Today's Soldier

Assessing the Needs of Soldiers and Their Families

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Preface

This document reports results from a research project entitled, “Assessing the Needs of Soldiers and Their Families.” The purpose of the project was to identify the most pressing problems that soldiers and their families face, the needs associated with those problems, and how soldiers use Army and non-Army resources to attempt to meet those needs. The results inform how the Army can best meet the most pressing unmet needs, whether through its own support services or by fostering partnerships with communities and other non-Army organizations.

This report documents the methods we used to develop a 2014 online survey of U.S. soldiers, along with the survey results. The findings should interest policymakers, program managers, and scholars interested in service members’ quality of life, their health and well-being, military families, service utilization, and military retention and readiness.

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Summary

Military life can be challenging for soldiers and their families. In addition to the typical day-to-day challenges that all people face, this population experiences unique stresses related to military life, such as the frequent moves and military deployments generated by more than a decade of combat operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. Recognizing these stresses and the problems they create, the Army has established a wide range of programs to help the affected parties cope. Previous surveys have typically focused on assessing the programs themselves—whether soldiers and their families know about the programs, use their services, and how satisfied they are with those services—rather than a holistic assessment of the challenges they face, how they go about getting help with those challenges, and whether their needs are met. An assessment that focuses on people rather than programs is important because a portfolio of Army programs may be well resourced, effectively run, and widely used, but if Army families have needs that fall outside the scope of these programs or use other resources to meet their needs, then a realignment of limited resources might be in order. Furthermore, unmet needs can translate into a wider range of problems for families because problems in one domain of life often spill into others.

Purpose and Approach

The research reported here fills this knowledge gap by assessing how well Army programs meet the actual needs of soldiers and their families. The primary vehicle for this analysis was a survey of soldiers. It was built within an analytic framework that considered the installation environment, demographics of the survey group, problems encountered, the types of help needed as a result of those problems, the resources soldiers draw on to deal with the problems, the barriers to using both military and civilian resources to meet the needs, the effectiveness of the resources used, and, lastly, attitudes toward military service. Along with analyzing the survey results, we also identify how soldiers prioritize their problems and how the Army can best address the most-pressing unmet needs.

The survey was administered to active component soldiers stationed in the continental United States in enlisted ranks of E-1 to E-9 and commissioned ranks of O-1 to

O-8 across 40 installations. The final survey sample group consisted of approximately 60,000 soldiers who were contacted by email and invited to take the survey online. The survey itself was anonymous, with no links to respondents' identities. Slightly more than 7,000 soldiers took the survey, a 12-percent response rate. While the response rate is relatively low, it provided enough respondents (statistical power) to support the analyses. Participants were asked to respond to issues within "problem domains." These domains were as follows:

- **Military Practices and Culture** (e.g., problems adjusting to military language, organization, culture; lack of guidance or sponsorship)
- **Work/Life Balance** (e.g., finding time for sleep, a healthy diet, and physical exercise; finding time for education; nearby and affordable options for stress relief and family time)
- **Household Management** (e.g., finding suitable housing, time management)
- **Financial or Legal Problems** (e.g., trouble paying debt or bills, child custody/family legal problems)
- **Health Care System Problems** (e.g., getting access to military health care, understanding military health benefits)
- **Relationship Problems** (e.g., problems communicating/expressing feelings, trouble starting a relationship)
- **Child Well-Being** (e.g., childcare problems, child emotional/behavior problems)
- **Soldier's Own Well-Being** (e.g., feeling stressed, overwhelmed, or tired; dealing with mood changes, including anxiety and depression)
- **Spouse's Well-Being** (e.g., feeling stressed, overwhelmed, or tired; dealing with mood changes, including anxiety and depression)
- **Other Problems** (write in responses).

Each domain contained a number of issues (ranging from five to 13, for a total of 83 across all domains) that soldiers and their families might face, and survey participants were asked if they had experienced any of these issues in the past year. Participants were then asked to identify the two domains that posed the most significant problems for them. We then asked about nine general types of assistance that might be needed to cope with those problems—such as Advice or Education; Activities (for fitness, recreation, stress relief, family bonding); and General Information (e.g., about rules or policies, or about what assistance is available and how to access it). Once soldiers had indicated that one or more of their problems generated a need for assistance, we asked them to identify whether they sought help from a military or nonmilitary program. We included a number of choices: Military options included such resources as the Family Readiness Group (FRG), Army Community Services, or the chain of command; sources outside the military included government or community programs, such as the Women, Infants and Children Program and civilian religious leaders. We

also offered respondents the option of noting they had a need for which they did not contact any organization. Those who did report seeking help were asked how well resources met their needs and the probable effect of the loss of such resources.

Our approach, while innovative, focuses on what soldiers considered their most pressing problems in a given year. Because we explored solution-seeking and outcomes only for the most important problems, solution-seeking for other, less important problems was not addressed. Thus, it is important to keep in mind that our approach may have resulted in an undercounting of total unmet needs.

Results in Brief

What Problems Do Soldiers Have?

On average, out of a total of 83 possible individual issues within problem domains, soldiers selected about 12. The most frequently chosen issues (all selected by about 40 percent of soldiers) were as follows:

- feeling stressed/overwhelmed/tired
- experiencing trouble sleeping
- poor communication with coworkers or superiors.

The most consistent finding within problem domains was that soldiers living farther from post reported more issues. Junior enlisted soldiers tended to report more issues than did other pay grades. Similarly, single soldiers with children reported more issues than other family status groups. Some 9 percent of soldiers reported having no problems in the past year.

Soldiers were asked which of the ten problem domains presented the most pressing challenges for them. In prioritizing what they considered the two most significant domains, respondents most frequently cited Military Practices and Culture, Work/Life Balance, Soldier's Own Well-Being, Health Care System Problems, and Relationship Problems.

What Types of Help Did Soldiers Need to Address Their Problems?

Across all problems and among respondents who reported needs, Advice or Education (21 percent), Activities (21 percent), General Information (21 percent), Counseling (21 percent), and Emotional Support (20 percent) were all reported relatively frequently. Of individuals who had faced problems in the past year, 24 percent indicated that they did not have any needs; junior enlisted personnel and individuals with a greater number of issues were less likely to report having no needs.¹ With respect to

¹ Note when we discuss group differences in the summary, these differences are statistically significant.

demographic groups, the clearest pattern was that junior enlisted personnel were more likely to report more types of help needed than were soldiers in other ranks.

We also examined the linkage of the most frequently selected and prioritized problem with the types of help needed to cope with that problem. To deal with prioritized problems in the Military Practices and Culture domain, soldiers reported they need General Information (about rules or policies or about what assistance is available and how to access it) and Advice or Education (from people with experience to recommend the best solution for someone in a similar situation). For soldiers who prioritized the Work/Life Balance domain, a commonly reported type of assistance needed was Activities for fitness, recreation, stress relief, and family bonding. For the domain of Soldier's Own Well-Being, respondents reported that the types of assistance they needed most were Emotional or Social Support, Professional Counseling, and Activities.

What Types of Resources Did Soldiers Use to Try to Meet Their Needs?

The large majority (85 percent) of respondents who reported problems and needs also reported reaching out to resources, whether individuals or programs, to meet those needs. Of those who used resources, 61 percent used both military and nonmilitary resources. On average, respondents reported reaching out to four military contacts and two nonmilitary contacts. More than half (58 percent) of respondents reported contacting four or more resources.

Popular military resources that were accessed included the chain of command (40 percent), unit members not in the chain of command (39 percent), and a doctor or counselor provided by the military (33 percent). Popular nonmilitary resources included personal networks of family and friends (38 percent) and Internet resources such as search engines, information pages, and social media sites (25 percent). The only significant predictor of the total number of contacts was total number of issues reported at the beginning of the survey.

How Well and Easily Were Needs Met?

The most common problems with resources reported by those who used them were long wait lists/response times for military counselors or medical doctors (26 percent) and for child and youth services (21 percent); the perception that contacting the chain of command might hurt one's career (19 percent); and the experience of chain of command being unwelcoming or unfriendly (18 percent). In general, both military and nonmilitary resources were rated as "all right" in meeting needs associated with specific problems. The findings from regression analyses of satisfaction with resources suggest that the Army is providing sufficient resources for soldiers to meet their pressing needs, but that junior enlisted personnel and those who live farther from post may not be benefiting as much as their colleagues from these resources.

What Impact Would Soldiers and Their Families Feel If Resources Were No Longer Available?

Soldiers were asked to imagine the impact on them and their families if each type of military resource were no longer available. Soldiers may or may not be able to predict the actual impact; however, this approach helps us understand the perceived value of these resources. Although going to the chain of command for help is perceived by some respondents as having potentially negative implications, losing the chain of command as a resource for helping to resolve problems was rated as having a serious impact by 35 percent of soldiers—almost as many as the number who rated loss of treatment and counseling as having a serious impact (38 percent). These results suggest a range of different experiences with the role of chain of command as a resource for problem-solving.

Other resources were perceived to have less impact if that resource was removed. Most soldiers reported that they and their families would feel little to no effect if they lost access to FRGs (66 percent), relief or aid societies such as Army Emergency Relief (57 percent), or to Child and Youth Services (CYS) (59 percent). Keep in mind that military resources vary in the degree to which they are designed to support soldiers generally (e.g., the chain of command) or to focus on targeted needs of very specific—and in some cases, vulnerable—populations. For example, CYS is only a resource for soldiers who have children, who perceived loss of CYS resources as having a significantly greater effect than did childless soldiers. In addition, few respondents reported using a relief or aid society such as Army Emergency Relief, and it is possible that soldiers do not perceive the loss of this resource as serious because they have never used it. This finding does not negate the importance of such emergency aid to those who do need it. Certainly, our regression analysis revealed that, for every resource, a respondent's prior use of that specific resource for one of his or her most significant needs in the past year significantly predicted greater perceived impact of resource loss. This is not surprising, and indicates that soldiers who used a resource to help with one of their needs—because it helped them address a pressing challenge they faced—would feel the most impact if it were taken away.

How Are Problems, Needs, and Resource Use Related to Attitudes About the Army?

We examined the relationship between problems and needs on various attitudes of interest to the Army: perceived organizational support to the soldier from the Army, perceived adjustment to military life, and intentions to remain in the Army. We classified soldiers into groups based on their endorsement of problems, help needed, resources accessed, and whether those resources met their needs.² This classification was used as a predictor of attitudes, along with soldier demographic and post characteristics.

² Specifically, the groups were: those who reported no problems; those who reported problems but no needs; those who reported needs associated with their problems but no resource use; those who used resources to meet their needs and were satisfied; those who used resources and were not satisfied; and those who reported “other” resources only, for whom it is unclear whether their needs were met.

We found consistent results across measures: Soldiers who had one or more unmet needs had worse attitudes toward the Army than did those who accessed resources and had their needs met. This finding demonstrates that reducing unmet needs may be a fruitful pathway to improving soldiers' attitudes toward the Army, thereby improving readiness, as measured by soldiers' intentions to remain in the Army, as well as their spouses' support for those intentions (as reported by soldiers). Another consistent finding is that respondents who had needs but used no resources had similar attitudes toward the Army as soldiers who accessed resources and had their needs met. This finding suggests that some soldiers are able to deal with problems on their own with no impact on their attitudes toward the Army. Of course, it is possible that soldiers who dealt with problems on their own had less severe problems, or dealt with their problems using more maladaptive coping strategies, than those who used resources.

Key Themes and Implications

Our analysis identified a number of key themes about problems, needs, and resource use.

- Soldiers who experience problems do not necessarily believe they need assistance.
- Among soldiers reporting both problems and needs, those who did not use resources to deal with them have attitudes toward the Army similar to those who did use resources.
- Junior enlisted soldiers do not appear to fare as well as other groups. They not only report having more of the common issues and problems that other soldiers indicated, but also more of the less common ones.
- The results suggest the types of help that would be perceived by soldiers as most useful in meeting the needs associated with their most pressing problems. For example, programs that focus on providing advice for challenges related to Military Practices and Culture clearly address one of the most-identified needs.
- Army programs are designed to deal with the full spectrum of soldier and family needs, yet some still go unmet. This raises the questions of whether soldiers and families are fully aware of the resources available to them—and, if so, whether they can access those resources. It also raises questions about the effectiveness of leaders, service providers, and programs in communicating with soldiers and families about available resources.
- Navigating the system is a challenge for about a quarter of respondents: figuring out where to go and with whom to talk to get help or information. Reluctance to draw on the chain of command for fear of harm to one's career, or perceptions that inquiries would be unwelcome, could contribute to this problem.
- Across the survey, soldiers reported problems with their own health and well-being and with the military health care system. Soldiers reported problems with

finding adequate time for sleep, a healthy diet, and physical exercise, as well as with mood changes, such as depression or anxiety. Soldiers also reported drawing on professional counseling for help and experiencing long wait times to see a doctor as a barrier to care.

The Army can use these results as it considers modification of the range of benefits it offers its soldiers, either by changing programs or possibly eliminating some. Any change to programs, however, should be combined with a careful communications plan. Communication to soldiers and families should aim to help them understand how the Army is working to use resources most efficiently to improve their quality of life based on their own reported problems and needs, as well as other sources of information. These other sources include such information as separately collected data on the use of and satisfaction with resources, population demographics, cost-benefit considerations, and consideration of the “social compact” the Army has established with its members. Consideration of that social compact includes careful thought for needs of populations that are critical (e.g., those at risk for suicide, sexual assault victims), but are only a small proportion of the Army. This report furnishes one important piece of information needed to inform these difficult decisions: data on what soldiers themselves see as their greatest problems, most frequent needs, and the resources that they use.

Recommendations

The survey provided a wealth of information and pointed to areas that could benefit from additional research. It would be illuminating to learn more about soldiers who indicate having problems but no needs, and soldiers who have needs but seek no resources to help cope with them. It may simply be that this group and their families have good coping and problem-solving skills; however, it may also be that they do not realize how a problem could be addressed or how available resources could help them. Future research could delve more deeply into these soldiers’ reactions and attitudes toward their problems and finding solutions.

The survey results also raise questions about soldiers’ experiences during the process of accessing multiple resources, which appeared to be a common occurrence. For example, are soldiers simultaneously engaging multiple resources because their problem is a complicated one? Or do they initially contact a number of resources sequentially in search of the appropriate resource? Or do they move from resource to resource because of dissatisfaction with each? Additional information on intensity of resource use and reasons for seeking multiple resources would be useful, as would additional analysis of existing data at the garrison level. Qualitative data collection may help shed light on the particulars with regard to these findings, as well as how best to apply findings at the local garrison level.

To improve support to soldiers and their families, we recommend the Army consider the following:

- **In existing leadership training, discuss negative soldier perceptions regarding the chain of command and the potential consequences of those perceptions.** Such training should highlight that it is better for the Army if soldiers feel comfortable coming to leadership with problems than for problems to remain hidden and potentially worsen or interfere with readiness. This training could also ensure that leaders themselves are fully aware of where to refer soldiers for what types of problems so that their own lack of awareness or discomfort with sensitive issues does not lead to an implicit or explicit message to subordinates that they do not want to be approached.
- **Seek additional ways to make soldiers and those who assist them more aware of available resources and how to access them.** Our findings suggest that there are persistent and consistent problems with awareness of the resources available to soldiers and/or how best to navigate the system to obtain those resources. Social marketing or service promotion campaigns that reach soldiers through the communication channels they say they prefer—email announcements from unit leaders and using social media—may be a fruitful avenue for increasing awareness of existing services.
- **Explore ways to improve user navigation of resources and coordination among resources to improve efficiency.** Many respondents reported seeking multiple resources. It may be possible to leverage existing program staff or enhance existing program description information to better assist users as they seek out and connect with military services to help meet their needs.
- **Increase capacity for childcare, professional counseling, and medical care.** Although long wait times to use CYA and military treatment facilities are not new issues, our survey results indicate that they persist. Wait times for counselors and doctors provided by the military are particularly troubling in light of the numbers of soldiers who indicated needs for counseling and emotional support. While not viable for all issues, extending partnerships with the civilian health care system does represent one possible solution, although sufficient availability of behavioral health and specialty care in the community would need to be examined. Well-known models for partnering with the civilian health care system already exist, such as the Fort Drum Military-Civilian Regional Healthcare Partnership and Military OneSource referrals to community providers. These types of partnerships can take a long time to develop and depend on the local community and installation characteristics, but the Army does have a Privatization and Partnerships Division at the Assistant Chief of Staff for Installation Management (ACSIM) to assist partnership efforts.

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Introduction

We have a fundamental obligation to take care of Soldiers, Civilians and Families. . . . fiscal reality requires us to eliminate redundant or poorly performing initiatives, allowing us to sustain those that have proven most beneficial to Soldiers and Families.

—Secretary of the Army John M. McHugh (2013)

[We must] Uphold the Army's responsibility to provide benefits and high-quality services such as MWR [Morale, Welfare and Recreation], education assistance, exchanges, housing, dependent schools, commissaries, and child and youth programs that are components of a professional force dedicated to the Army for the long term.

—Chief of Staff of the Army General Raymond T. Odierno (2014)

The quality of life of Soldiers and their families are critically important as the Army transitions to a smaller force.

—Sergeant Major of the Army Raymond F. Chandler (Ferdinando, 2014)

U.S. military personnel and their families face a variety of stresses related to features of military life, such as frequent moves and deployments generated by more than a decade of combat operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. Unsolved problems among soldiers and their families can grow into time-consuming distractions for them, for units, and for commanders. Unmet needs can also negatively affect soldier and family well-being, as well as individual, family, and unit morale, retention, and readiness.

The Army provides an array of quality-of-life support services for soldiers and their families. However, a recent RAND Arroyo Center study found that the Army lacks a holistic assessment of the types of challenges that soldiers face and what they need to deal with those challenges (Sims et al., 2013). Traditionally, Department of the Army evaluations have focused on existing on-post programs rather than the needs of soldiers and their families, and numerous surveys ask program-centric questions about soldier satisfaction with services. Such surveys include the following:

- Sample Survey of Military Personnel
- Survey of Army Families VI
- 2013 Army Community Service Needs Survey
- Army Leisure Needs Survey
- Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) Status of Forces Survey of Active Duty
- DMDC's Survey of Active Duty Spouses
- DMDC's Military Family Life Survey
- 2012 Workplace and Gender Relations Survey
- 2011 Department of Defense (DoD) Health Related Behaviors Survey
- DMDC's 2013 Living Patterns Survey.

These surveys provide important insights of value to the Army. However, the limitations of a program-centric approach are that they only tell part of the story. Soldiers who are satisfied with a program may still have unmet needs, and soldiers who are dissatisfied with a program could have their needs met by other resources, such as those available in the local community or through their own personal networks.

Ultimately, modification of the benefits package offered to soldiers and their families can be seen as implementation of an organizational change effort. One key suggestion supported by the literature on organizational change (e.g., Kotter, 1995; Fernandez and Rainey, 2006) is to convince stakeholders of both the necessity of and possibility for change: In this case, soldiers are a key stakeholder in the decision, and uncovering their priorities is a key first step in determining a course of action.

Thus, additional research—in particular, more-precise information about the problems that soldiers and families face and what assistance they need to address those problems—is required to discern whether military programs are providing a sound return on investment by meeting the needs of soldiers and families efficiently. Furthermore, the Army needs to understand the extent to which soldiers and spouses who are not relying on Army resources for support find other ways to resolve their problems and whether their problems continue to proliferate. Systematic study of soldier and family needs, priorities, help-seeking behaviors, and perceptions of barriers to tapping into Army and non-Army resources is needed to inform decisionmaking about Army programs and support services on Army installations. Such research can complement existing Army studies and lead to solutions that are more effective and cost-efficient, such as public-public or public-private partnerships with off-post service providers.

Study Objectives

The goal of this study was to conduct a survey of soldiers and use it to identify the full spectrum of challenges that soldiers and their families face, along with the implica-

tions of how the management of those challenges unfolded. This objective included understanding how soldiers prioritize their challenges, the types of help they needed to address them, their experiences with any resources they contacted for assistance, and ultimately whether the needs were met. This effort is consistent with the Army's objective of supporting the overall well-being of soldiers as expressed in the Total Army Strong initiative (the successor of the Army Family Covenant), focused on providing quality-of-life programs for soldiers and their families (U.S. Department of the Army, 2014). The objective of this research also echoes the approach of the Ready and Resilient campaign, which strives to coordinate Army resources for well-being and to foster a culture where addressing individuals' problems and needs is understood as a pathway to stronger soldiers, families, and units (U.S. Department of the Army, 2016). Finally, data collected in meeting these objectives will support consideration of what programs and resources are most essential.

Analytical Approach

This study took advantage of the framework and methodology previously developed for a DoD comprehensive service member needs assessment survey (Miller et al., 2011b) to gain critically needed insights into potential gaps and redundancies in services and how the Army can best address them. Our adaptation of this framework is shown in Figure 1.1 and illustrates the primary focus of attention on the experiences of soldiers and their families, not programs. It also encompasses a more holistic picture of the types of problems and needs for help of soldiers and their families. This approach stands in contrast to a strategy that would go much more in depth into specific areas (such as well-being problems and the need for professional counseling) but that would omit other potentially important domains that could trump or exacerbate the problems and needs being measured.

In essence, we followed soldiers through the process they take for coping with the challenges they face. The approach illustrated in Figure 1.1 first places the needs of soldiers and their families in the context of the installation environment and takes into

Figure 1.1
Framework for Assessing the Needs of Soldiers and Their Families

SOURCE: Adapted from Miller et al., 2011b.

RAND RR1983-1.1

account personnel and family demographic and military service characteristics. Conceptually, these would be expected to affect what types of problems soldiers and families might have, as well as what resources they might be able to access to resolve them. From that context, our approach assesses a wide range of types of problems (household, financial, legal, family, relationship, physical and mental health, and other problems) and discovers what types of help, if any, are needed to address them (including information, advice, an advocate, social support, and others). That is, we asked about the general types of assistance that soldiers might anticipate would be useful to resolve their problems, rather than specific resources. Note, also, that for soldiers experiencing problems, it is possible that these problems do not rise to a level of severity such that they need any assistance to resolve.

