



Editor's Note On

TIP 39, *Substance Abuse Treatment and Family Therapy*

2017

Published in 2004, Treatment Improvement Protocol (TIP) 39 contains much information that remains useful to today's reader. Noted below are several topical areas in the TIP where more current information and resources enhance or supplant the content found in the TIP.

Clinical Updates

The Consensus Panel was not reconvened to review and update the clinical information in TIP 39. A literature search covering 2011 to mid-2017 found little information that would affect the recommendations in the TIP. A few changes that affect the provision of family therapy are described below.

Behavioral Couples Therapy

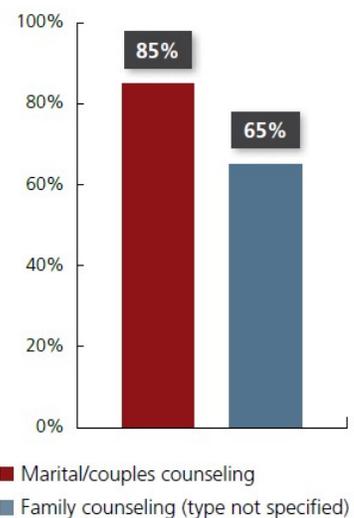
Behavioral couples therapy (BCT) has emerged as the family-based treatment with the strongest evidence supporting efficacy in treating alcohol and other substance use disorders.² Review studies have found that for individuals who have a partner, BCT is significantly more effective than individual treatment in increasing abstinence and improving relationship functioning.^{3,4}

Domestic Violence

TIP 39 did not extensively address domestic violence, although Appendix C of the TIP provides guidelines for assessing violence. Two statements made in the TIP no longer reflect current thinking among domestic violence experts and advocates:

- “Only the most extreme anger contraindicates family therapy.” (pp. xviii, 18)
- “Redefining the problem as residing within the family as a whole can help transform the anger into motivation for change.” (p. 18)

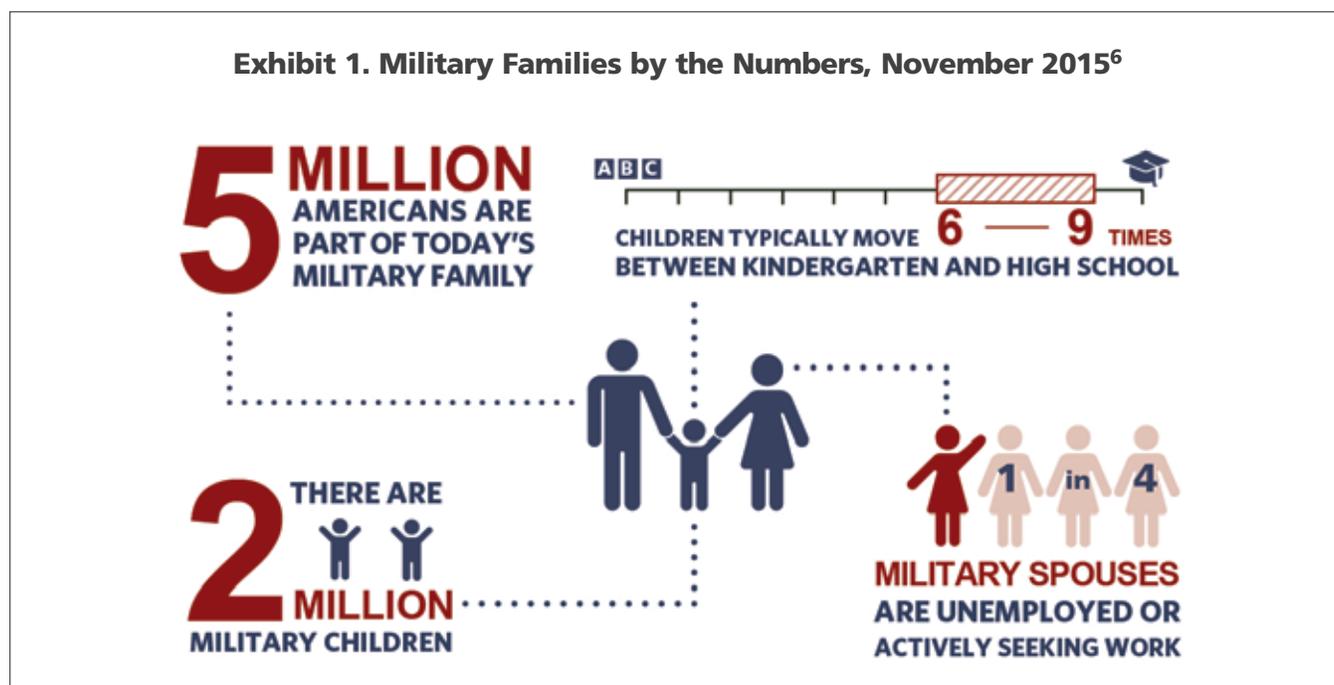
Substance Use Treatment Programs Offering Family Counseling in 2016¹



