring 2014	**Graduate Lecturer**, Purdue University Brian Lamb School of Communication
2010 – Spring 2013	**Instructor/ Teaching Assistant**, Purdue University Brian Lamb School of Communication
2010 – 2013	**Research Assistant**, Purdue University Brian Lamb School of Communication
2008 – 2010	**Instructor/ Teaching Assistant**, University of Delaware Department of Communication

Awards and Honors

2013 **Battlemind to Home Symposium Fellowship**
- One of nine graduate students to receive a scholarship to attend the "Battlemind To Home IV" Symposium. Conference focuses on research related to military family support.

2013 **Purdue Research Foundation Summer Research Fellowship**
- One of three recipients from the Brian Lamb School of Communication for "outstanding doctoral students who have held only graduate teaching appointments during the two semesters of the preceding year." Provided two months of research support.

2008 **Phi Beta Kappa Society**
- Invitation only honors society for undergraduate liberal arts and science students who have completed at least 90 credits, have at least a 3.75 cumulative GPA, and are "of good moral character."

2008 **Lambda Pi Eta National Communication Honors Society**
- Membership requires students to have at least a 3.25 GPA in all undergraduate communication studies courses, to be ranked in the highest thirty-five percent of their class in general scholarship, and to have completed at least 60 semester credits.

2007 – 2008 **Michael Hodes Communication Arts and Sciences Scholarship**
- Highly selective scholarship given to one CAS undergraduate student at Penn State who "manifests the promise of outstanding academic success."

2008 **Golden Key Honors Society**
- Invitation only honors society for the top 15% of college and university, sophomores, juniors, and seniors.

Penn State University's Schreyer Honors College Alumna
- Graduation requirements include maintaining at least a 3.33 undergraduate GPA, taking at least fourteen honors credits during the final two years of study, and completing an honors thesis.

2006-07 **Penn State University President's Fund for Research**
- Awarded to Penn State University faculty who participate in research with undergraduate students. Dr. Denise Solomon received support for lab expenses that were related to my honors undergraduate thesis project.

Research Interests

I have broad interests in interpersonal communication within family and health contexts. Specifically, my research focuses on issues related to family stress, loss, social support, topic avoidance, and the dark side of interpersonal communication.

Publications

Owlett, J. S., Richards, K. A., Wilson, S. R., DeFreese, J. D., & Roberts, F. D. (in press). Topic avoidance and privacy rules in military adolescents' experiences of deployment. Manuscript accepted for publication at *Journal of Family Communication*.

Wilson, S. R., Chernichky, S. M., Wilkum, K., & **Owlett, J. S.** (2014). Do family communication patterns buffer children from difficulties associated with a parent's
military deployment? Examining deployed and non-deployed parents' perspectives. *Journal of Family Communication, 14,* 32 – 52. doi: 10.1080/15267431.2013.857325.

Conference Presentations

Owlett, J. S., Richards, K. A., DeFreese, J. D., Wilson, S. R., & Roberts, F. D. (2013, November). Parental deployment and family communication: Privacy rule formation. Poster presented at the Battlemind to Home IV Symposium, Indianapolis, IN.

Owlett, J. S., Richards, K. A., DeFreese, J. D., Wilson, S. R., & Roberts, F. D. (2013, April). Managing private information during deployment: Reflections from military adolescents. Poster presented at the Health Communication and Family Dynamics: Beyond the Patient-Provider Relationship Conference, West Lafayette, IN.

Owlett, J. S. (2013, April). Reconceptualizing romantic jealousy: Beyond the cognition preceding emotion framework. Competitively selected paper presented at the annual convention of the Eastern Communication Association, Pittsburgh, PA.

Owlett, J. S. (2013, April). Intimacy and military couples: An alternative approach to Andersen, Guerrero and Jones' (2006) interaction-centered model of intimacy processes related to nonverbal behavior. Paper part of competitively selected panel presented at the annual convention of the Southern States Communication Association, Louisville, KY.

Owlett, J. S., Richards, K. A., DeFreese, J. D., Wilson, S. R., Roberts, F. D. & Miller, K. D. (2012, November). Extending communication privacy management theory: Topic avoidance and privacy rules in military adolescents' experiences of deployment. Competitively selected paper presented at the annual convention of the National Communication Association, Orlando, FL.