After asking respondents to indicate their most pressing problems and types of help needed, this approach then follows up by asking about their experiences seeking assistance from DoD and non-DoD resources, focusing on what deterred soldiers from using the different options available to them and whether the assistance sought actually helped meet individual or family needs. Finally, this framework includes measures that enable an assessment of whether soldiers' experiences are associated with such outcomes as their satisfaction with the quality of military life and intentions to stay in the armed forces.

An example of the way in which common challenging life experiences map onto this framework within the survey instrument would be a soldier respondent who indicates that the most pressing issue experienced in the past year was communication challenges with coworkers and superiors, an *issue* within the Military Practices and Culture *problem domain*. The soldier may have felt that the *type of help needed* was advice from someone who had been in the same situation before. The soldier may have turned to a military *resource*, such as other unit members not in the chain of command. The soldier may have experienced barriers in using this or other resources, such as fears of stigma or difficulty getting information about an available resource. Resources contacted, like another unit member, may or may not have been *effective*—that is, helpful—in meeting the need for advice. The soldier's experience at each step of this framework—whether the soldier had problems, had needs associated with those problems, used resources to address those needs, and whether those needs were met—is hypothesized to affect the soldier's *attitudes* toward the Army.

The survey used in this study solicited the perspective of soldiers about their own welfare and that of their families. Although, ideally, we would have sought the perspectives of Army spouses directly, resource constraints and the additional challenge of reaching that population meant that a survey of spouses was beyond our scope.

Organization of the Report

In Chapter Two, we provide an overview of the survey instrument, including how it was adapted from its use in Miller et al. (2011b) for addressing comprehensive service member needs assessment to our use in addressing specific needs and concerns of soldiers. We describe the conceptual model of how soldiers encounter and seek help with personal challenges, such as marital and financial problems. In the context of the survey items, we describe the range of programs that the Army currently has in place to support soldiers. In Chapters Three, Four, and Five, we detail the results from the survey itself, including use of resources to address needs and needs that are going unmet. In Chapter Six, we offer conclusions and recommendations for the Army about the needs and service utilization of soldiers, and discuss concrete ways in which the results of this individual needs assessment might be used in program planning. Appendix A contains the survey instrument, and Appendix B provides technical details about the sample.

Survey Content and Method

This chapter provides an overview of our survey content and procedures.¹ It begins with a description of the survey instrument, including highlights from the scientific literature illustrating the relevance of each section of the study to service member needs. Next, it describes the sampling procedure through which soldiers were invited to participate in the survey. The last section describes the survey administration. The survey (and sampling plan) operates on the principle that soldiers' and families' needs, and how they choose to address them, differ based on personal context—that is, whether a soldier is married and has dependent children, how urban his or her duty location is and hence how many off-post resources are likely to be available, and other factors, such as how far they live from post.

Survey Instrument

The survey instrument was adapted a comprehensive service member needs assessment the RAND Corporation previously developed for DoD (Miller et al., 2011b). The progression of the survey parallels the analytic framework; respondents are asked about problems they have faced, needs for help stemming from these problems, resources they have contacted for help, and quality of their experience using resources. The diagram below further simplifies this question flow, which was represented in Figure 1.1:

Problems → needs → use of resources → outcomes.

To tailor the survey to the Army setting, we first reviewed its content and made minor changes. The review included consulting the study's sponsors, Army officers serving as RAND Arroyo Center Fellows, scientific studies published since the previous survey was developed, and feedback gathered through pilot testing with soldiers. We modified the original instrument to ensure that the challenges and services offered as response categories in the survey both reflected the types of problems faced

¹ The research plan was reviewed and approved by the research sponsors; RAND's institutional review board, the Human Subjects Protection Committee; the Army Human Research Protections Office; and was licensed by the Army Research Institute for Behavioral and Social Sciences.

by soldiers and included the type of programs or supports provided by the Army. The problem domains generated by prior work were retained, but some of the lists of individual issues within each problem domain were expanded. For example, “Job Security/Preparation to Transition” was added to the area of Financial or Legal Problems to reflect the recent history and current plans for downsizing the Army. Other changes were made to reflect the focus on the Army, rather than on DoD overall. For example, “Army OneSource” replaced “Military OneSource” in the resources accessed listing as the Army-branded help web page. The resulting survey instrument used in this study is included in Appendix A. Although printed in this document as a paper survey, the survey was fielded exclusively online to facilitate the branching and tailoring to a given soldier’s personal experience possible only by web administration.

Before entering the survey, soldiers were given information on the process, including privacy, confidentiality, and the voluntary nature of participation, and they were asked to consent to the terms. Next, the survey asked how soldiers heard about it and how many requests they had received in the past year to participate in other research. Several questions followed to confirm eligibility for the survey (e.g., active component member of the Army, 18 years or older) and to collect information on family status (marital status, age, and residence of dependents). Family status questions were used to determine whether respondents would receive questions on spouse and child well-being.

Problem Domains and Issues

In the next module of the survey, respondents were shown a list of issues related to an overarching category, which we refer to as a *problem domain*. The problem domains in the order they appear on the survey are as listed below:

- Military Practices and Culture
- Work/Life Balance
- Household Management
- Financial or Legal Problems
- Health Care System Problems
- Relationship Problems
- Child Well-Being
- Problems with Your Own Well-Being (i.e., Soldier’s Own Well-Being)
- Spouse’s Well-Being.

These domains were previously established in the literature reviews, subject-matter expert review, and focus groups and survey testing with Army and Marine Corps members and spouses (Miller et al., 2011b), and our review affirmed these domains as relevant, although we revised some specific items within them. In this section, we provide examples of how these domain items have been relevant in recent or classic stud-

ies, but a historical and comprehensive review of every item falls beyond the scope of this report. The problems in these domains are not necessarily discrete. As examples, financial problems can cause problems with Household Management, Work/Life Balance problems can lead to Relationship Problems, and problems with a Soldier's Own Well-Being could spill over into the well-being of other family members. (For an in-depth discussion of how problems can interplay with one another, as well as within broader military, familial, and societal contexts, see Segal, Lane, and Fisher, 2015; note that their model offers a more holistic perspective that takes into account complexities over the life course.) The notional model described herein takes a more focused view, in that it asks soldiers to focus on problems faced most recently (i.e., in the past year).

Each problem domain offered between five and 13 specific issues that soldiers could indicate they had experienced in the past year. At the end of each list of issues, there was an option to select an "other problem related to [problem domain]" response, with a text box to enter a description of the issue. If a soldier did not experience any issues in a problem domain, there was also a response option for "I did not experience any of the above problems" at the end of each list. This option allowed us to distinguish between those who did not have a problem on the list from those who may have simply skipped the question (and left all of the problem items unchecked). The full lists of issues within each problem domain appear in Appendix A, but we describe the problem domains generally and provide some example issues here.

Military Practices and Culture

The Military Practices and Culture domain encompasses nine general types of issues in the Army environment that a soldier might experience trying to adjust to and succeed personally and professionally in. Even though soldiers learn essential information in entry-level training (such as the rank structure, common terminology, and uniform policy), the jargon, acronyms, policies, programs, job- and organizational-specific elements are so numerous and subject to change that soldiers may find mastering them a daunting and confusing undertaking. While onboarding is a common issue that organizations and their employees confront and try to manage efficiently (Bauer et al., 2007), uniformed cultures, including the Army, have many unique aspects (Soeters, 2000) that require translation and context (e.g., Reger et al., 2008).

Some of the survey items in this domain are more salient for newcomers, including "adjusting to military language, organization, and culture" and "figuring out how to use 'the system'—where to go, with whom to talk to get help or information." The latter, however, may be a hurdle not just for newcomers, particularly when there appear to be multiple resources targeting overlapping issues (e.g., families, counseling). Other items in the survey represent challenges not necessarily tied to tenure, such as "not being able to stay at/go to the military installation you prefer" and "lack of or incorrect information about deployment." The response options in the survey were designed to be specific so that findings could support a course of action (e.g., program

improvement, targeted intervention). Thus, we did not ask very generally about “poor leadership”; rather, we focused on specific problems such as “poor communication with coworkers or superiors.”

Work/Life Balance

Work/Life Balance refers to the ability to balance accomplishing the requirements of serving in the Army with the ability to care for oneself and one's family. The military is what sociologists characterize as a “greedy institution” in terms of its demands on members' time, energy, loyalty, and commitments (Segal, 1986). Examples of items in this domain include soldiers having problems finding time for sleep, a healthy diet, and physical exercise, or not having enough leave time before or after a deployment or temporary duty away from home. Poor diet, lack of sleep, and lack of exercise can all be a sign of significant stressors and a reaction to them, can be detrimental to resilience, mental health, and physical health, and can degrade cognitive functioning, work performance, and operational readiness (Flórez, Shih, and Martin, 2014; Robson, 2014; Troxel et al., 2015).

The 2011 DoD *Health Related Behaviors Survey of Active Duty Military* included a number of items in this domain (DoD, 2013). The most commonly reported stresses of military life were being away from friends and family and changes in work load (42 percent each). Obesity rates were highest in the Army (16 percent) and Navy (15 percent) and lowest in the Marine Corps (5 percent), yet soldiers were like Marines in self-reporting the highest rates of physical activity (80 percent and 78 percent, respectively) and the most vigorous rates (46 percent each). Service members reported eating healthy foods like fruits and vegetables at lower than recommended nutritional standards, but also frequently consuming snack foods, sweets, sugary drinks, and caffeine. Only 41 percent reported getting seven to eight hours of sleep a night. A more recent survey of 1,957 deployable military personnel found “a high prevalence of insufficient sleep duration, poor sleep quality, daytime sleepiness, fatigue, and nightmares” and that 18 percent of the sample used sleep medications whose side effects may have implications for safety and military effectiveness (Troxel et al., 2015).

For married soldiers, Work/Life Balance challenges may also include intrusions into spouses' educational opportunities and careers, which can be disrupted by such features of military life as frequent permanent change of station (PCS) moves, international assignments, deployments and other geographic separations, and long work hours, or need to care for wounded spouses (Segal, 1986; Sticha et al., 1999; Drummet, Coleman, and Cable, 2003; Booth, Segal, and Bell, 2007; Castaneda and Harrell, 2008; Cooney, De Angelis, and Segal, 2011; DMDC, 2013; Blue Star Families, 2014; Ramchand et al., 2014; Friedman, Miller, and Evans, 2015; Defense Manpower Data Center and U.S. Department of Defense, Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy, 2015).

Household Management

Some issues that can be stressors and distract from military duties are related to Household Management, which refers to maintaining a car, home, yard, and personal property, all while balancing the household budget. Military life can present particular challenges, including those related to frequent moves (e.g., finding a new home, moving belongings, move-related damage) and to deployments (e.g., putting belongings in storage for long tours, trying to help spouses manage home and auto problems from afar) (Drummet, Coleman, and Cable, 2003; Castaneda and Harrell, 2008; Miller et al., 2011b; Wadsworth and Southwell, 2011). Moreover, soldiers and families living in military housing can face disciplinary action if they do not tend to their houses and lawns or follow other post regulations (Booth, Segal, and Bell, 2007).

Financial or Legal Problems

Soldier and family financial problems include debt, bankruptcy or foreclosure, and pay issues (e.g., access to pay, errors). U.S. military pay and benefits have been gradually increasing in the 21st century; personnel are relatively well paid compared with civilians who have similar levels of education (Hosek and Wadsworth, 2013). Yet some—particularly junior enlisted personnel—report financial distress, and 5,000 qualified for food stamps in 2012 (Hosek and Wadsworth, 2013). Between 2002 and 2010, the proportion of service members reporting serious financial problems (“tough to make ends meet” or “in over their heads”) or one or more problems paying bills declined, but the junior enlisted personnel most likely to report such problems were those in the Army (DoD, 2012). Financial problems can have implications for other aspects of service members’ lives. For example, one study found that self-reported well-being was lower among soldiers with higher credit card debts and lower perceptions of net worth (Bell et al., 2014). Problems with spouse employment (captured in the Work/Life Balance domain) can also lead to family financial challenges (Miller et al., 2011a; Blue Star Families, 2014), although those may be offset by the relatively higher pay that military personnel earn compared with their civilian counterparts (Hosek and Wadsworth, 2013).

Legal problems include child custody, divorce, and soldiers facing prosecution under Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) or other disciplinary actions. Legal problems can also be associated with poor well-being. One review of suicides of Army soldiers from 2004 to 2009 noted that about 31 percent had a history of legal problems, and that “Article 15s”² and civil legal problems were the most common (Black et al., 2011).

² “Article 15s” are nonjudicial punishments administered by the commanding officer for less serious violations of the UCMJ (Joint Service Committee on Military Justice, 2012).

Health Care System Problems

This domain addressed problems with the health care system, such as difficulty understanding military health benefits (for soldiers themselves or for their dependents), problems handling military health insurance claims, and hurdles to getting access to military health care (e.g., waiting time for an appointment, distance to treatment facility, availability of needed services, hours and days open). Although quality of health care at military treatment facilities is on par with commercial health care (Military Health System, 2014), past research on this topic has shown that problems relating to health care systems include, but are not limited to, capacity and quality (Jennings et al., 2005; Wong et al., 2015). Additionally, soldiers may have special mental and physical health care needs related to combat or training injuries, some of which may require intensive care-taking or longer-term rehabilitation or may result in chronic injuries (Tanielian and Jaycox, 2008; Bagalman, 2013; Martin et al., 2013; Institute of Medicine of the National Academies, 2014; Ramchand et al., 2014; Sims et al., 2015). Distance to a treatment facility has been associated with the use of behavioral health care, with remote members making fewer visits than nonremote service members (Brown et al., 2015).

Relationship Problems

Both unmarried and married soldiers can struggle with relationship problems. Items in this domain included trouble starting a relationship, arguments, infidelity, trouble reuniting/reconnecting after a deployment, and the end of a relationship. Some of these problems may stem from aspects of military life. Frequent moves, deployments, training exercises, and long hours can interfere with soldiers' ability to find time to establish a serious romantic relationship. Married soldiers or soldiers with children may be separated from their families because of deployments, unaccompanied tours overseas, extended field exercises, and temporary duty assignments away from home. Dual-military couples may face separation as a result of assignments at separate locations or because both deploy. A military family may also decide to separate temporarily when the soldier moves to the next assignment because of shorter duration assignments (e.g., one year at a military school), to avoid disrupting children or a spouse's education or career, or because the family is unable to sell its home (Blue Star Families, 2014). While deployments can strengthen relationships, couples can also face problems reconnecting, difficulty communicating, heightened conflict, undesirable changes in sexual behavior, and problems reintegrating the service member into new daily routines that developed while he or she was away (Knobloch and Theiss, 2012). Relationship problems have been found to be a common stressor occurring before Army soldier suicides (Nock et al., 2013).

Child Well-Being

This domain encompassed problems with childcare, schools, children's emotional or behavioral problems, and children's trouble bonding with the parent or adjusting after a move or relocation. Children in military families face unique challenges because they

typically need to adapt to PCS moves every two to three years, which disrupts their social networks, causes problems, and is particularly stressful for adolescents (Booth, Segal, and Bell, 2007; Miller et al., 2011a). Moves can affect their education as well, because schools vary in terms of their schedules, calendars, and graduation requirements, and other problems, such as record transfers, can also be disruptive (Booth, Segal, and Bell, 2007). The services offer a number of programs for childcare and child and youth activities, but spouses may attribute child-related problems to the distance between their work and the child's school and military-provided resources, and the hours those services are available (Miller et al., 2011a). Military children also may be separated from their military parent as a result of deployments, unaccompanied tours, dual-military parents being assigned to different duty stations, or their parent having very long duty days, such as those demanded of drill sergeants at basic training. Parents' stress can spill over onto their children: For example, military children's reactions to moves have been associated with parents' emotional and behavioral reactions (Booth, Segal, and Bell, 2007).

Deployments have been shown to be a factor in child well-being (see review by Bello-Utu and DeSocio, 2015). As illustrative examples, an interview study of military children ages 11–17 years old with a deployed parent found that those children had more emotional difficulties compared with national samples, and that child difficulties increased the longer a parent was deployed (Chandra et al., 2010). A study of Army adolescents found that lower stress levels during deployment were associated with a high level of participation in sports and other activities, a strong family, and a belief that America supports the war and that the deployed parent is making a difference (Wong and Gerrass, 2010).

Soldier's Own Well-Being

In this section of the survey, soldiers were able to indicate problems with their own well-being, such as physical injury or illness, loneliness or boredom, substance abuse, mood changes, and trouble sleeping. A great deal of attention has focused on soldier well-being since Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) began. In 2008, the Army's suicide rates hit a 28-year high (Kuehn, 2009). The reported suicide rate was 18.5 suicides per 100,000 (Ramchand et al., 2011). Research has demonstrated that rates of probable posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and major depressive disorder among service members and veterans who served in OEF/OIF are higher than those of the overall U.S. adult population (Hoge et al., 2004; Tanielian and Jaycox, 2008; Ramchand et al., 2010). Previous research has found that members of the military particularly likely to suffer poor mental health are enlisted, women, and unmarried (Hoge, Auchterlonie, and Milliken, 2006; Lapierre, Schwegler, and LaBauve, 2007; Martin, 2007; Smith et al., 2008; Tanielian and Jaycox, 2008; Miller et al., 2014).

This is another domain in which the DoD *2011 Health Related Behaviors Survey of Active Duty Military Personnel* is informative. Compared with members of the other services, soldiers and Marines were more likely to self-report symptoms of high post-traumatic stress (7 percent each), high anxiety (20 percent and 22 percent, respectively), and high depression (12 percent and 13 percent, respectively) (DoD, 2013). Those with these symptoms were also more likely to report heaving drinking and heavy cigarette smoking. Ten percent of active duty personnel indicated high risk-taking, 8 percent reported suicidal ideation since joining the military, 5 percent reported self-inflicted injury since joining the military, and 1 percent reported having attempted suicide. Furthermore, the highest rates of high levels of anger were among soldiers (9 percent) and Marines (10 percent). Overall, service members with more deployment experience and more combat exposure were more likely to self-report symptoms of posttraumatic stress, depression, anxiety, anger, and suicidal ideation (DoD, 2013).

Spouse's Well-Being

Married soldiers were asked to indicate whether their spouses had experienced any of the physical, behavioral, or mental well-being issues from the same list of items they had just reviewed for themselves. Research has found that military life can also take a toll on spouse well-being. One study examined medical record data for 250,626 wives of active-duty U.S. Army soldiers from 2003 to 2006, comparing wives whose soldiers were deployed to OIF or OEF in Afghanistan with wives whose husbands were not (Mansfield et al., 2010). Wives of deployed soldiers were more likely than wives of non-deployed soldiers be diagnosed with depressive disorders, sleep disorders, anxiety, acute stress reaction, and adjustment disorders. Wives whose Army husbands were deployed for more than 11 months were even more likely to have received these mental health diagnoses (Mansfield et al., 2010).

Spouse well-being has also been linked to service member deployments and support for their service member's military service. A longitudinal study of 6,412 military spouses who participated in three waves of a survey in 2010, 2011, and 2012 found that service member deployments are linked with increased spouse stress and depressive/anxiety symptoms, and that spouses with more stress and depressive/anxiety symptoms have lower military satisfaction (Defense Manpower Data Center and U.S. Department of Defense, Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy, 2015). Another survey of 346 Army spouses living with soldiers assigned to installations in Europe found that a spouse's experience of deployment separations (whether it was stressful, put a strain on the family, hurt the stability of the marriage, caused worry about the effect on the children) was predictive of his or her physical and psychological well-being, marital satisfaction, and satisfaction with Army life (Burrell et al., 2006). Yet another small survey of Army spouses, this time 367 spouses in the United States whose soldiers were deployed, found higher levels of positivity and lower levels of stress and depressive symptoms among commis-

sioned officers' wives and those with more deployment experience (Faulk et al., 2012). A survey of 34,381 Air Force active duty personnel found that "unit relationship quality, leadership effectiveness, and tangible social support from community members—were positively and significantly related to members' reports of spousal ability to adjust to Air Force family demands" (Spera, 2009). This survey domain enables us to explore factors related to spouse well-being problems, their prominence (at least in terms of soldiers' perceptions), and how or whether they are resolved.

Other Problems

The problem domains and lists of issues within each domain were intended to be holistic and capture the most common types of problems. However, we wanted to be certain that soldiers had the opportunity to report the problems that mattered to them most, even if those problems were not listed in the survey. Respondents had opportunities to add to the types of problems listed on the survey in two places. First, there was an option to write in to describe "other" issues within any given problem domain (e.g., to describe a financial or legal issue that they had that was not listed). In addition, once soldiers had completed the inventory of issues for all the domains listed above, they could select and describe (using an open-ended text box) any other type of problem they had experienced in the past year that they had not seen in the survey. As with the problem domains already listed in the survey, soldiers were able to nominate these "other" problem domains as their most significant problems and describe needs that emerged from those problems.

Needs Associated with Top-Two Problem Domains

In the next section of the survey, respondents were shown a list of the domains in which they had selected having any problems and were asked to select the two problem domains that reflected "the most significant types of problems you've dealt with." The online survey was programmed to remind them which specific issues in each of those domains that they had indicated they had experienced. This approach was taken for two reasons. First, we sought to avoid treating all problems as though they might have equal significance to soldiers and their families.

Not every problem that a service member or family member faces . . . rises to the level of creating a need. Military personnel and their families handle some problems by themselves in the course of normal life, but other problems become so great that the service member or family needs help in addressing them (Miller et al., 2011b).

Second, narrowing the focus of the survey reduced participant burden in subsequent questions about needs and resource utilization for each of their two top problems.

Accordingly, relating to those top-two problem domains, soldiers were asked to indicate what types of help, if any, they needed in dealing with the specific problems

in that domain. Respondents could select as many as they felt were applicable. Respondents who did not need any help were also able to indicate that by selecting: "I had no need for assistance in this area."