Joint counseling for couples affected by domestic violence is generally not recommended by experts in domestic violence, because of a lack of evidence that it is effective.⁵ Also, couples counseling can be ethically inappropriate if it is based on the assumption that both people share responsibility for the violence (e.g., see the statement in the second bullet, above), or if the sessions focus on improving communication rather than on the abusive behavior. Also, it can be dangerous when people who are honest during therapy are punished for their openness with more violence from their partner after the session. Great care must be taken with assessing and treating couples when domestic violence exists. Batterer intervention and prevention programs for the perpetrator of the violence may be the safer first step.⁵

Military Families

One area in particular was given little attention in the TIP: military families. Since the TIP's publication, thousands more military service members have been deployed in the Global War on Terror, including Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. Exhibit 1 provides a snapshot of military families in the United States.



Graphic from the [U.S. Department of Defense](#)

Substance use treatment programs are likely to be seeing military clients and their families. Although illicit drug use is lower among military personnel than among civilians, heavy alcohol use and prescription medication misuse are more prevalent.⁷ The 2015 National Survey on Drug Use and Health included questions to identify military spouses and children. The survey found that:⁸

- The incidence of illicit drug use and prescription medication misuse among military wives is not significantly different from that of all married women. However, military wives were significantly more likely than civilian married women to report past-month alcohol use and binge drinking.
- The incidence of illicit drug use, prescription medication misuse, and alcohol use among children ages 12–17 of military service members is not significantly different from the incidence of use in all children in the same age range.

A full discussion of work with military families is outside the scope of this Editor's Note. See the Resources section, below, for sources of information and training on military culture, family counseling, and referral sources for client support.

Since publication of TIP 39, the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM) has been revised. The American Psychiatric Association has published several useful [fact sheets](#)⁹ that explain changes in the new edition, the DSM-5.¹⁰

Regulatory Update

On January 18, 2017, changes to 42 CFR Part 2, the federal regulations governing the confidentiality of substance use disorder patient records (including those receiving family therapy in a substance use treatment program), were published as a [Final Rule](#) (82 FR 6052; effective date February 17, 2017). The changes were made to “. . . facilitate health integration and information exchange within new health care models while continuing to protect the privacy and confidentiality of patients seeking treatment for substance use disorders.”¹¹

Resources

Potentially useful resources that were not included in TIP 39 are listed below.

Marriage and Family Therapy

The [American Family Therapy Academy](#) is a membership organization that offers resources for family therapists, including an annual conference.

<https://afta.org>

The [National Domestic Violence Hotline](#) provides 24/7 support and resources for individuals experiencing domestic violence.

www.thehotline.org

1-800-799-SAFE (7233)

Working With Military Service Members and Their Families

The [Center for Deployment Psychology](#) offers resources for providers working with military personnel and families, including webinars and self-paced online training on topics such as military culture, evidence-based practices, and working with couples.