Wilson, S. R., Chernichky, S. M., Wilkum, K., **Owlett, J. S**., & Miller, K. D. (2012, November). Do family communication patterns buffer children from difficulties associated with a parent's military deployment? Examining deployed and non-deployed parents' perspectives. Competitively selected paper presented at the annual convention of the National Communication Association, Orlando, FL.

Wilson, S. R., Collins, C. L., **Owlett, J. S**., Richards, K. A., DeFreese, J. D., Roberts, F. D. & Miller, K. D. (2012, July). My friends don't understand how it feels: Exploring perceptions of feeling understood among adolescents who have experienced the deployment of a military parent. Competitively selected paper presented at the annual convention of the International Association for Relationship Research, Chicago, IL.

Owlett, J. S. (2012, March). Examining families using the theory of planned behavior: Looking toward the future of military family research. Competitively selected paper presented at the annual convention of the Purdue Communication Graduate Student Association, West Lafayette, IN.

Owlett, J. S. (2010, April). Should I stay or should I go: An application of Rusbult's investment model to the general social survey. Competitively selected poster presented at the annual convention of the Eastern Communication Association, Baltimore, MD.

Owlett, J. S. (2010, April). Understanding romantic jealousy: An analysis of both partners' perspectives using an attribution framework. Paper presented at the University of Delaware's Dept. of Communication Graduate Student Colloquium, Newark, DE.

Invited Talks

Owlett, J. S. (2013, February). Social support, privacy management, and loss. Invited lecture for Professor Felicia Roberts' COM 372 (Close Relationships) class, Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN.

Owlett, J. S. (2012, June). Operation purple camp 2012: Research preview. An invited presentation for the "Operation Purple Camp" staff, Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN.

Owlett, J. S. (2012, May) Extending communication privacy management theory: Topic avoidance and privacy rules in military adolescents' experiences of deployment. An invited presentation for the Military Family Research Institute Learning Meeting, Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN.

Owlett, J. S., Miller, K. D., DeFreese, J. D., & Richards, K. A. (2011, July). Defining our families. An invited presentation to "Operation L.E.A.D." at the Military Family Research Institute, Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN.

Research Activity

Research Assistant to Dr. Steve Wilson and the Military Family Research Institute, Purdue University
01/2012 – 05/2012; 01/2013 – 03/2013
Assisted in program evaluation and fidelity assessment for the "Passport Toward Success" program, which assists Indiana National Guard service members and their families with post-deployment transitions.

Interviewer for Dr. Patrice Buzzanell and Rahul Mitra, Purdue University
12/2012 – 01/2013
Paid interviewer for National Communication Association (NCA) funded grant project titled "Changing Face of Communication Studies: Majority and Underrepresented Minority Millennial Graduate Students' Reported Quality of Life and Meaningfulness of Work."

Research Team Member for Drs. Steve Wilson and Felicia Roberts, Purdue University
03/11 – 12/12
Conducted interviews for children of military service members to capture their experiences during deployment. Assisted in participant recruitment and co-facilitated data collection, organization, and analysis.

Research Assistant to Dr. Erina MacGeorge, Purdue University
08/10 – 05/11
Research assistant for a National Science Foundation (NSF) award of $199,999, titled "Cultural similarities and differences in meanings and consequences of advice." In this capacity, I oversaw approximately 15 research assistants across three separate studies.

Research Assistant to Dr. Denise Solomon, The Pennsylvania State University
01/07 – 05/08
Collected communication data that focused on biological responses to stress in hurtful communication. As an undergraduate, I also helped to train new lab assistants, and coded online blog postings about couples' responses to infertility.

Teaching Experience

Courses Taught at William Paterson University

Instructor

Communication Theory (William Paterson University: COMM 1210)
I will independently instruct students on the major theoretical traditions across the communication discipline. Content includes interpersonal, small group, organizational, intercultural, and mass communication contexts. Students will complete in class activities, take home writing assignments, and exams.
In Fall 2014

Public Speaking (William Paterson University: COMM 2630)
I will independently instruct students on how to improve their public speaking skills. Students in this course will learn practical and theoretical knowledge through presenting a variety of public speeches.
In Fall 2014

Intercultural Communication (William Paterson University (COMM 3400)
In this course, students will gain practical knowledge about how to communicate across cultures. Contemporary research that examines intercultural communication will also be integrated into the lectures and assigned readings. As the sole instructor, I will develop all parts of this course.
In Fall 2014