The list of types of help was the same for all problem domains and included the following options:

- general information: for example, about rules or policies, or about what's available and how to access it
- specific information: for example, about training or deployment schedules, or how spouses can reach deployed troops
- an advocate: someone to try to get help for you
- advice or education: people with experience to recommend the best solution for someone in your situation
- emotional or social support
- professional counseling
- a helping hand: loans, donations, services to help out with some of your responsibilities
- activities: for fitness, recreation, stress relief, family bonding
- other needs that don't fit into the categories above (please specify).

As with their potential problems, respondents were asked to prioritize the types of help needed if they listed more than two for each top problem. That is, for each problem domain in which they had a need, they were asked to indicate their top two types of help needed for that particular problem out of all the needs they had previously indicated.

Military and Nonmilitary Ways of Meeting Needs

Once soldiers had identified that one or more of their problems had risen to the level of creating a need for assistance, the survey asked them whether they sought help and from where. For each combination of top-ranked problem domain and need, respondents were asked about what military and nonmilitary contacts or resources they used as a way of meeting the need, including programs, services, individuals, or groups.

Military contacts and resources included the following:

The Family Readiness Group (FRG), which is an Army commander's program designed "to provide activities and support that encourage self-sufficiency among its members by providing information, referral assistance, and mutual support" (Army Regulation [AR] 608-1, 2013, p. 16). FRGs can raise commanders' awareness about issues that their unit's families are facing, as well as provide family members with important information and help facilitate communication among families. The resource may be considered most directly relevant to spouses, but may be among an array of resources that soldiers use to solve challenges faced by their families.

“Unit members not in the chain of command” appeared on the survey separate from **the chain of command** to allow distinction between soldiers relying upon peers for help and those turning to authority figures. Previous research exploring the effect of deployments on service members found that “service members tended to rely on each other for support when dealing with difficult or stressful situations, because such support was the most helpful, direct, and appealing counseling option open to them.” (Hosek, Kavanagh, and Miller, 2006). Other research found that a protective factor against suicidal ideation among postdeployment combat soldiers is the degree to which unit members “cooperate with each other, know they can depend on each other, and stand up for each other” (Mitchell et al., 2012).

Installation MWR programs, services, and facilities offer a diverse array of opportunities that can promote mental and physical well-being, stress-relief, family and unit bonding, social networks, quality of life, and support the recruitment and retention of quality soldiers. These fall into three categories. “Mission Sustaining Programs” are considered essential to sustaining readiness and include gyms, field houses, pools for aquatic training, and other physical fitness centers; libraries; movie theaters; undeveloped natural areas, nature and fitness trails, and nature centers; parks, game fields and playgrounds; picnic areas and barbecue pits; individual, intramural, and unit sports; and the Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers program designed to ensure that the needs of single soldiers are not overlooked (AR 215–1, 2010). “Community Support Programs” help provide a sense of the military installation as a hometown and include such hobby activities as arts and crafts and automotive; cable/community TV; Child, Youth and School Services; event tickets; performing arts entertainment; small bowling centers; recreational swimming pools; sports above the intramural level; and outdoor recreation, such as beach facilities, garden plots, high-adventure activity areas, hunting and fishing areas, stables, and small campgrounds (AR 215–1, 2010). “Revenue Generating Programs” are social and recreational programs that generate enough income to cover most of their operating expenses and include water theme parks; bingo; golf courses; skating rinks; arcades; military clubs; cabins, cottages, and cabanas; rod and gun activities/skeet and trap; sport parachuting; large recreational vehicle campgrounds; and much more (AR 215–1, 2010).

The **Army Community Service** (ACS) center provides a wide range of support programs and services, including predeployment, deployment, and postdeployment assistance to military families; support to FRGs, Emergency Family Assistance; Family Advocacy Program (which addresses spouse abuse and child abuse and neglect); Exceptional Family Member Program (for soldiers who have family members with special needs); relocation counseling; overseas assignment orientation; language and cultural support to foreign-born spouses; job search and career counseling; financial counseling and debt liquidation assistance; and volunteer programs (AR 608-1, 2013).

Although **Child and Youth Services** (CYS) actually falls under MWR, we listed this resource separately among military resources because of the potentially central role

it could play for soldiers with minor dependents. Services include on-post childcare (child development services, school-age services) and youth services for middle school and teenage children (AR 215–1, 2010).

Army OneSource and other military Internet resources were included as military contacts that soldiers and families might use for assistance in meeting their needs. Army OneSource provides service-specific information linking soldiers and family members to resources such as those listed above. Other military Internet resources could include an installation or unit home page or Facebook page or other social networking site. It could also include Military OneSource, a website that can link them to a wide array of resources, including immediate crisis counseling at the 24/7/365 call center and referrals to free, confidential, nonmedical counseling sessions in their local community.

Other support services are embedded within units and garrisons. Soldiers and family members may turn to **military chaplains or members of a religious or spiritual group on their installations** for helping addressing their needs. Or they may contact a **counselor or doctor provided by the military** who may or may not themselves be a service member. The Army officer corps includes military physicians, clinical psychologists, psychiatrists, and social workers. Military and Family Life Counselors, however, are civilian licensed professional counselors who provide short-term nonmedical counseling to help service members and their families cope with life stressors. Additionally, as noted, the military can provide access to civilian counselors through Army OneSource.

Military relief or aid societies can also help soldiers and families in need. **Army Emergency Relief** provides no-interest loans and grants to Army families in financial need. In 2013, \$74 million in assistance was provided to 54,000 soldiers and their families (Army Emergency Relief, 2013). The most common uses of these funds are for housing (such as rent deposits, and mortgage and rent assistance) at \$22 million, vehicles (including vehicle repair) at \$16.4 million, and travel expenses (such as emergency travel or a loan to cover expenses while a soldier waits for travel claim reimbursement) at \$11.7 million (Army Emergency Relief, 2013).

Respondents were also offered the option to select “Other military contacts,” with a write-in option to describe other resources accessed as a way of meeting needs.

Nonmilitary contacts and resources were also included in the survey. Military resources are not the only options available to service members and their families. Approximately two-thirds of military families do not live on military installations (DoD, 2013) and might find off-post services more convenient. Those concerned about a potential stigma or career consequences to using some services, such as counseling or substance abuse treatment, may prefer nonmilitary options. Other reasons for using nonmilitary options might include the ability of such programs to supplement military ones or to fill a gap, such as providing specific religious guidance, recreational activities, or childcare options that are not available on post. We framed the nonmilitary contacts to be roughly comparable to the categorization of the military resources already described.

Nonmilitary contacts included resources and services such as **government or community resources** for family services (e.g., Women, Infants, and Children Program [WIC], public library); **private clubs, organizations, or recreation or fitness centers**; **private off-post childcare**; **religious or spiritual group or leaders**; **private doctor or counselor**; and **personal network (family, friends)**. This list was also where we located **Internet resources**, such as informational pages, search engines, and social networking sites. Respondents were also offered the option to select “Other nonmilitary contacts,” with a write-in option to describe other resources accessed as a way of meeting needs.

The last option in the list was “I didn’t contact anyone for help with this need.” By checking this item, soldiers confirmed that the items above were all unchecked because they did not contact anyone and not because they had accidentally or intentionally not responded to the question.

Reasons Resources Not Used

For nearly every contact or resource that respondents did *not* report using for their top-ranked problem domains and needs, they were asked to select reasons for not using the service or resource. Response options were:

- not applicable for my needs
- other things met my needs
- difficult to find information about them/never heard of them
- inconvenient location or access
- might hurt my career or reputation to use them
- not welcoming/unfriendly
- long wait list/response time
- poor reputation or service.

The exception, as we will discuss further, was that respondents were not asked this question regarding nonuse of their personal networks as a resource.

Problems Encountered with Resources Used

Respondents were then shown the list of resources that they reported using for their top-ranked problem domains and needs, with the exception of “personal networks.” For each of these displayed resources, they were asked to indicate whether they experienced any of the following problems while accessing the resource:

- difficulty finding information about them
- inconvenient location or access
- might hurt my career or reputation to use them
- not welcoming/unfriendly
- long wait list/response time
- poor reputation or service.

Note that the list of reasons here is identical to the list of reasons that resources were not used, with the exceptions being that “not applicable” or “other things met my needs” were not available options, and “never heard of them” was removed from the option “difficult to find information about them.”

Characteristics Related to Use of Personal Networks

Friends and family can be an important resource to meet needs for information, advice, an advocate, activities, and emotional or social support, although they are not likely to be equally available or appealing to all soldiers. In the 2011 DoD health behaviors survey, after thinking of a plan to solve a problem (86 percent) the most commonly identified strategy for coping with stress was talking to a friend or family member (72 percent) (DoD, 2013). But turning to one's friends and family for help meeting needs differs fundamentally from turning to an institutional resource. Therefore, the survey treated these resources differently by not asking if they had a long wait list or whether it might hurt their career or reputation to use them.

Social support can be emotional, informational (e.g., sharing knowledge about other local resources), and instrumental (e.g., providing a loan or emergency baby-sitting). Although researchers have developed a variety of social support scales for different populations and settings, there is widespread agreement that social support is a resilience resource that can enhance an individual's ability to adapt to or cope with life stressors, including traumatic events, and can even facilitate posttraumatic growth (Cacioppo, Reis, and Zautra, 2011; Harms et al., 2013; McGene, 2013; Meadows, Miller, and Robson, 2015). Meta-analyses show that lack of social support during and after a trauma can increase the risk of developing PTSD (Brewin, Andrews, and Valentin, 2000; Ozer et al., 2008). Social resilience also is one of the components of the Army's Comprehensive Soldier Fitness Program, with resilience resources in this domain including trust, connectedness to others, expressing social emotions and interdependence in addressing social problems (Cacioppo, Reis, and Zautra, 2011).

Consequently, survey respondents in this study were also asked to select statements that described their perceived social support from their personal networks (i.e., family and friends). The checklist of items was tailored to this population and contained items similar to previous social support scales. It contained the following:

- I have friends or family members who make an effort to help me with my problems and needs.
- People in my personal networks do not have the ability or resources to help me.
- Most or all of my friends and family live too far away from me.
- There is at least one person I can always count on to be there for me.
- I do not have many close relationships.
- I don't like to reveal my problems or needs to my friends and family.

- People in my personal networks have a good understanding of what military life is like.
- I connect to them via social media.

Perceived Effectiveness of Resources in Meeting Needs

For each resource that respondents reported using, they were asked how well that resource helped to meet their needs. Responses were on a five-point scale (very well, well, all right, not very well, not at all). This is a critical question, because even if a resource is free or low cost, easy to access, welcoming, and stigma-free to use, the ultimate goal is to meet soldier and family needs.

Projected Impact of Loss of Resources

For the list of military resources and support programs (e.g., Army FRG, chain of command, treatment or counseling), respondents were asked to imagine what they would experience if that program were no longer available to help them. Soldiers may or may not be able to predict the actual impact accurately, because they may not have complete information about the capacity of these resources, and their needs could change in the future. However, this approach helps us understand the perceived value of these resources. The four response options were “Little to no impact on me or my family,” “Some impact on me or my family,” “Serious impact on me or my family,” and “I don’t know whether there would be any impact.” These questions about projected impact of loss of resources were asked only of respondents who reported problems and needs and who contacted resources for help meeting those needs.

Additional Demographic and Military Service Characteristics

The final section of the survey asked respondents about military experience (years of active duty, rank, deployment history), demographic information (age, sex, education, race, ethnicity, citizenship status, English as a second language, housing), and satisfaction with housing. The survey concluded with questions surrounding attitudes about military service (e.g., satisfaction with military way of life) that are common in surveys of military personnel (see, for example, DoD’s *Status of Forces* surveys [DMDC, 2012a, 2012b]) as well as other attitude constructs that are less frequently used with the military, such as perceived organizational support.

We included some single-item measures, as well as some item composites, to measure attitudes about the Army. Our single items included one on retention intentions from the perspective of the soldier and one on perceived retention intentions from the spouse (i.e., spouse support of remaining in the Army). Meta-analytically, retention intentions—and, more broadly, measures of commitment—are some of the most powerful predictors available of actual retention behavior (Hom and Griffeth, 1995; Griffeth, Hom, and Gaertner, 2000). Spousal support of retention has also been demonstrated as a key factor affecting actual military retention (e.g., Burnam et al., 1992; Segal and

Harris, 1993). Although not specifically included in the doctrinal definition of readiness as described unit reporting requirements for readiness (i.e., AR 220-1, 2010), given the training investments the Army makes in its personnel, those who leave at or before the end of their term of service are expensive to replace and represent a deficit in readiness, as do those who are mentally unengaged in the mission owing to distractions posed by challenges faced by their families. Moreover, the Army's Retention Program (AR 601-280, 2011) does state that its goals include reenlistment of qualified soldiers in order to support both end-state and readiness requirements, hence drawing a direct tie between retention and readiness.

In terms of composites, we drew from the research literature. Specifically, Pittman, Kerpelman, and McFadyen (2004), used available survey items common in military surveys to create several attitudinal constructs, including an index of external adaptation. External adaptation is conceptualized as an index of how well the family fits with the demands made upon it by the Army, which we adapted for inclusion. Within that construct was a subset composite tapping satisfaction with the military way of life.

We also included a measure of perceived organizational support. Work-life conflict is of growing concern in the larger literature for managers (as well as employees—e.g., Allen, 2012). Sachau et al. (2012) examined this issue and developed a measure of perceived organizational support to reflect the general belief of employees that their employer, at the level of the organization, values them and cares about their well-being, which has in turn been linked to such important outcomes as organizational commitment (see Kurtessis et al.'s 2015 review of this literature). Sachau and colleagues (2012) developed a measure of perceived organizational support for their study of military law enforcement personnel, drawing largely from earlier works. We, in turn, adapted their measure for use with the Army. Both composites range from 1 to 5, with higher scores reflecting more of a given quantity.

Sampling of Participants

We wanted to obtain responses from a representative sample of active component Army soldiers stationed within the continental United States (CONUS) in great enough numbers to allow for statistically valid comparisons between prespecified subpopulations (e.g., rank groups, family status). The sample was restricted to E-1 to E-9 and O-1 to O-8. Excluded from the survey were warrant officers, who made up just 3 percent of the Army active component as of September 2012 (Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy, 2013). In addition, the sample was constructed to include a particular focus on installations of interest to the Army for examining concepts for installations of the future (U.S. Army Installation Management Command, 2014), as well as installations chosen due to such factors

as announced changes in tenants, so that needs of soldiers in these installations could be assessed with adequate precision.

The population of interest was active component soldiers of the above-listed ranks stationed at installations within CONUS. We chose to focus on CONUS because of the different nature of military life, tour length and assignment policies, and availability of civilian resources at installations outside the continental United States (OCONUS). For example, at many OCONUS installations, linguistic challenges may limit attempts to access off-post resources.

The sampling frame was constructed in July 2014 from Army personnel files for soldiers meeting these criteria. We used a stratified sample design to draw a representative sample of these soldiers with respect to type of post, rank, and family status (see Table 2.1). Two levels of stratification were used. The first level was defined by installation characteristics developed for U.S. Army Installation Management Command (IMCOM) called “workforce category,” which took into account whether it was a full-service garrison, the population size, the number of multimission criteria met, as well as other issues (for greater detail, see ICF International, 2012a, 2012b), as well as urbanicity (AR 215–1, 2010). We anticipated that these factors—urbanicity, complexity, and size of post—would affect what breadth of services to assist in solving problems would be available to participants in their communities as well as on post.

The second level of stratification was defined by soldier characteristics (see Table 2.2). These strata were selected because, as shown earlier in this chapter, prior research suggests that needs may differ significantly according to rank group and/or family status. Moreover, rank group reflects, in part, the level of power and authority that service members might have to try to resolve problems themselves or obtain help from others. Finally,

Table 2.1
First-Level Stratification: Description of Installation Strata

Stratification Variable	Strata
Workforce Category ^a	A: Full-service garrison with total military/civilian workforce population exceeding 20,000 that meets all seven multimission criteria. B: Full-service garrison with total military/civilian workforce population exceeding 15,000, or the garrison meets any four of the seven multimission criteria. C: Full-service garrison with total military/civilian workforce population between 6,000 and 15,000, or the garrison meets any three of the seven multimission criteria. D: Garrison (may not be full service) with less than 6,000 military/civilian workforce population, and generally not more than two of the seven multimission criteria.
Urbanicity	Urban: County of 2,500 or more people Rural: County of <2,500 people

^a ICF International, 2012a.

Table 2.2
Second-Level Stratification: Description of Soldier Strata

Stratification Variable	Strata
Rank	Junior Enlisted: E1–E4 Noncommissioned Officers: E5–E9 Junior Officers: O1–O3 Senior Officers: O4–O8
Family Status	Single Married with no children Married with children

NOTE: Appendix B provides additional detail about the survey sample.

these variables are among those of the greatest interest to the organization and are standard in military surveys, such as those named in the introduction to this report.

The initial sample contained 34,250 soldiers. In November 2014, in response to lower-than-expected survey participation, a second sample of 29,565 soldiers was drawn from the same sampling frame—active component soldiers stationed at prespecified CONUS installations—by first removing individuals who were selected in the first sample and then drawing a new sample.

After the survey was fielded, a related study developed a finer-grained categorization of urbanicity that included a “midsize city” middle category. Based on a RAND Arroyo Center analysis of the relationships between each installation and the surrounding communities using the Installation–Community GIS Analysis Tool,³ installations were classified as being in an urban area, medium city or large town, or a mostly rural area. Thus, for this analysis, communities were grouped into three types based on surrounding community population values: those that are mostly rural (low population densities and communities of less than 100,000 total population), those that are moderate in size (roughly 100,000–500,000 in total population), and larger urban areas (higher population densities and total populations greater than about 500,000). The final selection of the community group for an installation was based on assessing the location of the installation cantonment area in relationship to nearby communities, traffic and transportation patterns and congestion near the installation and communities, and whether the area was considered a commuting suburb for a nearby larger city or a separate community.⁴ The results reported here reflect that finer-grained and more sophisticated perspective.

³ The Installation–Community GIS Analysis Tool was a RAND Arroyo Center prototype tool developed to spatially display and assess key characteristics of installations and their surrounding communities.

⁴ Besides the use of the GIS tool, part of this group analysis process was subjective based on community knowledge and visits to installations and conversations with soldiers, family members, Army installation personnel, and community members from other RAND Arroyo Center studies (for example, see Lachman, Resetar, and Camm, 2016).

Procedure for Administering the Survey

The main sample of 34,250 soldiers received the initial email introducing the project and inviting participation in the survey in late September 2014. Between October and December 2014, soldiers in the main sample received eight reminder emails that restated the purpose of the survey and again provided a link to the survey instrument. The second supplemental sample of 29,565 soldiers was drawn in early December 2014 and contacted five times during December and early January 2015. Reminder emails highlighted support from Army leadership, press coverage, and the importance of the survey in the Army's ability to provide appropriate support for soldiers and their families.

In addition to mass emails distributed by administrators at Army Knowledge Online, RAND Arroyo Center sent two personalized follow-up reminder emails to approximately 1,200 soldiers who were stationed at installations with relatively small numbers of respondents. The personalized emails included the soldier's name and the name of the installation, and encouraged them to participate to have the particular needs of their installations represented in the study results. The survey itself was anonymous, with no links possible between respondents' identities and their participation in the survey.

To support good response rates, senior Army leadership endorsed the survey through several distribution networks in the weeks following the initial email to the main sample. Chief of Staff of the Army General Raymond Odierno sent an email to all soldiers four weeks after the initial invitation was sent, encouraging all who received the invitation to respond. Six weeks after the initial email, Vice Chief of Staff of the Army General Daniel Allyn endorsed the survey in a VCSA "sends" message to ask general officers, particularly garrison commanders, to encourage participation from soldiers in their formations, which was then "trickled down" to other garrison leaders. Finally, ten weeks after the initial email, Sergeant Major of the Army Raymond Chandler emailed all noncommissioned officers (NCOs) to endorse the survey and encourage them to promote the survey among their subordinates.

In addition to endorsement of Army leadership, RAND Arroyo Center coordinated with the IMCOM Marketing and Army Public Affairs staff to raise the profile of the Today's Soldier survey on installations. Press efforts included a September press release that was distributed to all installation newspapers, a short recorded announcement for installation radio stations, posters sent to sampled installations for display (likely at the Army Community Services offices), and an interview published in the independent *Army Times* newspaper in November 2014.

The survey instrument was available on a nonmilitary website maintained by RAND. The website was publicly available in that anyone who had the website address could begin the survey, although the link was only distributed by email to sampled soldiers. Because the survey was anonymous, an individual key was not required to log in. Respondents who failed to meet the screening requirements for age, membership in

the Army, and being posted at one of the installations in the sample were routed out of the survey. The survey took 19 minutes on average to complete, although the length of the survey varied based on the problems and/or resource use reported by the soldier. The survey was tested for functionality on the most common Internet browsers as well as on mobile devices (e.g., iPhone).

Response Rates and Number of Participants

The response rate for this survey was 12 percent, which provided enough respondents (7,092) to support the planned analyses in terms of statistical power requirements. This rate is low, but it is not surprising for a number of reasons. First, other surveys were being administered around the same time. The RAND Military Workplace Study survey was administered shortly before this survey, in August and September of 2014 (Morral et al., 2014), so soldiers may not have recognized that they were receiving an invitation to participate in a different survey being conducted by RAND. Additionally, the 2014 Center for Army Leadership Annual Survey of Army Leadership (CASAL) was administered from November 20 to December 15, 2014 (Riley et al., 2015).