<http://deploymentpsych.org>

The [Community Provider Toolkit](#) helps link community providers with behavioral health and wellness resources and information that will be helpful when working with veteran clients.

www.mentalhealth.va.gov/communityproviders/index.asp

[FOCUS \(Families OverComing Under Stress\)](#) provides resiliency training, teaching practical skills to help military children and families meet the challenges of deployment and reintegration, to communicate and solve problems effectively, and to successfully set goals together and create a shared family story.

www.focusproject.org

[Joining Forces: Taking Action to Serve America's Military Families](http://www.aamft.org/iMIS15/AAMFT/Content/Advocacy/Joining_Forces.aspx) is an initiative of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy. It provides military-focused information, training, and resources for marriage and family therapists and other behavioral health professionals.

www.aamft.org/iMIS15/AAMFT/Content/Advocacy/Joining_Forces.aspx

[Military OneSource](http://www.militaryonesource.mil/family-and-relationships) supplements existing family programs by providing a website and a worldwide 24/7 information and referral telephone service to all active military personnel, Guard and Reserve Soldiers, deployed civilians, and their families.

www.militaryonesource.mil/family-and-relationships

The [National Military Family Association](http://www.militaryfamily.org/about-us) provides information and support and sponsors programs for military children, spouses, and families.

www.militaryfamily.org/about-us

[Operation Homefront](http://www.operationhomefront.net) provides emergency financial and other assistance to the families of service members and wounded warriors.

www.operationhomefront.net

Notes

- 1 Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2017). *National Survey of Substance Abuse Treatment Services (N-SSATS): 2016. Data on substance abuse treatment facilities*. BHSIS Series S-93, HHS Publication No. (SMA) 17-5039. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.
- 2 Fletcher, K. (2013). Couple therapy treatments for substance use disorders: A systematic review. *Journal of Social Work Practice in the Addictions, 13*, 327–352.
- 3 O'Farrell, T. J., & Clements, K. (2012). Review of outcome research on marital and family therapy in the treatment of alcoholism. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy, 38*(1), 122–144.
- 4 Wesley, K. C. C. (2016). The use of behavioural couple therapy and couple-based interventions in the treatment of substance use disorders. *Addiction Research and Theory, 24*(2), 89–92.
- 5 National Domestic Violence Hotline. (2014). Why we don't recommend couples counseling for abusive relationships [Webpage]. Retrieved August 11, 2017, from www.thehotline.org/2014/08/why-we-dont-recommend-couples-counseling-for-abusive-relationships
- 6 U.S. Department of Defense. (2015, November). Military family support [Webpage]. Retrieved August 9, 2017, from www.defense.gov/News/Special-Reports/1116_familysupport
- 7 National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2013). *DrugFacts: Substance abuse in the military*. Retrieved August 10, 2017, from www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/substance-abuse-in-military
- 8 Lipari, R. N., Forsyth, B., Bose, J., Kroutil, L. A., & Lane, M. E. (2016, November). *Spouses and children of U.S. military personnel: Substance use and mental health profile from the 2015 National Survey on Drug Use and Health*. NSDUH Data Review. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.
- 9 American Psychiatric Association. (2013). DSM-5 fact sheets [Webpage]. Retrieved September 8, 2017, from www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/practice/dsm/educational-resources/dsm-5-fact-sheets
- 10 American Psychiatric Association. (2013). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (5th ed.). Arlington, VA: American Psychiatric Publishing.
- 11 Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2017, January 13). *New rule improves the exchange of medical information in ways that protect the privacy of people receiving substance use treatment* [Press release]. Retrieved August 7, 2017, from www.samhsa.gov/newsroom/press-announcements/201701131200

This publication lists nonfederal resources to provide additional information to consumers. The content and views in these resources have not been formally approved by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Listing of these resources does not constitute an endorsement by SAMHSA or HHS.

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