Courses Taught at Purdue University

Instructor/Graduate Lecturer

Small Group Communication (Purdue University: COM 320)
As the sole instructor, my duties included developing all aspects of this course. I devised all course documents (e.g., syllabus and schedule), constructed lesson plans, provided lectures, and created and graded course assignments (e.g., quizzes, exams, and group projects).
Note: Evaluations are on a 5-point scale (*5* = "*excellent*," *1* = "*very poor*") with higher numbers reflecting higher evaluations. All values represent group medians.
Students were asked to evaluate the course and instructor across the following two questions:
1. Overall, I would rate this course as:
2. Overall, I would rate this instructor as:

Fall 2013 Course Evaluation: 4.1 for the course and 4.3 for the instructor

Interviewing: Principles and Practice (Purdue University: COM 325)
Independently taught course that focuses on developing students' interviewing skills in several settings (e.g., employment, focus groups). As part of my course responsibilities, I teach lectures, hold office hours, and attend weekly teaching meetings. I also grade students' presentations, and provide relevant feedback.
Spring 2014 Course Evaluation: 4.3 for the course and 4.3 for the instructor
Fall 2013 Course Evaluation: 4.2 for the course and 4.3 for the instructor

Interpersonal Communication (Purdue University: COM 212)
Responsible for developing general course documents, activities, lesson plans, and related instructional materials. I also created and graded exams, quizzes, and mini-essay assignments.

Spring 2013 Course Evaluation: 4.2 for the course and 4.6 for the instructor
Fall 2012 Course Evaluation: 4.6 and 4.6 for the course and 4.6 and 4.9 for the instructor (2 sections)

Science Writing and Presentation (Purdue University: COM 217)
Independently instructed students from Purdue University's College of Science on how to effectively present scientific findings to lay audiences in oral and written formats. As the course instructor, I designed lectures, created course activities, and graded presentations, quizzes, and extended writing assignments.

Spring 2012 Course Evaluation: 4.1 for the course and 4.4 for the instructor
Fall 2011 Course Evaluation: 4.3 and 3.7 for the course and 4.7 and 4.3 for the instructor

Fundamentals of Speech Communication (Purdue University: COM 114)
Provided instruction for my independently taught sections. Students came from a variety of majors at Purdue University. Course material covered presentational speaking in informative, persuasive, and small group contexts. Attended weekly teaching development seminars to improve teaching skills. Held office hours, and graded course related materials (e.g., quizzes, presentations, and course assignments).

Spring 2011 Course Evaluation: 4.3 for the course and 4.8 for the instructor
Fall 2010 Course Evaluation: 3.7 for the course and 3.9 for the instructor

Courses Taught at the University of Delaware

Instructor/Graduate Lecturer

Public Speaking (University of Delaware: COM 350)
Fall 2009
One of two graduate student instructors from the Department of Communication to be invited to teach a required course for first semester freshman communication-interest majors. Independently instructed students on material related to public speaking, and introductory-level communication theory. Responsible for creating course materials, teaching lectures, and grading presentations, quizzes, exams, and assignments.

Oral Communication in Business (COMM 212), University of Delaware
Fall 2008, Spring 2009, Spring 2010
Independently instructed students from the Alfred Lerner College of Business & Economics at the University of Delaware. Averaged 3 sections (approximately 75 students) per semester during spring 2009 and 2010. Lessons focused on business presentation and professional speaking, audience analysis, small group communication, and a host of other related topics. Responsible for holding office hours, attending weekly teaching meetings, and grading speeches, quizzes, and related assignments.

Additional Teaching Activity

Teaching Certifications

2012 **Purdue University Graduate Teaching Certification**
- Given to Graduate Teaching Assistants who demonstrate a continued dedication to improving their teaching skills. Requirements include at least two teaching experiences as a teaching assistant, attendance at teaching orientation sessions, participation in a micro-teaching seminar with feedback, attendance at additional teacher development seminars (6+ hours), classroom observations with feedback, and self-analysis of teaching skills.

Teaching Presentations

Owlett, J. S., (2012, August). How to create an engaged classroom. An invited presentation to the Graduate Teaching Assistant Orientation Training, Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN.

Owlett, J. S., (2012, August). Fostering academic integrity & responsibility. An invited presentation to the Graduate Teaching Assistant Orientation Training, Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN.