Another reason the rates might be particularly low is that 54 percent of the invited sample were junior enlisted, the population with the lowest online survey response rates (Miller and Aharoni, 2015). Other online military surveys have obtained higher overall response rates, but similarly low rates for the junior enlisted population. Overall, DMDC reported that from 2008 to 2010, the response rates for their online surveys have ranged from 29 percent to 32 percent for active-duty personnel (DoD, 2010). In DMDC's 2012 Workplace and Gender Relations Survey of Active-Duty Members, the overall response rate was 24 percent, while the response rate for junior enlisted personnel was 12 percent for the E-1 to E-3 pay grades and 14 percent for E-4 (DMDC, 2012d). In the 2012 Status of Forces Survey, though, the response rate for the E-1 to E-4 rank group was 13 percent (DMDC, 2012c). In 2013 the CASAL obtained a response rate of 23 percent for the active component, and that survey does not include junior enlisted personnel (only NCOs, warrant officers, and officers) (Riley et al., 2014).

Low response rates are not uncommon in surveys of military personnel, and they are not necessarily biased and can still produce meaningful results. Although the odds of getting a biased set of findings are considered to increase as response rate decreases, there is no scientific standard for a minimum response rate that ensures unbiased results (Groves, 2006). Research in the field of public opinion polling has revealed that surveys with low response rates typically yield similar results to those with higher response rates (e.g., Curtin, Presser, and Singer, 2000; Keeter et al., 2000). As a military-specific example, DMDC has followed up its online survey invitations periodically with paper surveys and found that the added effort and expense "increases response rates by around seven percentage points without significantly or meaningfully changing estimates from

the survey” (U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2010). Strategies to increase response rates can be costly, and previous research shows that they might not necessarily change the results in any perceptible or practically significant way (Groves, 2006; Miller and Aharoni, 2015). Moreover, pressing for more response can irritate respondents and lead to an increase rather than a decrease in survey bias (Groves, 2006).

The key is having a response rate that provides statistical power to address the research questions and to achieve representativeness. The primary research questions for our survey concerned differences in expressed needs according to a soldier’s rank and family status. To detect meaningful differences (defining 14 percentage points for a categorical variable as the lower threshold for meaningful) with sufficient power, our survey needed a minimum of 200 representative participants from each rank and familial status group (Miller et al., 2011b). This standard for the survey’s number of respondents is based on an aim to identify differences that are not only statistically significant but also potentially practically significant for Army policies and programs.

We employed sample weighting to correct for the observable differences in the representativeness of the sample (see Appendix B). This addressed the representativeness of the sample on rank and family status, which are arguably the demographic factors most likely to be associated with service needs of soldiers. Our evaluation of the representativeness of the survey respondents after weighting indicated that, compared with the general population of soldiers in the Army, there was an overrepresentation of some subgroups in our data. Particularly concerning was the overrepresentation of female and more highly educated soldiers in our data, both of which have been associated with resource use (e.g., Möller-Leimkühler, 2002; Galdas, Cheater, and Marshall, 2005). To deal with this issue, we reran the main analyses including gender and education as covariates; the results did not change. Thus, we concluded that even though the weighting procedure did not adequately account for differences between the sample and population on gender and education, this imbalance did not jeopardize the main findings in the report. In addition, a post-hoc examination of results using poststratification weighting methods demonstrated that the results using sample weights are robust to weighting method. However, we acknowledge that there may be other differences between the sample and the general population of soldiers that were not accounted for by the weighting procedure.

Caveats to Consider

The survey considered past-year problems and types of help needed to deal with the most pressing problems of both soldiers and their families, but we asked questions only of soldiers themselves. While it is reasonable to think that soldiers should be able to speak for the most pressing needs of their families, it is possible spouses would report a different perspective if the survey questions were asked of them, including a different

perspective on soldiers' own problems, such as substance use and psychological well-being. Further, spouses have known issues related to military life and employment outcomes (see, e.g., Lim, Golinelli, and Cho, 2007) and may feel these more keenly. As noted by Karney and Crown (2007), using soldiers as the source of information about family issues is common practice in military research, though not optimal for all research questions. Past research has demonstrated that husbands and wives are relatively accurate in reporting on such issues as their spouses' preferences for having more children (Morgan, 1985) and their spouse's attitudes about their own employment (Spitze and Huber, 1982), and more recent research has also shown similarities in reports of their most pressing relationship problems (Jackson et al., 2016).

It is possible that our survey underestimates problems for two reasons. The first is the very use of the term "problem" on the survey. The military fosters a culture of toughness in which admitting to challenges may be difficult (see, e.g., Acosta et al., 2014; Soeters, 2000). Hence, as we used the term "problem" on the survey, fewer of our respondents may have been inclined to respond that they experienced the things we were asking about. However, we feel that this is unlikely to have been a large obstacle. As will be seen in the description of results, respondents did volunteer that they experienced a number of issues and challenges, with the highest number endorsed being 74 out of a possible high of 83. On average, respondents indicated that they experienced about 12 problems in the past year.

It is also possible that the survey underestimates the number of problems faced by soldiers for another reason: Respondents did not include those who most needed help and already left the Army in consequence, or who were struggling so much with personal issues they did not have time to respond. While this is a relevant issue, it must be taken in the context of the overall effort, in which we reached out to recruit soldiers as widely as possible, and with high-level support, accompanied by a media campaign. To the extent that troubled soldiers were still in the Army, we made every effort to reach out to them as providing an opportunity to comment on the problems they were experiencing and what they needed to resolve them (and what the Army was not providing). However, to the extent that these soldiers were not able to participate, our findings may provide an underestimate and present problems, needs, and resource use as less extensive than they are in reality.

A related issue is that we asked soldiers to prioritize their most pressing problems, and thoroughly explored solution-seeking and outcome for those problems only. So, when we examine whether or how well these problems were resolved, we cannot speak to the whole domain of challenges that soldiers face.

We weighted the analytic sample to be representative of the Army in terms of pay grade, installation type, marital status, and number and ages of nonspouse dependents. However, on average, respondents were still more highly educated and older than the Army as a whole. Based upon past research, this suggests that our results are likely to underestimate, rather than overestimate, the degree to which soldiers and families are

having problems or unmet needs (Booth, Segal, and Bell, 2007). Efforts to adjust the weights to account for sample differences in education level resulted in excessively large weights, so the weights were not adjusted for education. As noted above, the results were robust to poststratification weighting, suggesting that sample weights were sufficiently adjusted for the key demographic differences between the population and our sample.

Response bias is another possible limitation. Surveys are sometimes considered avenues for reporting only for those who have problems. Note, however, that our recruitment for the survey was framed broadly as the Army attempting to gain information about the strengths and weaknesses of support programs to best support soldiers and their families. Moreover, as our categorization of soldiers shows, we had respondents with many different problems and needs—ranging from those who reported no problems in the past year to others who reported many, and from those who expressed no need for Army assistance in addressing problems to those who listed many needs. Some respondents were satisfied with the assistance they got from various resources while others were not. This diversity of response suggests that we did, indeed, capture a broad set of experiences and alleviates concern about response bias.

The survey was quite tailored and detailed, and followed respondents through the coping process, starting with the initial assessment of a large number of issues, to a prioritization of problem domains, to identification of types of help needed and a prioritization of the types of help needed, to a discussion of resources accessed as well as barriers to that access. Even with this level of detail, we were unable to ask all of the questions that it became clear would be helpful. For example, our measure of resources accessed does not present a clear picture of intensity of use of resources (“dosage”), and it is difficult to determine if a large number of accessed resources indicates successfully addressing a complicated problem or unsuccessfully seeking the appropriate resource through a series of referrals. Moreover, the approach of limiting the prioritized types of help may obscure synergies between types of help. As an example, social support from peers may enhance the effect of counseling from a mental health counselor, and advice from an NCO with experience regarding a particular situation might in turn enable appropriate help-seeking of other types. That potential synergy would be better assessed with a direct question regarding the existence of such interplay. Another complication is that the survey is cross-sectional rather than longitudinal, although in some senses we were attempting to assess an inherently longitudinal phenomenon. In some cases, soldiers could have been in the process of meeting their needs, but that process was not yet complete—they could have been en route to a solution, but not there yet.

Finally, the survey can only capture a soldier’s perceptions of what he or she might need, and those perceptions may differ from what a military commander or helping professional might conclude is needed. Furthermore, some soldiers might feel they are coping fine on their own, but actually just be avoiding the problem or using maladaptive coping strategies such as overeating or abusing drugs or alcohol (Erbes et al., 2007; Mattocks et al., 2012). All of that said, we move to presentation of our results.

Survey Results

Our survey, though brief in terms of administration time, covered the process of coping with life's challenges in a fair amount of detail, both quantitative (in terms of static survey items) and qualitative (in terms of the option to write in content that was otherwise not included in the static survey). In this chapter, we present an overview of our analyses, including a description of our respondents, our analysis plan, the issues and problem domains, and the top problem areas. Subsequent chapters describe respondent needs for dealing with problems, the use of resources to meet the needs, unmet needs and ways to get soldiers information about resources, and the probable effect if resources were unavailable. We also discuss the relationship among problems, needs, resources, and attitudes. Finally, we offer our assessment of the survey.

Respondent Characteristics

We considered a survey complete for the purposes of the inclusion in the analytic sample if a respondent answered questions necessary for applying sample weights. These items were pay-grade group, installation, marital status, and number and ages of nonspouse dependents, an item from which family status was derived by identifying respondents with dependent minor children.¹ After imputing missing values, we had 7,092 surveys that met the minimal completion requirements, forming our analytic sample. Respondent characteristics are shown in Table 3.1.

Representativeness of Sample

The samples of soldiers who were invited to participate in the survey were designed to be representative of the active duty CONUS Army on key characteristics, as described

¹ We observed higher-than-expected rates of missing data for the item on dependents (i.e., notably higher than on adjacent items). The response categories were ordered so that "I have no dependents" was the last row in a table that asked for counts of dependents by age. Because unmarried respondents were the most likely to be missing a response for this item, we inferred that respondents without dependents likely skipped over the item entirely. To retain these respondents in the analytic sample, we imputed a response of "I have no dependents" for those respondents who answered adjacent items but skipped the item on dependents.

Table 3.1
Weighted Sample Description

Attribute	Percentage
Female	25
Age	
18 to 24	23
25 to 29	20
30 to 34	19
35 to 39	15
40 and over	23
Education	
Less than high school diploma	1
High school degree or equivalent	12
Some college or trade school	36
Associate's degree or certificate	14
Bachelor's degree or equivalent	23
Graduate degree	15
Race and Ethnicity	
White	73
Black	23
American Indian or Alaskan Native	5
Asian	6
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	3
Hispanic	16
ESL	13
Live on-post	51
PCS in past year	56
Rank	
E1 to E4	43
E5 to E9	36
O1 to O3	11
O4 and above	11
Family Status	
Married, no children	17
Married, with children	42
Single, no children	36
Single, with children	6

Table 3.1—Continued

Attribute	Percentage
Deployment History	
Deployed in last year	10
Avg. length last deployment (months)	8.4
Avg. time since last deployment (months)	7.5
Installation Characteristics	
Urban	33
Small city	43
Rural	24
Workforce Category	
A	33
B	40
C	17
D	11
Future Force Installation	53

in the sampling plan (see Appendix B). To verify that survey respondents (i.e., 12 percent of soldiers in the sample who completed the survey) were also representative of the Army, we compared selected demographics of respondents to the active duty CONUS Army as a whole. The description and full results of this analysis is shown in Appendix B. Results show that, compared with the Army as a whole, respondents were more likely to be white, female, older, and more highly educated.

Analysis Plan

Our analysis focused on the following:

- describing the extent of problems, types of help needed, and resource use among respondents
- examining differences between groups to highlight how soldiers of certain rank groups, family status, installation settings (i.e., rural/urban status), and living situations (i.e., distance from post) report different degrees of problems, needs, and resource use
- quantifying the association of problems, needs, resource use, and satisfaction with resources with retention intentions, perceived organizational support, and adjustment to Army life.

All analyses were weighted so that respondents more closely reflected the population. Individual and installation characteristics, like being younger or being located in a more rural location, would be expected to contribute to the type of problems, needs, and resource use reported. Consequently, we examined differences between groups of soldiers with regression equations that controlled for the effect of rank group, family status, installation urban/rural status, and the distance from post to where the respondent lived.²

Respondent rank was sorted into four rank groups, also referred to as *pay-grade groups*: E1–E4, E5–E9, O1–O3, and O4 and above.

Respondents were divided into four categories of family status based on marital status and nonspouse dependents ages 0 to 22 years: single without children, single with children, married without children, and married with children. Distinguishing soldiers with dependent children was important because the problems and needs of these households differ from those of households without children (e.g., childcare, family activities, effects of PCS on children's schooling). Throughout this report we use the phrase "with children" to denote dependent children ages 0 to 22 because the benefits of simplicity in phrasing outweigh any confusion that this might create when thinking about soldiers with children older than 22.

Installation urbanicity was assigned based on an analysis of surrounding community population values, the location of the installation cantonment area in relationship to nearby communities, traffic and transportation patterns and congestion near the installation and communities, and whether the area was considered a commuting suburb for a nearby larger city or a separate community (Lachman, Resetar, and Camm, 2016). Installations were classified as being an urban area, medium city or large town, or a mostly rural area.

Respondents' distance to post was ascertained by asking soldiers who lived off-post the approximate distance in miles they lived from the installation. In the regression equations, living on post and distance from the installation when living off-post was controlled for by a six-level categorical variable indicating living on post or a distance from post of <5 miles, 5–10 miles, 11–20 miles, 21–40 miles, or more than 40 miles.

² These are not the only variables of possible interest; other potentially significant indicators suggested by the literature and our reviewers include gender and race/ethnicity. We did systematically examine these variables in regression equations for all of our top-line analyses (e.g., top-two problems prioritized; top needs). In some cases, these were significant predictors (e.g., women were more likely to identify Relationship Problems as a top-two problem; African-Americans were consistently less likely to identify most categories of top problems as priorities, with the exception of financial problems). Our main policy findings as described are robust to inclusion of these two control variables; so, given length concerns and the focus of our sponsor audience, we chose to summarize these analyses here rather than present them in depth. Policy audiences should be aware that, in general, factors that can increase vulnerability (such as female or minority status) may be generally relevant when considering provision of resources, and the ability of personnel to independently cope with challenges that rise to the level of problems.

All main effects for groups noted in this report are significant at $p < .05$ or better after controlling for rank group, family status, installation urbanicity, and distance to post. Significant main effects for group differences were followed up with tests of differences between specific groups (e.g., between junior enlisted and senior officers). In consideration of the number of tests conducted throughout the analysis and, in an effort to reduce Type I error in the follow-up analyses, we used an alpha criterion of $p = .01$ for significance tests of differences between specific groups.

Issues and Problem Domains

Issues Experienced by Soldiers

Respondents were provided with a list of 83 issues within nine problem domains and instructed to select all the issues they had experienced in the past year. In each list of issues was an option for respondents to indicate that they had an issue related to the problem domain that was not included in the list of issues. For example, for Military Practices and Culture, an optional response was “Other problem relating to military practices and culture. (Please specify).” We treated these issues as belonging to the domain in which respondents themselves had classified them.

When considering the individual issues that respondents reported, the most frequently reported challenges, shown in Table 3.2, were each indicated by about a third or more of the survey respondents. These items were: feeling stressed/overwhelmed/tired, experiencing trouble sleeping, poor communication with coworkers or superiors, trouble finding time for sleep/healthy diet/physical exercise, experiencing mood changes, difficulty with long work hours/inconvenient schedule, and lack of proper guidance or sponsorship. Note that we present both point estimates and confidence intervals (CIs), which help convey the uncertainty that is found in any estimate. They should be interpreted as follows: If we measured the same variables in the same way from the same population of CONUS active component soldiers, our results in 95 percent of those samples would fall within the upper and lower bound we report.

Number of Issues Selected

On average, respondents selected 11.9 issues across all problem domains. Figure 3.1 shows the distribution of responses; almost one-third selected between one and five issues, about half selected between one and 11 issues, and 82 percent selected between one and 20 issues. In addition, 9 percent of respondents did not report having issues in any problem area in the previous year.

Number of Issues Within Each Problem Domain

Here, we report on the number of issues reported by respondents within each problem domain. We present results of analyses that tested for differences in the number of

Table 3.2
Most Frequently Reported Issues Across Problem Domains

Problem Domain	Issue	Percent	95% CI
Soldier's Own Well-Being	Feeling stressed/overwhelmed/tired	44	42, 46
Soldier's Own Well-Being	Trouble sleeping	43	41, 45
Military Practices and Culture	Poor communication with coworkers or superiors	40	38, 42
Work/Life Balance	Finding time for sleep/healthy diet/physical exercise	38	36, 40
Soldier's Own Well-Being	Mood changes: depression, impatience, anger, aggression, anxiety	34	32, 36
Work/Life Balance	Long work hours/inconvenient schedule for you	33	31, 35
Military Practices and Culture	Lack of proper guidance or sponsorship	33	31, 35
Military Practices and Culture	Rumors/gossip in the military community	32	31, 34
Soldier's Own Well-Being	Physical injury/illness	29	27, 31
Household Management	Time management (getting everything done in the amount of time you have)	29	27, 31
Health Care System Problems	Getting access to military health care (e.g., waiting time for an appointment; distance to treatment facility; availability of needed services; hours/days open)	29	27, 31
Soldier's Own Well-Being	Loneliness/boredom	27	25, 29
Military Practices and Culture	Not being able to stay at/go to the military installation you prefer	26	25, 28
Military Practices and Culture	Figuring out how to use "the system"—where to go, with whom to talk to get help or information	26	24, 28
Work/Life Balance	Being able to pursue educational opportunities	25	23, 27
Spouse's Well-Being	Feeling stressed/overwhelmed/tired	25	24, 26
Work/Life Balance	Finding nearby or affordable options for recreation/stress relief/family time	24	22, 26
Military Practices and Culture	Getting people in your unit to listen to you, take you seriously, treat you with respect	22	20, 24
Health Care System Problems	Managing dependents' health problems	22	20, 24
Household Management	Home repairs/work orders/car maintenance	21	20, 23
Relationship Problems	Problems communicating/expressing feelings	21	20, 23
Relationship Problems	Arguments	20	19, 22

NOTE: CIs help convey the uncertainty that is found in any estimate. Their interpretation is as follows: For the 95% CIs that we report, if we measured the same variables in the same way from the same population, our results in 95% of those samples would fall within the upper and lower bound we report. So, we can be reasonably sure that the population point estimate for soldiers who feel stressed and overwhelmed is between 42 and 46 percent. In cases where our analyses rest on small sample sizes, there is greater uncertainty in our estimates, and our confidence intervals are wider. For analyses with larger sample sizes, such as the ones presented in this table, our estimates can be more precise, and our confidence intervals may be quite narrow.

Figure 3.1
Number of Issues Selected Across Problem Domains

RAND RR1893-3.1

problems by paygrade group, family status, urbanicity, and distance from post. Thus, we used a number of issues in each problem domain as a dependent variable in a regression in which we entered pay-grade group, family status, distance to post, and urbanicity as predictors in the “omnibus” model. All variables except distance to post were entered as dummy variables. For pay-grade group, the reference category was junior enlisted; for family status, the reference category was single without children; and for urbanicity, the reference category was urban location. All associations discussed below were significant in the regression models, which included all of the factors simultaneously. Our initial bar for examining the models was $p < .05$; however, given the large number of tests undertaken, we required predictors to be significant at the $p < .01$ level. We looked at each domain individually, given that respondents were only asked about domains that were relevant to them, and hence saw different numbers of domains, depending on their family status.

Military Practices and Culture

On average, respondents selected 2.2 issues within the Military Practices and Culture domain (see Appendix A for a complete list of Military Practices and Culture issues included in the survey). Multiple regression analysis testing for significant associations between the number of Military Practices and Culture issues and pay-grade group, family status, urbanicity, and distance from post, revealed that only the association with pay-grade group reached statistical significance. As shown in Figure 3.2, senior officers (O4 or above) selected significantly fewer issues than did respondents of any

Figure 3.2
Number of Military Practices and Culture Issues Reported, by Pay-Grade Group

RAND RR1893-3.2

other pay-grade group, and junior enlisted personnel (E1 to E4) selected significantly more issues than did respondents of any other pay-grade group. Senior enlisted personnel (E5 to E9) did not significantly differ from junior officers (O1 to O3).

Work/Life Balance

On average, respondents selected 1.7 issues within the Work/Life Balance domain (see Appendix A for a complete list of Work/Life Balance issues included in the survey). Multiple regression analysis revealed that pay-grade group, family status, and distance from post were all significantly related to the number of Work/Life Balance issues. As shown in Figure 3.3, senior officers selected significantly fewer issues than did respondents of any other pay-grade group. Senior enlisted soldiers selected significantly fewer issues than did junior enlisted soldiers or junior officers. Junior enlisted personnel did not significantly differ from junior officers.

Regression results also revealed that single soldiers with no children reported significantly fewer Work/Life Balance issues than did any of the other family groups, which did not significantly differ from one another (see Figure 3.4). Finally, regression results for distance to post revealed that the farther soldiers lived from their installations, the more likely they were to report significantly more Work/Life Balance issues.

Household Management

On average, respondents selected 1.3 issues within the Household Management domain (see Appendix A for a complete list of Household Management issues included in the survey). Multiple regression analysis revealed that family status and distance from post

Figure 3.3
Number of Work/Life Balance Issues Reported, by Pay-Grade Group

RAND RR1893-3.3

Figure 3.4
Number of Work/Life Balance Issues Reported, by Family Status

RAND RR1893-3.4

were both significantly related to the number of Household Management problems. As shown in Figure 3.5, similar to Work/Life Balance issues, single soldiers with no children reported significantly fewer Household Management issues than did any of the other family groups, which did not differ significantly from one another. Also similar to Work/Life Balance issues, regression results indicated that the farther soldiers lived from their installations, the more likely they were to report significantly more Household Management issues.

Financial or Legal Problems

On average, respondents selected 0.6 issues within the Financial or Legal Problems domain (see Appendix A for a complete list of Financial or Legal Problems included in the survey). Multiple regression analysis revealed that pay-grade group, family status, and distance from post were all significantly related to the number of Financial or Legal Problems. As shown in Figure 3.6, junior enlisted soldiers reported significantly more issues than did respondents of any other pay-grade group. Senior enlisted soldiers reported more issues than did junior or senior officers, who did not differ from one another.

Regression results for family status revealed that single soldiers with children reported significantly more Financial or Legal Problems than did any other family group (see Figure 3.7). Single soldiers without children reported fewer issues than did any other family group. Soldiers who were married and had children did not differ significantly from those married without children. Finally, regression results for distance

Figure 3.5
Number of Household Management Issues Reported, by Family Status

Figure 3.6
Number of Financial or Legal Problems Reported, by Pay-Grade Group

RAND RR1893-3.6

Figure 3.7
Number of Financial or Legal Problems Reported, by Family Status

RAND RR1893-3.7

to post revealed that the farther soldiers lived from their installations, the more likely they were to report significantly more Financial or Legal Problems.

Health Care System Problems

On average, respondents selected 1.2 issues within the Health Care System Problems domain (see Appendix A for a complete list of issues related to Health Care System Problems included in the survey). Multiple regression analysis revealed that family status and distance from post were both significantly related to the number of issues reported in the Health Care System Problems domain. As shown in Figure 3.8, single soldiers without children reported significantly fewer issues related to Health Care System Problems than did any other family status group, which did not significantly differ from one another. Of course, soldiers with families were asked about Health Care System Problems concerning their spouse and/or children, so it is perhaps not surprising that these groups listed more issues in the Health Care System Problems domain than single soldiers with no children. In addition, regression results for distance to post revealed that the farther soldiers lived from their installations, the more likely they were to list significantly more issues related to Health Care System Problems. As noted in Table 3.2, the most commonly selected item related to Health Care System Problems was the one concerning access, which included distance to treatment facility.

Soldier's Own Well-Being

On average, respondents selected 2.3 issues concerning their Own Well-Being (see Appendix A for a complete list of Soldier's Own Well-Being issues included in the

Figure 3.8
Number of Issues Related to Health Care System Problems Reported, by Family Status

survey). Multiple regression analysis revealed that pay-grade group, family status, and distance from post were all significantly related to the number of Soldier's Own Well-Being issues. As shown in Figure 3.9, junior and senior officers reported significantly fewer issues with their own well-being than did junior and senior enlisted soldiers. No other pay-grade differences were statistically significant.

Regression results revealed that single soldiers with children reported significantly more issues with their Own Well-Being than did any of the other family groups (see Figure 3.10). Single soldiers with no children reported significantly more issues with their Own Well-Being than did married soldiers with and without children, who did not significantly differ from one another. In contrast to Health Care Systems Problems, for example, where those with dependents reported more issues, being married and/or having children was associated with fewer well-being issues. Finally, as has been found with other issues, regression results for distance to post revealed that the farther soldiers live from their installations, the more likely they are to report issues with their Own Well-Being.

Spouse's Well-Being

The number of issues related to a Spouse's Well-Being was analyzed only for soldiers who reported being married ($n = 5,585$). On average, respondents who were married selected 1.8 issues concerning their Spouse's Well-Being (see Appendix A for a complete list of Spouse's Well-Being issues included in the survey). Multiple regression analysis revealed no significant relationship between any of the model variables and number of

Figure 3.9
Number of Soldier's Own Well-Being Issues Reported, by Pay-Grade Group

Figure 3.10
Number of Soldier’s Own Well-Being Issues Reported, by Family Status

RAND RR1893-3.10

Spouse’s Well-Being issues; that is, soldiers’ reports of Spouse’s Well-Being issues did not vary by pay-grade group, whether they had children, or distance from post.

Relationship Problems

Similar to Spouse’s Well-Being problems, the number of issues within the Relationship Problems domain was only analyzed for soldiers who reported being in a romantic relationship (n = 6,744). On average, respondents who were in a relationship selected 1.3 issues within the Relationship Problems domain (see Appendix A for a complete list of issues related to Relationship Problems included in the survey). Multiple regression analysis revealed that pay-grade group, family status, and distance from post were all significantly related to the number of issues within the Relationship Problems domain. As shown in Figure 3.11, senior enlisted soldiers reported significantly more issues in the Relationship Problems domain than did junior or senior officers. No other differences between pay-grade groups reached statistical significance.

As shown in Figure 3.12, regression results revealed that single soldiers in a romantic relationship but not married (with and without children) reported significantly more issues in the Relationship Problems domain than did married soldiers (with and without children). No other differences between family status groups reached statistical significance. Finally, consistent with results from the other problem domains, the farther soldiers lived from post, the more likely they were to report significantly more issues in the Relationship Problems domain.

Figure 3.11
Number of Issues Related to Relationship Problems Reported, by Pay-Grade Group

RAND RR1893-3.11

Figure 3.12
Number of Issues Related to Relationship Problems Reported, by Family Status

RAND RR1893-3.12

Child Well-Being

We analyzed the number of Child Well-Being issues reported by soldiers with children ($n = 3,797$). On average, respondents with children selected 1.0 Child Well-Being issues (see Appendix A for a complete list of Child Well-Being issues included in the survey). Multiple regression analysis revealed a significant effect of family status: Single soldiers with children reported significantly more Child Well-Being issues (mean = 1.6) than did married soldiers with children (mean = 0.9). No other associations reached statistical significance.

Summary of Findings for Individual Issues Within Each Problem Domain

For each domain, a significant difference might have meant that one group tended to experience on average only one issue more than other groups, controlling for other factors. While differences of one or more unprioritized issues may not seem relevant, the pattern of findings is revealing. The most consistent finding across most of the problem domains was that soldiers who live farther from post selected more problems than those who live closer. Since the analyses controlled for family status and rank, this result does not seem to be due to the fact that married soldiers tend to live farther from post. This suggests that soldiers living farther from post are dealing with more issues than are those living closer, regardless of their family status.

Where differences by pay-grade group emerged, junior enlisted soldiers tended to report more issues within problem domains than did other pay-grade groups. This was true for issues within the Military Practices and Culture and Financial or Legal Problem domains, and both junior and senior enlisted soldiers reported more Soldier's Own Well-Being issues than did junior and senior officers. Thus, for several problem domains, junior enlisted soldiers are dealing with more issues than are soldiers from other pay-grade groups.

Finally, where differences by family status emerged, single soldiers with children tended to report more issues than did soldiers from the other family status groups. For example, single soldiers with children reported more issues within the Financial or Legal Problems and Soldier's Own Well-Being domains than did the other family status groups, and they reported more Child Well-Being issues than did married soldiers with children. Single soldiers with and without children reported more issues in the Relationship Problems category than did married soldiers with and without children. This suggests that single soldiers with children are dealing with more issues and potentially more complicated problems than are soldiers with other family situations.

"Other" Issues/Problems

After completing the list of issues for each problem domain, respondents were given the opportunity to list issues that they *did not think were included in any of the problem domains*. Specifically, respondents were asked "If you didn't see a description of the challenges you faced, please briefly describe any OTHER type of problem you expe-

rienced in the past year.” Respondents were given the opportunity to list up to three additional issues. We examined these write-ins to understand the extent to which our survey had captured the majority of the relevant problems faced by soldiers and their families.

Overall, 1,078 respondents listed at least one “other” issue, and 652 respondents indicated that at least one of these other issues was an issue that they thought was one of the top-two “most significant types of problem” they had dealt with in the past year. To understand whether these volunteered “other” issues represented ones that were not included in the survey, we examined the write-in responses for those selected as top-two significant issues to determine if any themes emerged. Three coders independently examined 100 randomly selected write-in responses and developed coding categories that corresponded to common themes. The coders compared their categories for each sampled write-in issue, discussed inconsistencies, and decided upon a common set of coding categories. Most write-in problems were either elaboration on items already on the survey (e.g., long work hours, long wait times for health care), concerned infrequently mentioned issues (e.g., “pet care,” “chances of getting into military schools”), or were not worded specifically enough to categorize (e.g., a note of “commissary” does not specify what it is about the commissary that is the problem). Common themes included the following:

- leadership behavior (e.g., toxic, uncaring, careerist, unfair, poor communication)
- long work hours/personnel shortages/overtasking
- frequent PCSs
- spouse employment problems
- long wait times for medical appointments.

Coding categories that were elaborations of items already on the survey were coded into the same problem domain as the survey items (e.g., “leadership behavior” was coded as falling under “Military Practices and Culture”). Recoding write-in responses to the related problem domains accounted for 94 percent of the write-in responses.

Top Problem Areas

After respondents selected issues within all the problem domains, those who indicated problems in more than two domains were asked to choose the two domains that they thought contained “the most significant types of problems” that they had dealt with in the past year. Although the number of issues reported within a problem domain measures the diversity of problems soldiers face within each domain, the ranking of a domain indexes the most important problem domains soldiers faced. As shown in Table 3.3, of the problem domains chosen as respondents’ top problem areas, the most frequently selected domain was Military Practices and Culture, followed by Work/Life

Table 3.3
Percentage of Soldiers Choosing Each Problem Domain as a Top-Two Problem

Problem Domain	Percentage	95% CI
Military Practices and Culture	37	35, 39
Work/Life Balance	31	29, 33
Soldier's Own Well-Being	31	29, 33
Household Management	14	13, 16
Financial or Legal Problems	14	13, 16
Health Care System Problems	22	21, 24
Relationship Problems	16	14, 17
Child Well-Being	8	7, 9
Spouse's Well-Being	13	12, 14

NOTE: Because respondents were asked to choose the top-two problems, the percentages sum to more than 100 percent; each value represents the proportion of all respondents who chose that problem area as one of their two most significant types of problems for the previous year.

Balance, Soldier's Own Well-Being, Health Care System Problems, and Relationship Problems.

Analysis of Top-Two Problems by Domain

As with the analysis of number of issues within problem domains, we analyzed choice of a problem domain as a top-two problem as the dependent variable in a logistic regression in which we entered pay-grade group, family status, distance to post, and urbanicity as predictors. All associations discussed below were significant in the regression models, which included all of the factors simultaneously.

Military Practices and Culture

We first tested for statistically significant associations between the choice of Military Practices and Culture as a top-two problem domain, as a function of pay-grade group, family status, urbanicity, and distance from post. The logistic regression model revealed significant associations with pay-grade group and family status. As shown in Figure 3.13, senior officers were less likely to choose Military Practices and Culture as a top-two problem than were soldiers in any of the other pay-grade groups, which did not significantly differ from one another.

For family status, the logistic regression model revealed that soldiers without children, whether married or single, were significantly more likely to choose Military Practices and Culture as a top-two problem than were soldiers with children, whether married or single (see Figure 3.14). Married and single soldiers without children did

Figure 3.13
Percentage of Soldiers Who Chose Military Practices and Culture as a Top-Two Problem, by Pay-Grade Group

RAND RR1893-3.13

Figure 3.14
Percentage of Soldiers Who Chose Military Practices and Culture as a Top-Two Problem, by Family Status

RAND RR1893-3.14

not significantly differ from one another. Similarly, married and single soldiers with children did not significantly differ from one another.

Work/Life Balance

The logistic regression model revealed that only pay-grade group was significantly associated with choosing Work/Life Balance as a top-two problem. As shown in Figure 3.15, junior officers were significantly more likely to choose Work/Life Balance as a top-two problem than were any of the other pay-grade groups. Senior officers were significantly more likely to choose Work/Life Balance as one of their top-two problems than were senior enlisted personnel. No other comparisons between pay-grade groups reached statistical significance.

Household Management

The logistic regression model revealed that pay-grade group and distance from post were significantly associated with choosing Household Management as a top-two problem. As shown in Figure 3.16, senior officers were significantly more likely to choose Household Management as a top-two problem than were any of the other pay-grade groups, which did not significantly differ from one another. In addition, regression results for distance to post revealed that the farther soldiers lived from their installations, the less likely they were to choose Household Management as a top-two problem.

Figure 3.15
Percentage of Soldiers Who Chose Work/Life Balance as a Top-Two Problem, by Pay-Grade Group

Figure 3.16
Percentage of Soldiers Who Chose Household Management as a Top-Two Problem, by Pay-Grade Group

RAND RR1893-3.16

Financial or Legal Problems

Analysis revealed that only pay-grade group was significantly associated with choosing Financial or Legal Problems as a top-two problem. As shown in Figure 3.17, junior enlisted soldiers were significantly more likely to choose Financial or Legal Problems as a top-two problem than were any of the other pay-grade groups. Senior enlisted soldiers were significantly more likely to choose Financial or Legal Problems as a top-two problem than were senior officers, but no other comparisons between pay-grade groups reached statistical significance.

Health Care System Problems

Analysis revealed that pay-grade group and family status were significantly associated with choosing Health Care System Problems as a top-two problem. As shown in Figure 3.18, senior enlisted personnel and senior officers were significantly more likely to choose Health Care System Problems as a top-two problem than were junior enlisted personnel or junior officers. No other comparisons between pay-grade groups reached statistical significance.

Analysis of family status revealed that married soldiers with children were significantly more likely to choose Health Care System Problems as a top-two problem than were single soldiers without children (see Figure 3.19). No other comparisons between family status groups were statistically significant.

Figure 3.17
Percentage of Soldiers Who Chose Financial or Legal Problems as a Top-Two Problem, by Pay-Grade Group

RAND RR1893-3.17

Figure 3.18
Percentage of Soldiers Who Chose Health Care System Problems as a Top-Two Problem, by Pay-Grade Group

RAND RR1893-3.18

Figure 3.19
Percentage of Soldiers Who Chose Health Care System Problems as a Top-Two Problem, by Family Status

RAND RR1893-3.19

Soldier's Own Well-Being

Analysis revealed that pay-grade group and family status were significantly associated with a soldier choosing his or her own well-being as a top-two problem. As shown in Figure 3.20, senior enlisted personnel were significantly more likely to choose their Own Well-Being as a top-two problem than were junior or senior officers. No other comparisons between pay-grade groups reached statistical significance.

Analysis of family status revealed that single soldiers with no children were significantly more likely to choose their Own Well-Being as a top-two problem than were married soldiers with or without children (see Figure 3.21). Single soldiers with children were more likely to choose their Own Well-Being as a top-two problem than were married soldiers with children, but no other comparisons between family status groups were statistically significant.

Spouse's Well-Being

The likelihood of choosing Spouse's Well-Being as a top-two problem was only analyzed for soldiers who reported being married ($n = 5,585$). The analysis model did not reach statistical significance, indicating that the likelihood of choosing this problem did not significantly differ by rank, distance from post, urbanicity, or family status (i.e., for married couples with or without children). As noted above, 13 percent of married soldiers indicated that one of their top-two problems related to Spouse's Well-Being.

Figure 3.20
Percentage of Soldiers Who Chose Their Own Well-Being as a Top-Two Problem, by Pay-Grade Group

RAND RR1893-3.20

Figure 3.21
Percentage of Soldiers Who Chose Their Own Well-Being as a Top-Two Problem, by Family Status

RAND RR1893-3.21

Relationship Problems

Similar to Spouse's Well-Being problems, the likelihood of choosing Relationship Problems as a top-two problem was only analyzed for soldiers who reported being in a romantic relationship with a spouse or partner in the past year ($n = 6,744$). Analysis revealed that only family status was significantly related to choosing Relationship Problems as a top-two problem. Single soldiers (with or without children) were significantly less likely to choose Relationship Problems than were married soldiers (see Figure 3.22). Note that single soldiers selected a greater number of individual Relationship Problems than did married soldiers. However, when asked to choose their most significant problems in the past year, the Relationship Problems domain was less likely to be considered one of their top-two problem areas. No other significant differences between family status groups emerged.

Child Well-Being

We analyzed the likelihood of choosing Child Well-Being as a top-two problem for those soldiers who reported having dependent children (i.e., 22 years or younger) living with them ($n = 3,797$). The only statistically significant effect that emerged from the analysis was that single soldiers with children were significantly more likely to choose Child Well-Being as a top-two problem than were married soldiers with children (see Figure 3.23).

Figure 3.22
Percentage of Soldiers Who Chose Relationship Problems as a Top-Two Problem, by Family Status

Figure 3.23

Percentage of Soldiers Who Chose Child Well-Being Issues as a Top-Two Problem, by Single or Married Family Status

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Summary of Findings for Top Problem Areas

Military Practices and Culture was the problem domain most cited among respondents, with 37 percent indicating that this area contained the most significant problems they faced in the past year. In addition, problems in the Work/Life Balance, Soldier's Own Well-Being, and the Health Care System Problems domains were each cited as important by more than 20 percent of respondents. Compared with other pay-grade groups, junior enlisted soldiers were more likely to choose Financial or Legal Problems as a significant problem domain, while junior officers were more likely to choose Work/Life Balance. Senior officers were more likely to choose Household Management and less likely to choose Military Practices and Culture as a significant problem area than were those in lower pay-grade groups.

Differences emerged among family status groups where soldiers without children were more likely to choose Military Practices and Culture as a top problem than were soldiers with children. In addition, single soldiers were more likely to choose their own well-being and relationships as top problems than were married soldiers. Finally, in contrast to our analysis of the *number* of issues reported within each problem domain, distance from post was not associated with the specific problem domains that soldiers selected as a top problem. Thus, although Military Practices and Culture was most likely to be chosen as a significant problem overall, the specific problems that soldiers found most important varied considerably among pay-grade and family-status groups. This suggests that programs should focus on the common problems of soldiers, but

that excluding focus from some problem areas, such as Financial or Legal Problems, would disproportionately affect some groups.

Respondents' Needs for Addressing Problems

For each of the top-two problem domains, respondents were prompted to select what types of help or support they needed most to address these problems. Respondents could select as many needs as applied to their problem. (See the Appendix A survey instrument for the survey-provided list of needs.) However, if they selected more than two for each, they were asked to prioritize their top-two needs associated with their top problems, resulting in up to four problem-need pairs. That is, for the first top problem, they could have one or two needs linked to that problem domain; similarly, they could have one or two needs linked to their second top problem. Thus, needs are always considered in the context of the related problem that they address.

Respondents Who Reported Problems But No Needs

Individuals who did not have problems were not routed to the items in the survey that focused on needs. Of individuals who did have problems, 24 percent indicated that they did not have any needs. Although lack of reported needs was not a prespecified outcome of interest, we wanted to understand what factors were associated with this pattern of response. Thus, we used that as a dependent variable in a logistic regression in which we entered pay-grade group, family status, distance to post, and urbanicity, as well as the overall number of issues, as predictors.

Results revealed two significant predictors: pay-grade group and number of issues. First, junior enlisted personnel were significantly less likely to say that they had no needs associated with their problems than were senior enlisted personnel. Moreover, having fewer overall issues significantly predicted not having needs associated with those problems and issues. A problem might not result in a need for a number of reasons. Soldiers may have been able to solve the problem themselves, or it may have just been a passing inconvenience.

We also examined the open-ended comments for insight into what might be a factor in this phenomenon. Our assessment of these data is that some soldiers did not feel that assistance for them was necessary because the problems are institutional and thus targets for Army efforts, rather than individual ones. About half of these responses were in the Military Practices and Culture problem domain, with another 15 percent in the Work/Life Balance domain. In other words, soldiers may see some problems as issues that Army leaders should resolve rather than as something they should either seek help to cope with or be expected to address themselves. Examples include toxic or abusive leadership, favoritism/unfair practices, incompetent personnel, and excessive work hours/manpower shortages. Another possible interpretation was that some prob-

lems are accepted as a part of Army life or as temporary. To illustrate, there were comments that dealt with the challenges related to moving to a new place and about time apart from spouses or children due to long hours, deployments, being a geographic bachelor, or being dual military stationed at different posts. These, too, can be seen as potential issues for Army leadership to tackle, to the extent that PCS moves and similar lifestyle demands actually may compromise the well-being of soldiers and families with little offsetting military benefit. Some factors, such as deployments, may be a fact of military life; however, even in cases of such military necessities, other research seeks to provide insight regarding lessons learned in terms of deployment length, frequency, and other risk factors or moderators. The available literature is large, and it is beyond our scope to summarize it here. At present, however, exposure to combat trauma is the best-substantiated risk factor for negative mental sequelae from deployment (see, e.g., Ramchand et al., 2010; Zamorski and Boulos, 2014). Other than reducing combat exposure, other interventions—such as modifying length of deployments or length of dwell time between deployments—have not been sufficiently researched to suggest specific policy changes.

Most Frequently Reported Needs

Table 3.4 shows the relative frequency with which soldiers selected different types of needs associated with their most pressing problems in the past year. Across all problems and among respondents who reported needs, Advice, Activities, General Information, Professional Counseling, and Emotional or Social Support were selected by about one-fifth of survey participants. An Advocate, Specific Information, and Loans/Donations (a “Helping Hand”) were less common needs. Because individuals could choose a given need up to two times across their prioritized problem-need pairs, the percentage indicates the proportion of respondents who reported a need at least once.

Table 3.4
Most Frequently Reported Needs Among Those Who Indicated a Need

Need	Percentage	95% CI
Advice or education from someone with experience	21	19, 23
Activities for fitness, recreation, stress relief, family bonding	21	19, 23
General Information	21	19, 23
Professional Counseling	21	19, 22
Emotional or Social Support	20	18, 22
Advocate to Try to Get Help	17	15, 19
Specific Information	10	9, 12
Loans/Donations, services to help out (a “Helping Hand”)	7	6, 8

As with the analysis of number of issues and problem domain choice, we analyzed prioritized need as the dependent variable in a logistic regression in which we entered pay-grade group, family status, distance to post, and urbanicity as predictors. When a statistically significant main effect is noted, that main effect was found while controlling for these other demographic and installation context variables.

None of our variables of interest or the model overall (i.e., the combined effect of all variables of interest) significantly predicted need for an Advocate.

For General Information, the overall model was statistically significant, but individual parameters did not reach statistical significance, with the exception of distance from post (the greater the distance, the less likely to indicate this was a top need). The results were less ambiguous for Specific Information: Pay-grade group was statistically significant. The trend was such that junior enlisted personnel were more likely to report needs for Specific Information than were more-senior personnel. Senior enlisted personnel and senior officers were not significantly different from each other, although junior officers indicated more of this need than senior officers. Family status, urbanicity, and distance from post did not significantly affect need for Specific Information.