Gerding, A., **Owlett, J. S.,** Poynter, D., Trask, S. & Turner McGowen, S. (2012, March). I'm not taken seriously: Common problems female graduate students encounter in the classroom. Competitively selected panel presented at the annual convention of the Central States Communication Association, Cleveland, OH.

Owlett, J. S., Tyrawski, J. A., & Oxley, L. M. (2009, August). Presenting course content effectively. An invited presentation to the Graduate Teaching Conference, University of Delaware, Newark, DE.

Attendance at Teaching Workshops

Center for Instructional Excellence Workshop: Microteaching (9/27/2011)
Center for Instructional Excellence Workshop: Making an IMPACT (9/8/2011)
Center for Instructional Excellence Workshop: Designing a Course from Scratch (9/3/2011)

Academic Preparation

Theoretical Foundations

Epistemology and Theory in Com.	Univ. of Delaware	Steve Mortenson
Foundations of Human Com. Inquiry I	Purdue University	Steve Wilson Stacey Connaughton
Foundations of Human Com. Inquiry II	Purdue University	Steve Wilson
Organizational Communication – (Small Group)	Univ. of Delaware	Charlie Pavitt
Mass Communication Theory	Univ. of Delaware	Betsy Perse

Interpersonal, Family, and Health Communication

Interpersonal Communication Theory	Univ. of Delaware	Scott Caplan
Interpersonal Communication Theory	Purdue University	Brant Burleson
Nonverbal Human Interaction	Purdue University	John Greene
Communication and Emotion	Univ. of Delaware	Steve Mortenson
Communication and Persuasion	Univ. of Delaware	John Courtright
Adult Development, Social Relationships, and Health	Purdue Univ. (CDFS)	Karen Fingerman

Family Communication	Purdue University	Steve Wilson
Family Loss: Health Promoting Interventions	Purdue Univ. (EDPS)	Heather Servaty-Seib
Advanced Family Studies	Purdue Univ. (CDFS)	Melissa Franks
Introduction to Health Communication	Purdue University	Susan Morgan
Research Methods		
Com. Research Methods – Procedures	Univ. of Delaware	Nancy Signorielli
Com. Research Methods – Analysis	Univ. of Delaware	Lindsay Hoffman
ANOVA	Purdue University	Steve Wilson
Adv. Social Research Methods (Regression)	Purdue Univ. (SOC)	John Stahura
Qualitative Research	Purdue Univ. (ENGL)	Dwight Atkinson
Selected Problems in Social Research (Structural Equation Modeling)	Purdue Univ. (SOC)	Jim Anderson
Advanced Qualitative Research Methods	Purdue Univ. (EDCI)	Nadine Dolby

Professional Service – Department and University

Department of Communication Undergraduate Committee Fall 2014 – present
Member
William Paterson University

Brian Lamb School of Communication (BLSC) Graduate Committee 2012 – 2013
Graduate Student Representative (committee met weekly)
Purdue University

Communication Graduate Student Association 2012 Conference 2011 – 2012
Planning Committee Board Member
Purdue University

Communication Graduate Student Senate 2011 – 2012
V.P. Administration
Purdue University

Mentorship Program for Engaged Humanities Scholarship Fall 2011
Mentor
Purdue University

Recruiter: Brian Lamb School of Communication 2010; 2012
Talked with prospective graduate students at the National Communication Association Annual Convention in San Francisco, CA (2010) and Orlando, FL (2012).
Purdue University

University of Delaware Graduate Student Senate

Events Committee Chair	2009 – 2010
Communication Department Senator	2008 – 2010

Professional Service - Discipline

Paper Reviewer	National Communication Association	2011 – 2014
Panel Chair	National Communication Association	2013
Secretary	Student Section - National Communication Association	2011 – 2013
Paper Reviewer	Communication Graduate Student Association	2011 – 2012
Paper Reviewer	International Communication Association	2011 – 2012

Association Membership

Central States Communication Association	2011 - present
International Association for Relationship Research	2012 - present
National Communication Association	2009 - present
Southern States Communication Association	2012 – present

Volunteer Work

Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General - Bureau of Consumer Protection 2006 – 2007
Volunteer Agent
State College, PA

Pennsylvania Literacy Corps 2006
Literacy Tutor
Pleasant Gap, PA