Only one variable for need for Advice had a statistically significant association: pay-grade group, which had a statistically significant association such that junior enlisted personnel were significantly more likely to report Advice needs than were either senior officers or senior enlisted personnel. Senior enlisted personnel and officers did not differ significantly from each other.

Both pay-grade group and family status were significantly associated with the need for Emotional or Social Support. Junior enlisted personnel were significantly more likely to report these needs than all other pay-grade groups, and all other pay-grade groups did not differ significantly from each other. For family status, those who were married with children were significantly less likely than the reference group to report this need. In general, married participants were not different from each other.

Pay-grade group was significantly associated with the need for Professional Counseling, with junior enlisted personnel significantly more likely to indicate this need than junior officers. Pay-grade group was similarly significantly associated with the need for Loans/Donations: Junior enlisted personnel were more likely to report that need than were all other pay-grade groups. Junior and senior officers did not significantly differ from each other in this regard, though they were significantly less likely to indicate this need than senior enlisted personnel, as well. Finally, pay-grade group was significantly associated with a need for Activities, with junior enlisted personnel significantly more likely to report this need than all other rank groups (who did not differ from each other).

In summary, junior enlisted respondents were more likely to report many types of needs than respondents of other ranks, including Specific Information, Advice, Professional Counseling, Activities, Emotional or Social Support, and Loans/Donations. The pay-grade group differences are shown together in Figure 3.24.

Figure 3.24
Percentage of Soldiers Who Prioritized a Variety of Types of Help Needed, by Pay-Grade Group

RAND RR1893-3.24

Needs Identified for Top Problems

We also examined the frequency of individual problem-need pairs; that is, how often specific needs and problems were reported together by respondents. For example, 12 percent of respondents who reported needs said that they needed General Information for challenges with Military Practices and Culture. Eleven percent reported needing Emotional or Social Support for problems with their own (Soldier's) Well-Being. Because there was a range of options for problems and needs, the proportions of the sample that reported the same problem-need pairs are fairly low. However, the top ten problem-need pairs, shown in Table 3.5, identify the ten most frequent areas in which resources are needed for the most important problems of soldiers, sorted by overall magnitude.

Although we looked at all problem-need linkages, we limited presentation to the top ten of these; relatively low incidence of some of the lower-ranked problem-need pairs (e.g., a low of $n = 247$ for Emotional or Social Support for Relationship Problems) limits further analysis. These top ten problem-need pairs are the most frequently reported combination of types of help needed linked to specific problems. Even though the overall percentages are low, given the number of possible combinations, these pairings represent prevalent needs among soldiers experiencing given problems, and hence represent an area where program resources matching the particular type of help needed for a given problem would be beneficial. Thus, resources devoted to providing general information about things like rules or policies, or about what is available in the military

Table 3.5
Percentage of Soldiers Choosing Each Pairing of Top Problem and Type of Help Needed: Ten Most Frequent Problem-Need Pairs

Needs Associated with Top Problems: Problem-Need Pairs	Percentage	95% CI
General Information for Military Practices and Culture	12	11, 14
Emotional or Social Support for Soldier's Own Well-Being	11	9, 13
Advice for Military Practices and Culture	9	7, 10
Activities for Work/Life Balance	9	7, 10
Activities for Soldier's Own Well-Being	9	7, 10
Specific Information for Military Practices and Culture	8	7, 9
Professional Counseling for Soldier's Own Well-Being	8	7, 9
Emotional or Social Support for Spouse's Well-Being ^a	7	6, 9
Professional Counseling for Military Practices and Culture	7	6, 9
Emotional or Social Support for Relationship Problems	6	5, 8

^a Only soldiers who had spouses were asked questions about their spouse's well-being; thus, this finding is reflective of the percentage of soldiers with spouses who endorsed this item.

system and how to access it, would be considered helpful to a relatively large number of individuals who are experiencing challenges with Military Practices and Culture.

Another way of looking at this information is to examine the leading needs associated with only the three most frequently noted prioritized problems, shown in Figure 3.25. In considering this linkage, it becomes clear that soldiers report that the types of help they need for Military Practices and Culture issues (which range from communication challenges with coworkers and superiors to adjusting to military language, organization, and cultures) include General Information about rules or policies, or about what is available and how to access it, as described, and Advice or education from people with experience to recommend the best solution for someone in a similar situation.

As one might expect, for Work/Life Balance—which included finding time for sleep, a healthy diet, and physical exercise, as well as finding nearby and affordable options for stress relief and family time—a commonly reported type of assistance needed was Activities for fitness, recreation, stress relief, and family bonding. For Soldier's Own Well-Being, which included issues such as dealing with mood changes (including anxiety and depression) as well as feeling stressed and overwhelmed, or dealing with physical injuries or illness, soldiers reported that the types of assistance they needed most were Emotional or Social Support, Activities, and Professional Counseling. This finding echoes previous studies noted in Chapter Two that describe the

Figure 3.25

Percentage of Soldiers Choosing Each Type of Help Needed, for Three Most Frequently Reported Top Problem Domains

RAND RR1893-3.25

importance of social support networks for resilience and well-being. Those networks may in part be established, expressed, and maintained through social activities.

Also notable in these results is the degree to which soldiers themselves believe that professional counseling has or could help them resolve their most pressing problems with well-being or aspects of Army life. Because of the relatively low numbers choosing different problem-need pairs, we do not analyze differences in problem-need pairs by pay-grade group, family status, urban/rural status, or distance of residence from post.

Summary of Findings About Needs and Needs Linked to Problems

Individuals who reported problems were asked about types of help needed to address their problems. Of soldiers reporting problems, 24 percent indicated that they did not have any needs. Analysis revealed that junior enlisted personnel were significantly less likely to say that they had no needs associated with their problems than were senior enlisted personnel. Moreover, having fewer overall issues significantly predicted not having needs associated with those problems and issues. A review of open-ended comments suggested that other possible explanations for the phenomenon included a perception that problems should be addressed in a systemic manner (rather than a personal one), or that they were relatively temporary adjustment issues.

Specific types of help needed were selected by the remaining three-quarters of soldiers reporting problems: Advice, Activities, General Information, Professional

Counseling, and Emotional or Social Support were selected by more than a quarter of respondents. An Advocate, Specific Information, and Loans/Donations (a “Helping Hand”) were less common needs.

Demographic variables sometimes predicted needs. For example, pay-grade group was a consistent predictor for types of need as well as for selecting any need. Specifically, junior enlisted respondents were more likely to report many types of needs than respondents in other ranks, including Specific Information, Advice, Professional Counseling, Activities, Emotional or Social Support, and Loans/Donations. Urbanicity also made a significant contribution to General Information (those who lived farther away had less need), and family status made a contribution to Emotional and Social Support (those who were married with children were less likely to claim this as a top need than those who were single without children; in general, married soldiers with or without children did not differ from each other).

Considering the linkage of the most frequently reported and prioritized problem with the types of help needed to address that problem is also revealing. For example, it becomes clear that soldiers report that the types of help they need for Military Practices and Culture issues (which range from communication challenges with coworkers and superiors to adjusting to military language, organization, and cultures) include General Information about rules or policies, or about what is available and how to access it, and Advice from people with experience to recommend the best solution for someone in a similar situation. Similarly, for issues with their (Soldier’s) Own Well-Being, which included issues such as dealing with mood changes (including anxiety and depression) as well as feeling stressed and overwhelmed, respondents reported that the types of assistance they needed most were Emotional or Social Support and Professional Counseling.

Respondents' Use of Resources to Address Needs

This chapter describes the resources that those who identified needs reported using to deal with their problems. We list the percentages of those who used resources, their access to specific types of resources, and what predicted resource use. We then describe what barriers inhibited the use of resources and the level of satisfaction with resources used.

Respondents who reported problems and needs were asked about whether they accessed a selection of military and nonmilitary resources to meet their needs (see survey instrument in Appendix A for full list of Army, military community, and non-military resources). Respondents were also given the option to specify that they did not contact any resources for needs related to this particular problem.

It is important to emphasize here the unique nature of our survey, which asked questions about resource utilization to follow the experiences of respondents who reported having significant problems in the past year for which they could identify needs. Other surveys address usage and satisfaction from a more typical top-down volume perspective; that is, they try to determine how many in a population overall use the resource. We focused on the implication of resource use for addressing respondents' needs in the process of problem-solving.

Resource Utilization Among Survey Respondents

Percentage of Respondents Using Resources for Reported Needs

As an overview of resource use from the perspective of respondents with problems and needs, Table 4.1 shows the proportion of respondents who reported contacting a given resource for at least one of their problems.

A large majority (85 percent) of respondents with reported problems and needs used resources in an attempt to meet the needs they described in the survey. Of those who used resources, the majority (61 percent) used both military and nonmilitary resources. A smaller proportion (33 percent) reporting only using military resources, and only 6 percent used exclusively nonmilitary resources. On average, respondents

Table 4.1
Resources and Percentage of Soldiers Who Used Each Resource for at Least One Problem-Need Pair (n = 4,873)

Resource Used	Percentage Using Resource for at Least One Problem	95% CI
Military resources		
FRG	11	9, 12
Unit members not in the chain of command	39	37, 42
Installation MWR (e.g., recreation/sports services, such as intramural sports, libraries, post gymnasium)	20	18, 22
ACS (e.g., financial services, relocation assistance, and family services)	20	18, 22
CYS (e.g., on-post childcare, youth sports)	10	9, 12
Army OneSource, post homepage, or other military Internet resources or social media (such as Twitter, Facebook)	17	15, 19
Chain of command (squad leaders, NCOs/officers, rear detachment commanders, sexual harassment/assault response and prevention (SHARP) advocates, or designated points of contact (POCs) for family issues)	40	37, 42
Chaplain or members of military religious or spiritual group	18	16, 20
Counselor or doctor provided by the military	33	31, 36
Relief/aid society (Army Emergency Relief)	5	4, 6
Other military contacts	13	11, 14
Nonmilitary resources		
Government or community resources for family services (for example, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, WIC, public library, Head Start, community center)	7	6, 8
Private clubs, organizations, recreation or fitness centers	13	12, 15
Private off-post childcare	6	5, 7
Religious or spiritual group or leader	15	13, 17
Private doctor or counselor	15	13, 16
Internet resources (such as WebMD, Google, Craigslist, Wikipedia, Yahoo, Twitter, Facebook)	25	23, 28
Personal networks (friends, family)	38	36, 41
Other nonmilitary contacts	5	4, 6

reported four military contacts and two nonmilitary contacts. More than half (58 percent) of respondents reported contacting four or more resources.

The high proportion using resources and number of resources accessed was a bit surprising and hard to decipher in the context of our survey. We know only that participants reached out to a given resource at least once; it is entirely possible that they were avid users of a particular resource, but the “dosage” is unknown based on how our survey was structured. Reaching out to many resources could indicate either reaching out to multiple resources to address specific issues for a complex problem, or searching for the correct resource to use and being referred from one to another. Without an indication of dosage or temporality of resource use, it is hard in the current survey to determine what the specific dynamics were.

Respondents' Access of Specific Resources

Frequently used resources included both “chain of command” (40 percent) and “unit members not in the chain of command” (39 percent), as well as personal networks of friends and family (38 percent), highlighting a social aspect of frequently used resources. Moreover, as might be anticipated by the relatively frequent reporting of professional counseling as a type of help needed, among resources accessed, military doctor or counselor (33 percent) was also relatively frequent.

Note our previous caveat when considering our information about resource use, in the context of our survey: We asked about resource use as related to problem-solving. Thus our numbers may differ from more commonly surveyed usage numbers. While approximately 20 percent of our respondents in this section (i.e., those who reported problems for which they had a need) reported accessing ACS to help address problems, more general usage may be more robust. For example, the report on the 2010 Survey of Army Families VI indicates that approximately 42 percent of spouses found that the ACS provided very helpful support during their soldiers' deployment (Rayzor, 2011). In contrast, the ACS Needs Assessment report indicated that 61 percent of active duty service members did not use any ACS programs, though 34 percent did and reported their needs were met; an additional 5 percent reported using the resource though it did not successfully meet their needs (IMCOM, 2013). Note that the ACS Needs Assessment typically employs convenience sampling rather than population-based sampling, so the proportion of soldiers using the program may not accurately represent the usage rate in the population.

Approximately 10 percent of our respondents reported accessing CYS to help address the two most pressing problems they encountered in the past year. In contrast, other surveys address general usage. For example, the 2010 Survey of Army Families VI report (Rayzor, 2011) indicated that 56.8 percent of spouses of currently deployed and deployed and returned soldiers said that they and their families received very helpful support from CYS during their soldier's deployment, which reflects a much larger proportion of the population. This type of general user survey may reflect overall use

and overall satisfaction but does not speak to the degree to which soldiers are using CYS as a resource to address major problems.

Demographic Predictors of Resource Use

We next explored whether resource use could be predicted by our demographic variables of interest. We ran the following analyses: logistic regressions on the dichotomized variable for whether an individual only accessed military resources and for whether an individual accessed only nonmilitary resources, as well as a linear regression for the total number of resources accessed. The same set of predictors employed in previous models for problems and needs was included in both models: pay-grade group, family status, urbanicity, and distance to post. Our hypothesis that urbanicity and distance of residence to post would predict outcomes did not hold true. Pay-grade group had a significant association as a block for use of only military resources; however, differences for individual rank groups only approached statistical significance such that senior officers had lower odds of using only military resources than junior enlisted personnel. The regression for prediction of use of only nonmilitary resources, and total number of contacts overall, did not reach statistical significance, meaning that pay-grade group, distance from post, urbanicity, and family status were not associated with use of only nonmilitary resources or total number of contacts overall.

Bivariate correlations of total number of contacts with our variables of interest revealed quite small correlations overall, none of them individually significant. To explore this further, we added overall number of individual issues to the linear regression model predicting total number of resource contacts. This omnibus regression was significant, with the majority of the variance accounted for by the number of issues (R^2 change = 18 percent). Higher numbers of reported issues predict higher numbers of total contacts.

Summary of Findings for Resource Use

A large majority (85 percent) of respondents with reported problems and needs used resources in an attempt to meet the needs they described in the survey. Of those who used resources, the majority (61 percent) used both military and nonmilitary resources. Popular military resources accessed for problems included unit members not in the chain of command (39 percent), the chain of command (40 percent), and a doctor or counselor provided by the military (33 percent). Popular nonmilitary resources included personal networks of family and friends (38 percent) and Internet resources (25 percent). To our surprise, urbanicity and distance of residence to post did not predict resource use. In fact, the only statistically significant predictor of total number of contacts was the total number of issues reported, which was an additional predictor added in this instance because the demographic predictors in the omnibus models did not prove to be statistically significant.

Barriers to Accessing Resources

We also explored what issues might pose barriers to resource use for those who had problems and needs. These questions were posed to respondents slightly differently, depending on whether a given resource had been accessed for any of their problem-need combinations. If *not* accessed, we included options to indicate that the resource was not applicable or that other resources met their needs. Neither option represents a barrier per se but rather a legitimate reason for not accessing a resource. Note, also, that not all of the available resources would apply to all problems; for example, CYS was a potential resource for problems and needs having nothing to do with children. We also examined barriers for access, even for resources that were reported as being accessed. We focus here on barriers to use of military resources, because those are the resources subject to control by the Army.

We present point estimates and CIs, which help convey the uncertainty that is found in any estimate. They should be interpreted as follows: If we measured the same variables in the same way from the same population of CONUS active component soldiers, our results in 95 percent of those samples would fall within the upper and lower bound we report. So, we can be reasonably sure that the population point estimate for soldiers who feel that an FRG was not applicable for their needs is between 43 and 47 percent. In cases where our analyses rest on small sample sizes, there is greater uncertainty in our estimates, and our confidence intervals are wider.

Reasons Resources Not Used, for All Respondents with Needs

For each resource they did not use, respondents were asked to select a reason. Because respondents were asked about all resources, the most common responses were that the resource did not apply to the respondent's problem (27 to 49 percent) and that some other resource met the respondent's need (6 to 12 percent). Other reasons that resources were not contacted are shown in Table 4.2. The most frequently reported barrier to resources *not used* was the fear that using a resource might hurt the respondent's career or reputation; small but not trivial numbers of respondents stated that they did not use chain of command (9 percent), military counselor or medical doctor (5 percent), and other unit members not in the chain of command (5 percent) for this reason. Other reasons for not using other resources were all less than 4 percent.

Problems Encountered with Resources, for Resources Used

Respondents were asked if they experienced any issues with the resources they used, such as inconvenient location or access, or poor reputation or service. The proportion of users of each resource who reported problems is shown in Table 4.3. The problems most frequently reported for resources used were experiencing long wait lists/response time for a military counselor or medical doctor (26 percent) and CYS (21 percent); the perception that contacting the chain of command might hurt their career (19 per-

Table 4.2
Reasons Military Resources Were Not Used, by Percentage

	Not Applicable for My Needs	Other Things Met My Need	Difficult to Find Information About/Never Heard of It	Inconvenient Location or Access	Might Hurt My Career or Reputation to Use It	Not Welcoming/ Unfriendly	Long Wait List/ Response Time	Poor Reputation or Service
Army FRG	45 (43, 47)	8 (7, 9)	3 (3, 4)	2 (1, 2)	2 (1, 3)	2 (1, 2)	1 (0, 1)	3 (3, 4)
Unit members not in chain of command	33 (31, 35)	9 (7, 10)	2 (1, 2)	1 (1, 2)	5 (4, 6)	2 (2, 3)	0 (0, 1)	2 (1, 2)
Installation MWR	41 (39, 43)	9 (8, 10)	3 (2, 4)	3 (2, 4)	1 (1, 2)	0 (0, 1)	0 (0, 1)	1 (1, 1)
ACS	41 (38, 43)	9 (8, 10)	4 (3, 5)	2 (2, 3)	2 (1, 2)	0 (0, 1)	0 (0, 1)	1 (1, 2)
CYS	49 (47, 52)	6 (5, 7)	2 (1, 3)	1 (1, 2)	1 (0, 1)	0 (0, 1)	1 (1, 2)	1(1, 1)
Army OneSource, post homepage, other military Internet resources	39 (37, 42)	12 (10, 13)	4 (3, 5)	1 (1, 2)	1 (1, 2)	0 (0, 0)	0 (0, 0)	1 (1, 1)
Chain of command	27 (25, 29)	10 (9, 11)	1 (0, 1)	1 (1, 2)	9 (7, 10)	4 (3, 5)	1 (0, 1)	2 (2, 3)
Chaplain or members of military religious group	40 (38, 42)	11 (9, 12)	2 (1, 2)	2 (1, 2)	3 (2, 4)	0 (0, 1)	0 (0, 0)	1 (1, 2)
Counselors or military doctors	34 (32, 37)	9 (7, 10)	2 (1, 3)	2 (1, 3)	5 (4, 6)	1 (0, 1)	2 (2, 3)	2 (1, 2)
Relief or aid society	48 (46, 50)	8 (7, 9)	4 (3, 5)	1 (1, 1)	2 (1, 2)	0 (0, 0)	0 (0, 0)	1 (0, 1)

NOTE: 95% CIs shown in parentheses.

Table 4.3
Problems Encountered with Resources Used, by Percentage

	Difficult to Find Information About/ Never Heard of It	Inconvenient Location or Access	Might Hurt My Career or Reputation to Use It	Not Welcoming/ Unfriendly	Long Wait List/ Response Time	Poor Reputation or Service
Military resources						
Army FRG	<u>18</u> (12, 24)	7 (3, 12)	6 (3, 10)	11 (8, 15)	4 (1, 6)	14 (10, 18)
Unit members not in chain of command	7 (5, 10)	4 (3, 6)	11 (8, 13)	9 (6, 12)	5 (2, 7)	5 (3, 6)
Installation MWR	11 (8, 14)	14 (11, 17)	1 (0, 2)	4 (2, 5)	7 (4, 11)	7 (4, 10)
ACS	12 (8, 16)	9 (7, 12)	3 (1, 4)	5 (3, 6)	9 (6, 11)	8 (6, 11)
CYS	8 (5, 11)	9 (6, 12)	1 (0, 2)	10 (6, 13)	<u>21</u> (16, 25)	12 (8, 16)
Army OneSource, post homepage, other military Internet resources	12 (9, 16)	7 (5, 9)	3 (2, 4)	2 (1, 3)	7 (3, 11)	7 (4, 10)
Chain of command	5 (3, 8)	4 (3, 6)	<u>19</u> (16, 23)	<u>18</u> (15, 22)	11 (7, 14)	14 (11, 17)
Chaplain or members of military religious group	4 (2, 5)	9 (5, 12)	8 (5, 11)	2 (0, 4)	6 (2, 10)	6 (2, 9)
Counselors or military doctors	8 (5, 10)	8 (6, 11)	10 (8, 13)	7 (4, 10)	<u>26</u> (22, 31)	14 (11, 17)
Relief or aid society	10 (4, 16)	6 (2, 11)	8 (3, 12)	1 (0, 2)	10 (–022)	4 (0, 8)
Nonmilitary resources						
Government or community resources for family services	<u>22</u> (15, 29)	9 (5, 13)	7 (0, 14)	3 (0, 5)	7 (3, 10)	2 (1, 4)
Private clubs, organizations, recreation or fitness centers	10 (7, 13)	<u>16</u> (10, 22)	1 (0, 1)	3 (1, 4)	5 (2, 8)	3 (1, 6)
Private childcare	<u>14</u> (9, 20)	12 (8, 16)	0 (0, 0)	4 (1, 8)	11 (6, 16)	5 (1, 9)
Religious leaders	6 (3, 9)	13 (7, 19)	2 (1, 4)	3 (1, 5)	1 (0, 2)	2 (0, 4)
Civilian counselors or MDs	9 (6, 12)	<u>14</u> (10, 19)	5 (2, 9)	3 (2, 5)	<u>14</u> (11, 18)	4 (2, 6)
Internet resources	<u>17</u> (12, 21)	5 (2, 9)	1 (0, 2)	1 (0, 1)	2 (0, 4)	4 (3, 6)

NOTE: 95% CIs shown in parentheses. Underlining indicates top-five point estimates for military and nonmilitary resource barriers, respectively; ties included.

cent); the experience of chain of command being unwelcoming or unfriendly (18 percent); and difficulty in finding information for contacting the Army FRG¹ (18 percent) (AR 608-1, 2013). The confidence intervals delineate the uncertainty around each of these point estimates. Thus, if we measured the same variables in the same way from the same population of CONUS active component soldiers, our results in 95 percent of those samples would fall within the upper and lower bound we report.

Satisfaction with Resources Used

Respondents were asked, for each resource they used, how well each resource met their needs on a five-point scale ranging from not at all (1) to very well (5): basically, an index of perceived effectiveness of the resource. Results for resources (aggregated across types of help needed and problem domains) are shown in Figure 4.1. In general, most military and nonmilitary resources did “all right” at meeting needs (i.e., average satisfaction was three or higher). The resources with the highest average ratings were civilian religious or spiritual leaders and military chaplains, followed by personal networks and military or civilian doctors or counselors. The resources with the lowest average ratings were Army FRGs, civilian government or community resources for family services, chain of command, and CYS. This assessment of perceived effectiveness of resources was judged in the context of whether needs were met for a specific problem. As such, this measure was not a general rating of satisfaction with all program resources, as in other surveys. Thus, a rating of “all right” is not *necessarily* problematic.

Satisfaction with Military Resources

We first examined overall satisfaction with perceived effectiveness of military resources by averaging the ratings for all military resources to come up with an index of satisfaction with military resources. The average satisfaction rating for military resources was 3.15. In other words, on average, soldiers rated the military resources they used to address their needs as “all right.” Thus, this measure indicates average satisfaction with military resources for anyone who used any military resources. We used this average satisfaction as the dependent variable in an omnibus linear regression model, which included pay-grade group, family status, distance from post, and urbanicity as predictors.

Statistically significant differences in ratings of satisfaction with military resources emerged by pay-grade group and distance from post. As shown in Figure 4.2, senior officers were significantly more satisfied with the military resources they had used to address

¹ Note that the FRG is designed for its services to be used primarily by spouses and families, but this finding is still relevant because many of these groups reach spouses through their soldiers. Ideally, the soldiers would be able to provide information easily about these services to their spouses. Moreover, the Army concept of FRGs is that they are designed to support the whole family (see, e.g., Army One Source, undated).

Figure 4.1
Average Satisfaction Ratings of Military and Nonmilitary Resources by Soldiers Who Used Each Resource to Address Their Needs

RAND RR1893-4.1

Figure 4.2
Average Satisfaction with Military Resources Used to Address Needs, by Pay-Grade Group

RAND RR1893-4.2

their needs than were junior enlisted personnel. No other comparisons between pay-grade groups reached statistical significance. In addition, the farther that soldiers lived from their installations, the less satisfied they were with the military resources they had used to address their needs.

Next, we examined satisfaction ratings for each military resource, as rated by soldiers who used the resource to address a need. Again, we employed linear regression models including pay-grade group, family status, distance from post, and urbanicity as predictors.

Army FRG

Within those who used FRGs to address one or more of their needs, no statistically significant differences emerged by pay-grade group, family status, or distance from post. As noted in Table 4.1, only 10.6 percent of respondents indicated that they used an FRG to address their needs. This means that the statistical test used to find differences in satisfaction between groups is underpowered, and the results should be interpreted with caution.

Unit Members Not in the Chain of Command

Statistically significant associations were identified for both pay-grade group and distance to post. As shown in Figure 4.3, junior and senior officers were significantly more satisfied with the assistance they received from unit members not in the chain of command than were junior enlisted personnel. No other comparisons between pay-grade groups reached statistical significance. In addition, the farther soldiers lived from their installations, the less satisfied they were with the assistance they received from unit members not in the chain of command.

Installation MWR

The analysis model did not reach significance, indicating that satisfaction with MWR resources to address soldiers' needs did not significantly differ by pay-grade group, distance from post, urbanicity, or family status.

ACS

The analysis model did not reach statistical significance, indicating that satisfaction with ACS resources used to address respondents' needs did not significantly differ by pay-grade group, distance from post, urbanicity, or family status.

CYS

As noted in Table 4.1, only 10.4 percent of respondents indicated that they used CYS to address a need. This means that the statistical test used to find differences in satisfaction between groups is underpowered, and the results should be interpreted with caution.

The only statistically significant association that emerged from the analysis was with pay-grade group. As shown in Figure 4.4, controlling for family status, junior and

Figure 4.3
Average Satisfaction with Assistance from Unit Members Not in the Chain of Command to Address Needs, by Pay-Grade Group

RAND RR1893-4.3

Figure 4.4
Average Satisfaction with Child and Youth Services Resources Used to Address Needs, by Pay-Grade Group

RAND RR1893-4.4

senior officers and senior enlisted soldiers were more satisfied with CYS resources than were junior enlisted soldiers. No other comparisons among pay-grade groups reached statistical significance.

Army OneSource and Other Military Internet Resources

The only statistically significant association that emerged from the analysis was with family status. As shown in Figure 4.5, single soldiers without children were significantly less satisfied with the military Internet resources they accessed to help with their needs than were any of the other family status groups, which did not significantly differ from one another.

Chain of Command

The only statistically significant association that emerged from the analysis was for distance from post: The farther soldiers lived from post, the less satisfied they were with the assistance received from their chain of command for their needs.

Chaplain or Members of Military Religious Group

The analysis model did not reach statistical significance, indicating that satisfaction with help from chaplains or other military religious groups to address soldiers' needs did not significantly differ by pay-grade group, distance from post, urbanicity, or family status.

Figure 4.5
Average Satisfaction with Army OneSource and Other Military Internet Resources Used to Address Needs, by Family Status

Counselor or Medical Physician

Although the overall model was statistically significant with all predictors included, further analysis of factors related to satisfaction with military counselors or physicians revealed that satisfaction ratings did not significantly differ by pay-grade group, distance from post, urbanicity, or family status.

Relief or Aid Society

As noted in Table 4.1, only 5 percent of respondents indicated that they used a relief or aid society to address a need. As was the case with CYS, this means that the statistical test used to find differences in satisfaction between groups is underpowered. The analysis model did not reach statistical significance, indicating that satisfaction with the relief or aid society resources used to address soldiers' needs did not significantly differ by pay-grade group, distance from post, urbanicity, or family status. Because of the reduced power of this analysis, these results should be interpreted with caution.

Satisfaction with Nonmilitary Resources

We next examined overall satisfaction with nonmilitary resources. As with military resources, we averaged the satisfaction ratings for all nonmilitary resources across problems and needs to come up with an index of satisfaction with nonmilitary resources. For the 2,367 respondents who used nonmilitary resources to help meet their needs, the average satisfaction rating was 3.54. In other words, on average, soldiers rated the nonmilitary resources they used to address their needs as slightly better than "all right."

Statistically significant differences in ratings of satisfaction with nonmilitary resources emerged by pay-grade group and urbanicity. As shown in Figure 4.6, senior officers were significantly more satisfied with the nonmilitary resources they had used to address their needs than were junior and senior enlisted personnel. Junior officers were also significantly more satisfied with nonmilitary resources than were junior enlisted personnel. No other comparisons between pay-grade groups reached statistical significance.

In addition, the soldiers at installations in medium-sized cities were less satisfied with the nonmilitary resources they used to address their needs than were soldiers stationed at urban or rural installations (adjusted averages of 3.48, 3.70, and 3.70, respectively).

Next, we examined satisfaction ratings for each nonmilitary resource, as rated by soldiers who used the resource to address a need. We should note that only a small percentage of soldiers indicated that they used each nonmilitary resource, except for personal networks (see Table 4.1). As noted earlier, this means that the statistical tests used to find differences in satisfaction between groups are underpowered, and the results of the analyses must be interpreted with caution. Indeed, for most nonmilitary resources, the analysis models did not reach statistical significance, indicating that satisfaction

Figure 4.6
Average Satisfaction with Nonmilitary Resources Used to Address Needs, by Pay-Grade Group

RAND RR1893-4.6

with the specific nonmilitary resources used to address soldiers' needs did not significantly differ by pay-grade group, distance from post, urbanicity, or family status.

Exceptions were satisfaction with nonmilitary childcare, satisfaction with nonmilitary counselors/medical doctors, and satisfaction with personal networks (i.e., friends, family). For nonmilitary childcare, soldiers who lived farther from post were more satisfied than those who lived closer. The only statistically significant association that emerged from the analysis of nonmilitary counselors/medical doctors was with family status. Single soldiers with no children were significantly less satisfied with the help they received from nonmilitary counselors and doctors than were soldiers from any of the other family groups, which did not differ from one another.

For personal networks (friends, family), statistically significant associations emerged for pay-grade group and urbanicity. As shown in Figure 4.7, senior officers were more satisfied with the help they received from their personal networks than were junior and senior enlisted personnel. No other comparisons between pay-grade groups reached statistical significance. In addition, soldiers at urban installations were more satisfied with the help they received from personal networks than were soldiers at installations near midsize cities (adjusted means of 3.93 and 3.59, respectively). Soldiers at rural installations (adjusted mean = 3.79) did not significantly differ from those at urban or midsize city installations.

Figure 4.7
Average Satisfaction with Personal Networks Used to Address Needs, by Pay-Grade Group

RAND RR1893-4.7

Summary of Findings for Satisfaction with Resources

In general, soldiers were satisfied with the resources they used to address their most pressing needs. For military resources, the average satisfaction with each resource was around a 3 (“all right”) or better, suggesting that needs were adequately met, on average. The average ratings for three resources—FRGs, chain of command, and CYS—were slightly below 3, possibly representing some frustration with soldiers’ use of these resources to deal with pressing needs. Ratings of satisfaction with specific resources revealed few differences by pay-grade group or family status. Compared with senior officers, junior enlisted soldiers were less satisfied with military resources (aggregated across resources), and junior enlisted were specifically less satisfied with CYS and others not in the chain of command, compared with officers. In addition, soldiers who lived farther from post were less satisfied with military resources (aggregated across resources)—specifically with their fellow soldiers in and outside the chain of command—than were soldiers who lived closer. These results suggest that the Army is providing satisfactory resources for soldiers to address their pressing needs, but that junior enlisted and those who live farther from post may not be benefiting from these resources as much as their colleagues are.

For findings with regard to FRG, ACS, and CYS, recall that our population was soldiers who were in turn answering for their families when applicable. Thus, it is possible that spouses might feel a different level of satisfaction with some of these resources, because they are targeted at the family overall rather than helping with soldiers’ specific needs. As just one example, from the report on the 2010 Survey of Army Fami-

lies VI (Rayzor, 2011), of the *spouses* surveyed, the vast majority (83 percent) said that their FRG was active, and among those with active FRGs, two-thirds said the FRG is run well, and almost three-fourths rated FRGs as good/fair in helping them and their family. Unlike our survey, however, the 2010 one does not link resource use to the help needed for respondents' most pressing problems. Our survey relies on asking soldiers to report on the most relevant challenges faced by themselves and their families in the past year; thus, their responses should add value about what soldiers perceive as their own and their families' most pressing issues, and how helpful military resources were in their resolution.

Most nonmilitary resources received an average satisfaction rating of 3 or above, indicating that, among those soldiers who used nonmilitary resources, their needs were adequately met. In addition, officers were more satisfied with nonmilitary resources than were junior enlisted soldiers, and soldiers stationed at installations near midsized cities were less satisfied than those stationed in urban or rural areas. Of those who used their personal network of friends and family members as a resource, senior officers were more satisfied than junior or senior enlisted soldiers. Finally, soldiers at installations in urban areas were more satisfied with help from their social networks than were soldiers stationed near midsized cities. Thus, nonmilitary resources seem to be a viable resource to help soldiers address their most pressing needs, but those stationed at installations near midsized cities may not receive the same level of benefits from nonmilitary resources as those stationed at other installations.

Unmet Needs, Resource Information and Perceived Impact, and Interrelations Among Problems, Needs, Resources, and Attitudes

This chapter describes the needs of soldiers and their families that are *not* met by available resources. It also explores ways to inform soldiers of what resources are available, and perceptions of the impact that might occur if resources were no longer available. It reports what interrelations occur among problems, needs, resources, and resultant attitudes. It also presents our assessment of the survey.

Unmet Needs

On average, survey respondents reported using several resources to meet their needs. To ascertain whether a soldier's needs were met by the resources used, we examined respondents' ratings of satisfaction with resources used to create a measure of issue resolution that reflects the experiences of individual respondents across all resources used. To do this, we coded any resource satisfaction rating where the resource helped soldiers meet their needs "well" or "very well" as having met the soldier's needs. Otherwise, the resource was coded as *not* having met the soldier's needs. For each soldier, we then examined issue resolution across all resources used to help with each problem and need combination.¹ If all the resources used to address a need were coded as not having met that need, we classified the soldier as having "unmet needs." Otherwise, if one or more resources they used for that need was rated as having met the need, then we classified the soldier as having the need met. Thus, this measure of *any unmet needs* identified respondents who said that resources did not address their needs, across *all* the resources they used for each of their problem-need pairs.

In this operationalization of unmet need, soldiers who contacted several resources for help but were satisfied with only one of them were considered to have their needs met. This might not represent an efficient or satisfying process for seeking help, but

¹ Needs were always associated with a problem domain (i.e., problem-need pair). Each soldier could have up to four unique problem-need pairs for which he or she sought help from resources.

the soldier did ultimately receive the help he or she needed. Alternatively, a soldier who had his or her needs met in some areas—for example, a need for information about health care—but not in another area—such as professional counseling for his or her own well-being—would be considered to have unmet needs because of their outstanding unmet need in one area.

According to this measure, about 11 percent of all soldiers who were included in our analysis have at least one unmet need, and about 22 percent of soldiers who reported having needs for types of assistance on the survey had at least one unmet need. Thus, although soldiers' average ratings of how well individual resources met their needs are an important indicator of resource effectiveness, examining those ratings more closely reveals a substantial number of soldiers who report having unmet needs.

Army decisionmakers may find the analysis of those with unmet needs by family status and pay-grade group to be of interest. Analysis of differences by pay-grade group and family status, controlling for urbanicity of post and distance from post, yielded a significant effect of pay-grade group. Follow-up tests showed that junior enlisted soldiers were more likely to have one or more unmet needs than were junior or senior officers. No other differences by pay-grade group were statistically significant. There were no statistically significant differences in unmet needs by family status.

We next examined whether the needs associated with particular problem domains were less likely to be met. For these analyses, we examined whether resources used to address a particular need within each problem domain met the need. Note that, since respondents could list up to four needs associated with two problem domains, soldiers could have had a need in a different problem domain that was not met. As shown in Figure 5.1, the problem domains that had the highest percentage of soldiers with unmet needs were Health Care System Problems, Military Practices and Culture, and Financial or Legal Problems. More than 10 percent of soldiers who had a top-two problem within each of these domains did not have their needs met.

Looking at each problem domain, we tested whether having an unmet need in the domain was significantly associated with pay-grade group or family status (each analyzed in separate regression models because of sample size constraints). Statistically significant differences in unmet needs by pay-grade group emerged for Financial or Legal Problems and for Spouse's Well-Being. Senior officers were less likely to have an unmet Financial or Legal Problems need than were junior enlisted soldiers, and senior officers were also less likely to have an unmet Spouse's Well-Being need than were senior enlisted soldiers. No other comparisons by pay-grade group reached statistical significance.

Analysis of family status revealed a significant difference in unmet needs within the Household Management and Child Well-Being problem domains. Single soldiers with no children were more likely to have unmet Household Management needs than were any of the other family groups. For Child Well-Being, married soldiers with children were more likely to have unmet Child Well-Being needs than were single soldiers with children, but this comparison should be interpreted with caution because of the

Figure 5.1
Percentage of Soldiers with Unmet Needs by Top-Two Problem Domain

RAND RR1893-5.1

small number of single soldiers with children with a top-two problem in this domain (n = 78 for single soldiers with children). No other comparisons by family status were statistically significant.

In conclusion, soldiers who use resources but continue to have unmet needs compose an important target group for Army leadership’s attention. Overall, the domains of Health Care System Problems, Military Practices and Culture, and Financial or Legal Problems constitute the predominant areas where unmet needs are a concern. Our analysis suggests that junior enlisted soldiers may be particularly vulnerable to having unmet needs.

Best Ways to Get Information to Soldiers About Resources

To understand how best to get information about available resources to soldiers, we asked respondents who indicated that they had problems: “What is the best way to get information to you about services available to help meet your needs?” Table 5.1 displays their responses. Respondents could choose more than one option, so totals add up to more than 100 percent. The most requested way to receive information about resources was by an email from the unit leader: 43 percent of respondents selected this method. The next most requested way to receive information was through friends, family, or coworkers, with 24 percent of respondents selecting this method. In addition, 22 percent of respondents indicated that they would like to receive information through social media (e.g., Twitter, Facebook, a phone app). Some of these outreach methods are easier to use for mass communication (e.g., email announcements from

various members of the support and authority systems for soldiers) than others (e.g., through friends and family). These echo the findings presented in Table 5.1 showing that soldiers tend to reach out to people in their unit or their personal networks for information and other forms of assistance.

Impact If Resources Were No Longer Available

Respondents who accessed resources were asked about the impact they might feel if they were no longer able to access a (complete) list of military resources to help address the problems that they and their families might face. Results are shown in Figure 5.2. The two resources most likely to be seen as having a serious impact if lost were treatment or counseling (35 percent) and chain of command (38 percent). In contrast, the majority reported that they would feel little impact if they lost access to FRGs (66 percent), relief or aid societies (57 percent), and CYS (59 percent).

Next, we analyzed ratings of the impact of the loss of each military resource to look for significant associations between impact ratings and pay-grade group, family status, urbanicity, distance from post, and prior use of the resource to satisfy a need identified for a top-two problem, as indicated in the survey. For every resource, prior use of that specific resource to address a need identified for a top-two problem significantly predicted perceived impact of resource loss, indicating that those soldiers who

Table 5.1
Percentage of Soldiers Saying a Given Outreach Method
Acceptable

Outreach Method	Percentage of Soldiers
Friend/family/coworker	24 (22, 26)
Social media (Twitter, Facebook, phone app)	22 (20, 24)
Email/announcement from FRG	16 (15, 18)
Installation website	16 (14, 17)
Postcard in the mail	15 (14, 17)
Unit website	12 (11, 14)
Flyer/poster on post	11 (10, 13)
Unit news letter	11 (9, 12)
Installation newspaper	11 (10, 13)
TV	10 (9, 12)

NOTE: 95% CIs shown in parentheses.

Figure 5.2
Soldier Ratings of Perceived Impact If Resource No Longer Available to Help

RAND RR1893-5.2

used the resource to help with one of their needs would feel the most impact if the resource were taken away.

FRGs

Analysis of the perceived impact of loss of FRGs revealed two statistically significant associations: As noted, those who had used FRGs to help address a need identified for a top-two problem perceived significantly greater impact of loss than did those who had not. In addition, soldiers who lived closer to post perceived significantly greater impact than those who lived farther away.

Unit Members Not in Chain of Command

Analysis revealed that prior use to address a need identified for a top-two problem, distance from post, and family status were significantly associated with perceptions of impact of loss of unit members not in the chain of command. Compared with soldiers who lived farther from post, those who lived closer perceived a significantly greater impact of loss of unit members not in the chain of command as a resource for their problems. As shown in Figure 5.3, single soldiers without children perceived a significantly greater effect of loss of unit members not in the chain of command than did

Figure 5.3

Soldier Ratings of Perceived Impact If Unit Members Not in the Chain of Command No Longer Available for Help, by Family Status

RAND RR1893-5.3

married soldiers with children. No other statistically significant differences between family status groups emerged.

Installation MWR

Analysis revealed that prior use to address a need identified for a top-two problem, distance from post, and pay-grade group were significantly associated with perceptions of impact of loss of MWR resources. Again, soldiers who lived closer to post perceived a significantly greater impact would result from loss of MWR resources than did soldiers who lived farther away. As shown in Figure 5.4, senior officers perceived a significantly greater impact of loss of MWR resources than did junior or senior enlisted soldiers. No other comparisons between pay-grade groups reached statistical significance.

ACS

Analysis revealed that prior use to address a need identified for a top-two problem, distance from post, family status, and pay-grade group were all significantly associated with perceptions of effect of loss of ACS resources. Compared with soldiers who lived farther from post, those who lived closer perceived a significantly greater impact of loss of ACS resources. As shown in Figure 5.5, single soldiers with no children reported significantly less perceived impact as a result of the loss of ACS resources than did married or single soldiers with children. No other comparisons between family status groups reached statistical significance.

Figure 5.4
Soldier Ratings of Perceived Impact If MWR Resources No Longer Available, by Pay-Grade Group

RAND RR1893-5.4

Figure 5.5
Soldier Ratings of Perceived Impact If Army Community Service Resources No Longer Available, by Family Status

RAND RR1893-5.5

Differences in ratings of impact of loss of ACS resources by pay-grade group are shown in Figure 5.6. Analysis revealed that senior enlisted soldiers reported significantly more perceived impact as a result of loss of ACS resources than did junior or senior officers. No other comparisons between pay-grade groups reached statistical significance.

CYS

Analysis revealed that prior use to address a need identified for a top-two problem, distance from post, and family status were significantly associated with perceptions of impact of loss of CYS resources. Compared with soldiers who lived farther from post, those who lived closer perceived a significantly greater impact of loss of CYS resources. As shown in Figure 5.7 (and as would be expected), both married and single soldiers with children reported significantly more perceived impact as a result of the loss of CYS resources than did married or single soldiers with no children. No other comparisons between family status groups reached statistical significance.

Military Internet Resources

Analysis revealed that prior use to address a need identified for a top-two problem, distance from post, and pay-grade group were significantly associated with perceptions of impact of loss of military Internet resources. Soldiers who lived closer to post perceived a significantly greater impact would result from loss of military Internet resources than did soldiers who lived farther away. As shown in Figure 5.8, junior officers perceived significantly less impact of loss of military Internet resources than did senior enlisted

Figure 5.6
Soldier Ratings of Perceived Impact If Army Community Service Resources No Longer Available, by Pay-Grade Group

Figure 5.7
Soldier Ratings of Perceived Impact If Child and Youth Services Resources No Longer Available, by Family Status

RAND RR1893-5.7

Figure 5.8
Soldier Ratings of Perceived Impact If Military Internet Resources No Longer Available, by Pay-Grade Group

RAND RR1893-5.8

personnel or senior officers. In addition, junior enlisted personnel perceived less impact than did senior enlisted personnel. No other comparisons between pay-grade groups reached statistical significance.

Chain of Command

Analysis revealed that prior use to address a need identified for a top-two problem, distance from post, and pay-grade group were significantly associated with perceptions of impact of loss of chain of command as a resource to help soldiers meet their needs. Soldiers who lived closer to post perceived a significantly greater impact would result from loss of assistance from the chain of command than did soldiers who lived farther away. As shown in Figure 5.9, senior enlisted personnel perceived significantly less impact would result from loss of chain of command as a resource than did junior officers or senior officers. No other comparisons between pay-grade groups reached statistical significance.

Chaplain or Members of Military Religious Group

Analysis revealed that prior use to address a need identified for a top-two problem and distance from post were significantly associated with perceptions of impact of loss of military chaplains. Soldiers who lived closer to post perceived a significantly greater impact as a result of loss of help from military chaplains than did soldiers who lived farther away.

Counselor or Doctor Provided by the Military

The only statistically significant association that emerged from the analysis was prior use: Soldiers who had used a military counselor/medical doctor to help with a need identified for a top-two problem perceived significantly greater impact as a result of the loss of this resource than those who had not used a military counselor/medical doctor.

Relief or Aid Society

Analysis revealed that prior use to address a need identified for a top-two problem and pay-grade group were significantly associated with perceptions of impact of loss of relief or aid society as a resource. As shown in Figure 5.10, enlisted soldiers (both junior and senior) perceived significantly greater impact of loss of relief or aid society as a resource than did junior officers or senior officers. No other comparisons between pay-grade groups reached statistical significance.

Summary of Perceived Impact Findings

Soldiers who accessed resources were asked to indicate the impact they might feel if they were no longer able to access a list of military resources. Although accessing the chain of command for help is perceived as having potential negative implications, loss of chain of command as a resource was rated as having a serious impact by 35 percent of soldiers—

Figure 5.9
Soldier Ratings of Perceived Impact If Unit Members in the Chain of Command No Longer Available for Help, by Pay-Grade Group

RAND RR1893-5.9

Figure 5.10
Soldier Ratings of Perceived Impact If Relief or Aid Society No Longer Available for Help, by Pay-Grade Group

RAND RR1893-5.10

almost as many as the number who rated loss of treatment and counseling as having a serious impact (38 percent). This suggests that some ambivalence exists between soldiers and members of the chain of command: Soldiers need them for help, but seeking that help could be unwelcome or have negative implications for one's career.

In addition, the majority of respondents reported that they would feel little impact if they lost access to FRGs (66 percent), relief or aid societies (57 percent), and CYS (59 percent). It is unclear why most perceive losing these resources as having little impact, but several issues with these resources should be noted. First, FRGs are designed to focus more on supporting spouses and other family members, so soldiers may not fully realize the extent of the services they provide. CYS may be less important to families with a spouse who voluntarily stays home full time to care for their children, who live too far away from post to use these services, or whose children are too old for these services. Last, only about 5 percent of respondents reported using a relief or aid society, which is intended to be an emergency fund only, so it is possible that soldiers do not perceive the loss of this resource as having a serious impact on them because they have never used it and perhaps think they will never need it. Indeed, in our regression analysis, for *every* resource, *prior use* of that specific resource to address a need identified for a top-two problem significantly predicted perceived impact of resource loss, indicating that those soldiers who used the resource to help with one of their needs would, unsurprisingly, feel the most impact if it were taken away.

Another factor that consistently predicted impact was distance from post: With the exception of military counselor/medical physician and relief/aid society, soldiers who lived closer to post perceived more impact from the loss of each resource than did soldiers who lived farther away. Although the regression models controlled for prior use of each resource to address a need identified in the survey, it is possible that soldiers who lived closer to post had accessed resources for other needs in the past, and thus perceived greater impact as a result of losing the resources. Another possibility is that soldiers who live closer to post are more connected to military life and the resources available to soldiers, so they are more aware of the negative consequences of loss of resources for themselves, their family, or their fellow soldiers. Finally, soldiers who live farther away may prefer the use of resources closer to their home.

Analysis of family status revealed that soldiers with children perceived greater impact from the loss of CYS and ACS, especially compared with single soldiers without children, and that single soldiers without children perceived greater impact from the loss of unit members not in the chain of command than did married soldiers or single soldiers with children. Thus, soldiers with children perceive more impact from the loss of family- and community-oriented resources than do soldiers without children, and single soldiers without children perceive more impact from the loss of help from their peers, perhaps because peers are their main source of support compared with soldiers who have spouses and/or children. No clear pattern of findings emerged for pay-grade group.

Relationship Between Problems, Needs, Resources, and Attitudes

Respondents answered questions about their attitudes toward military service that formed the basis of four attitudinal measures: External Adaptation (a composite), Organization Support (a composite), and Soldier and Spouse Retention Attitudes (two single items). The measures are described in more detail in Chapter Two.

To understand how problems, needs, and resource use relates to military attitudes and readiness, we analyzed models predicting attitudes from indicators of problem resolution. Specifically, we coded survey response patterns into six categories of respondents who reported:

1. no problems (8.4 percent of the sample)
2. problems but did not report having needs (22.2 percent of the sample)
3. needs but did not report using resources (10.6 percent of the sample)
4. using resources and were satisfied with the help provided by at least one of those resources (i.e., had their needs met, 39.2 percent of the sample)
5. using resources but were not satisfied with the help provided by any of those resources (i.e., had one or more unmet needs, 11.0 percent of the sample)
6. using only “some other resource,” so it is unclear whether their needs were met or not (8.6 percent of the sample).

The response pathways that resulted in these problem/need/resource use categories are shown in Figure 5.11. Regression models were constructed to analyze the relationship between each attitudinal measure and the above categories of respondents, controlling for pay-grade group, family status, urbanicity, and distance from post. The reference group for the respondent categories was those who had problems and needs and were satisfied with the resources they used to address those needs. We chose this respondent category to be the reference group because this is the expected pattern for most soldiers who have problems—that they would seek out resources and that using those resources would successfully address their needs.

The results for models predicting respondents’ retention intentions on a 1–5 scale, with 5 anchored by “I/my spouse strongly favors leaving” are shown in Table 5.2. Among control variables, statistically significant associations emerged for pay-grade group (senior officers more inclined to remain in service than all other pay-grade groups), family status (married with children more inclined to remain than single with no children), and distance from post (farther from post less inclined to remain than those closer to post).

A statistically significant association with soldier retention intentions also emerged for the respondent problem/need/resource use category. Compared with respondents who had needs that were satisfied by the resources they used, those reporting no problems or problems and no needs indicated that they were more inclined to remain in service. In contrast, those with one or more unmet needs indicated that they were less

Figure 5.11
Flow Diagram of Key Survey Response Patterns

RAND RR1893-5.11

inclined to remain in service. Respondents with needs who used no resources and those who used alternative resources did not significantly differ from respondents whose needs were satisfied.

The results for models predicting spouses' retention intentions are also shown in Table 5.2. For married respondents, analysis of their spouses' perceived attitudes toward retention revealed statistically significant associations with pay-grade group (spouses of senior officers seen as more inclined to remain compared with junior enlisted personnel), family status (those with children seen as less inclined to remain compared with those without children), and distance from post (those living farther from post seen as less inclined to remain compared to those who live closer). Respondents' problem/need/resource use category was significantly associated with their spouses' attitudes toward retention. Compared with married respondents who reported problems, needs, used resources, and had their problems resolved (the reference group), those report-

Table 5.2
Models Predicting Soldier and Perceived Spousal Retention Intentions from Soldier Problem/Need/Resource Use Categories

	Soldier Retention Intentions Coefficient (SE)	Perceived Spousal Retention Intentions Coefficient (SE)
Intercept	4.03 (.117)	3.73 (.081)
E1–E4 vs. O4 plus	–0.88 (.079)***	–0.45 (.094)***
E5–E9 vs. O4 plus	–0.22 (.051)***	–0.08 (.058)
O1–O3 vs. O4 plus	–0.49 (.067)***	–0.08 (.072)
Married with no children vs. single with no children	0.19 (.089)	—
Single with children vs. single with no children	0.21 (.174)	—
Married with children vs. single with no children	0.33 (.075)***	—
Married with children vs. married with no children	—	–0.24 (.064)***
Midsized city vs. urban	–0.08 (.077)	–0.06 (.063)
Rural vs. urban	–0.15 (.087)	–0.18 (.075)*
Distance from post	–0.07 (.019)***	–0.09 (.018)***
Reported no problems	0.71 (.098)***	1.01 (.097)***
Problems, no needs	0.23 (.082)**	0.39 (.070)***
Needs, used no resources	0.01 (.112)	0.13 (.099)
One or more unmet needs	–0.32 (.127)*	–0.22 (.095)*
Used other resource	–0.07 (.106)	–0.01 (.096)

NOTES: SE = standard error. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. Intention responses range from 1 (“strongly favor leaving”) to 5 (“strongly favor staying”). Respondents who had needs that were satisfied by the resources they used served as the reference group.

Shaded rows highlight significant coefficients for soldier problem/need/resource use categories.

The coefficients can be interpreted such that a positive and statistically significant coefficient means that membership in a given demographic group, or variable (in the case of distance to post, which is a continuous variable), is associated with a stronger willingness to leave for regressions where retention intentions are predicted. Conversely, a negative and statistically significant coefficient means that a given group or variable is associated with less willingness to leave.

ing no problems, or problems and no needs, perceived that their spouses were more inclined toward them remaining in service. In contrast, those with one or more unmet needs perceived that their spouses were less inclined toward them remaining in service. Respondents with needs who used no resources and those who used alternative resources did not significantly differ from respondents whose needs were satisfied.

We next analyzed respondents' reported adaptation to the Army and their perceptions of organizational support. Recall that adaptation is an index of how well the family manages with the demands made upon it by the Army and satisfaction with the Army as a way of life. Results for adaptation to the Army are shown in Table 5.3. Among control variables, statistically significant associations emerged for pay-grade group (senior officers report better adaptation than all other pay-grade groups) and distance from post (farther from post report less adaptation than those closer to post). A statistically significant association also emerged for the respondent category. Com-

Table 5.3
Models Predicting Adaptation to the Army and Perceptions of Organizational Support from Soldier Problem/Need/Resource Use Categories

	Adaptation to the Army Coefficient (SE)	Perceptions of Organizational Support Coefficient (SE)
Intercept	3.68 (.062)	2.69 (.078)
E1–E4 vs. O4 plus	–0.27 (.048)***	0.02 (.048)
E5–E9 vs. O4 plus	–0.10 (.030)***	0.02 (.032)
O1–O3 vs. O4 plus	–0.11 (.039)**	–0.09 (.040)*
Married with no children vs. single with no children	–0.05 (.049)	–0.12 (.053)
Single with children vs. single with no children	–0.11 (.123)	–0.17 (.102)
Married with children vs. single with no children	–0.01 (.041)	–0.09 (.045)
Midsized city vs. urban	–0.01 (.041)	–0.09 (.048)
Rural vs. urban	–0.11 (.047)	–0.08 (.056)
Distance from post	–0.05 (.011)***	–0.03 (.011)**
Reported no problems	0.87 (.051)***	0.88 (.088)***
Problems, no needs	0.38 (.047)***	0.27 (.051)***
Needs, used no resources	0.03 (.062)	0.02 (.071)
One or more unmet needs	–0.39 (.064)***	–0.45 (.066)***
Used other resource	0.02 (.065)	0.01 (.052)

NOTE: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. Adaptation and perceptions of organizational support range from 1 to 5, with higher numbers indicating better adaptation/support.

Shaded rows highlight significant coefficients for soldier problem/need/resource use categories.

The coefficients can be interpreted such that a positive and statistically significant coefficient means that membership in a given demographic group, or variable (in the case of distance to post, which is a continuous variable), is associated with better adaptation for regressions where Adaptation to the Army are predicted; and better support where Perceptions of Organizational Support are predicted. Conversely, a negative and statistically significant coefficient means that a given group or variable is associated with less adaptation or support.

pared with respondents who had needs that were satisfied by the resources they used, those reporting no problems, or problems and no needs, reported better adaptation to the Army. In contrast, those with one or more unmet needs reported less adaptation to the Army. Respondents with needs who used no resources and those who used alternative resources did not significantly differ from respondents whose needs were satisfied.

Finally, results for respondents' perceptions of organizational support are also shown in Table 5.3. Among control variables, statistically significant associations emerged for pay-grade group (senior officers report better organizational support than junior officers) and distance from post (farther from post report less organizational support than those closer to post). A significant association also emerged for the respondent problem/need/resource use category. Compared with respondents who had needs satisfied by the resources they used, those reporting no problems, or problems and no needs, reported more organizational support from the Army. In contrast, those with one or more unmet needs reported less organizational support from the Army. Respondents with needs who used no resources and those who used alternative resources did not significantly differ from respondents whose needs were satisfied.

Summary of Attitudes Findings

Our analysis of the attitudes questions revealed consistent results across measures: Soldiers who had one or more unmet needs in the past year had worse attitudes toward the Army than did those who accessed resources and had their needs met. This is important because it demonstrates that having unmet needs is an important issue for Army leadership. Although we did not measure unit readiness in our survey, an important component is personnel readiness for deployment and mission. While even a soldier who is mentally preparing to leave the Army may in fact deploy and serve, soldiers who have adapted less successfully to the Army, who believe the Army is not committed to their well-being, and who are themselves less committed to the Army are unlikely to make the best soldiers given that their focus is on other things such as (in this instance) their unmet needs, or (more generally) their next career move. A downsizing Army is an Army in which existing soldiers count more, and represent an investment less easily recoverable if lost.

Another consistent finding is that respondents who had needs but used no resources were very similar to those who accessed resources and had their needs met. This finding needs further exploration in future research, but it suggests that soldiers may be able to deal with certain problems on their own, without the need of external resources provided by the Army. Similarly, respondents who reported using alternative resources to the ones listed in the survey were similar to those who accessed the resources listed and had their needs met. This implies that these respondents also had their needs met by these resources. Considering that a broad array of Army and civilian resources were listed in the survey, future research is needed to understand the other types of resources soldiers may access to help them with their needs.

Finally, those who had no problems in the past year, or who had problems but reported no associated needs, had better attitudes toward the Army than those who used resources and had their needs met. In other words, compared with having no problems or having problems but no needs, successfully using resources to address one's needs seems to have residual negative implications for attitudes toward the Army. Since the survey only asked about problems encountered in the past year, it is possible that this association is short-lived. Nonetheless, it is worth considering how the process of accessing and using resources, even when they work for the soldier, might be improved to lessen the potential negative impact on soldiers' attitudes toward the Army.

Proof of Concept: The Survey Documented Important Information

As stated in our initial objectives, our efforts were intended to identify, through a survey of soldiers, the full spectrum of challenges that soldiers and their families face, and the implications of how the management of those challenges unfolded. This objective included understanding how soldiers prioritize their challenges, the types of help they needed to address them, their experiences with any resources they contacted for assistance, and ultimately whether the soldier's and family's needs were met. This study also represents the first attempt to field this type of needs assessment survey on a large scale. The survey is strategic in nature, oriented at getting a holistic assessment of the problems that presented the most serious challenges for soldiers, the types of help they needed to address those problems, and the resources they attempted to access to address those problems and needs.

Overall, the survey succeeded in achieving its aims using the new survey framework that placed soldiers' challenges, and solution-seeking, at the center of inquiry. Soldiers reported a wide variety of individual issues, and analysis of their responses to their "other" problems recorded in the open-ended text boxes revealed that, on the whole, their write-in responses reflected problem domains already included on the survey. Hence, the survey successfully encompassed the general set of challenges faced by soldiers in a given year. Nonetheless, the open-ended comments provide insight into the specific dynamics and additional detail on the survey items.

Other signs point to a survey that was performing as expected. For example, research has shown that junior enlisted soldiers are frequently beset by numerous challenges and require the most assistance (e.g., Booth, Segal, and Bell, 2007; Segal and Harris, 1993). Our survey findings reflected that: Junior enlisted personnel reported the highest number of issues overall. Moreover, they needed more, and more types of, assistance for their problems.

Other findings might not surprise—for example, reports of long wait times for CYS and for military medical care and behavioral health are covered in the press (e.g., Floyd and Phillips, 2013; Schoenberg, 2015; "Injured Heroes, Broken Promises," 2016).

However, our study found complaints of long wait times for these resources among soldiers who were trying to get help for their most pressing problems, suggesting that these systems are no better at triaging soldiers with more-challenging situations than otherwise. All told, several indications emerged throughout the survey that can be seen to suggest that it represented a new and important angle on the matter of soldier and family problems and needs, and complemented existing information already collected by the Army.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This study uses a unique survey methodology to assess the types and range of problems faced by soldiers and families, and what types of help are needed to address those problems. Rather than focus on existing on-post programs and program-centric questions about soldier satisfaction with services, our approach shines a light on how soldiers and their families confront problems. The survey instrument took soldiers through, in effect, their coping process: a holistic assessment of the challenges they and their families faced in the past year, then their perceived needs for assistance for their most-pressing problems, resources sought to address those problems, and whether those resources met their needs. We also asked about important attitudes regarding the Army and used those attitudes as indicators of the impact of having unmet needs. In this section, we discuss our findings, their application, and the study limitations.

Brief Caveats to Consider

In Chapter Two, we presented a detailed discussion of caveats to keep in mind while perusing our findings; we reprise that discussion briefly here. The survey considered problems of the past year and types of help needed to deal with the most-pressing problems of both soldiers and their families, but we asked questions only of soldiers themselves. This is quite common (Karney and Crown, 2007), and literature supports the notion that husbands and wives are relatively accurate in reporting similarly on various pressing issues (e.g., Jackson et al., 2016; Morgan, 1985; Spitze and Huber, 1982).

The focus on most-pressing problems in a given year also may have resulted in an undercounting of unmet needs, because we focused in depth only on soldiers' perceived most-pressing problems, and thoroughly explored solution-seeking and outcomes for those problems only. So, when we examine whether or how well these problems were resolved, we cannot speak to the whole domain of challenges that soldiers face, only the ones they indicated were most important.

The possibility that only those with problems, or those particularly desiring benefits, filled out the survey (that is, response bias) is another potential limitation. However, our recruitment was broadly framed because the Army was attempting to gain informa-

tion about the strengths and weaknesses of support programs to provide the best support for soldiers and their families. Moreover, as our categorization of soldiers shows, we had respondents with many different problems and needs, ranging from those who reported no problems in the past year to others who reported many, and from those who expressed no need for Army assistance in addressing problems to those who listed many needs. This diversity of responses suggests that we did, indeed, capture a broad set of experiences and alleviates concern about response bias.

Even with the level of detail included in the survey, we were unable to ask all of the questions that it became clear would be helpful. For example, our measure of resources accessed does not present a clear picture of intensity of use of resources (“dosage”), and it is difficult to determine whether a large number of accessed resources indicates successfully addressing a complicated problem or unsuccessfully seeking the appropriate resource through a series of referrals.

Finally, the survey can only capture a soldier’s perceptions of what he or she might need, and those perceptions may differ from what a military commander or helping professional might conclude is needed. Furthermore, some soldiers might feel they are coping fine on their own when they are actually just avoiding the problem or using maladaptive coping strategies, such as overeating or abusing drugs or alcohol (Erbes et al., 2007; Mattocks et al., 2012). All of that said, we offer a brief overview of our results.

Summary of Findings

What Problems Do Soldiers Have?

Presented with of a total of 83 possible problems as well as write-in opportunities, soldiers reported experiencing about 12 problems in the past year, on average. The **most frequently chosen issues across domains were feeling stressed/overwhelmed/tired (Soldier’s Own Well-Being), experiencing trouble sleeping (Soldier’s Own Well-Being), and poor communication with coworkers or superiors (Military Practices and Culture)**. Other, somewhat less common issues also related to health, well-being, and soldiers taking care of themselves, given the demands of work. The most consistent finding with regard to individual issues was that soldiers living farther from post reported more issues overall and more issues within problem domains, controlling for other related factors, such as family status. Where differences by pay-grade group emerged, junior enlisted soldiers tended to report more issues within problem domains than did other pay-grade groups. Similarly, where differences for family status emerged, the direction was such that single soldiers with children reported more issues than other family status groups. The findings with regard to junior enlisted personnel, in particular, echo findings from other studies and survey approaches (e.g., Booth, Segal, and Bell, 2007) and highlight the vulnerability of these respondent groups.

Nine percent of respondents reported no issues in the prior year. For those who did report issues within problem domains, we asked them to prioritize their top-two most-significant domains: **The most frequently reported top-ranked problem domain was Military Practices and Culture, followed by Work/Life Balance, Soldier's Own Well-Being, Health Care System Problems, and Relationship Problems.**

We examined omnibus regressions controlling for pay-grade group, family status, distance from post, and urbanicity. These analyses indicated that pay-grade group and family status were significantly associated with some problems even when taking into account their distance from post and whether they lived in rural, urban, or midsized city locations. However, the direction of findings for both pay-grade group and family status was mixed. Distance from post and urbanicity were not associated with choosing a specific problem domain as a top problem.

What Types of Help Did Soldiers Need to Address Their Problems?

We asked soldiers to choose what types of help were needed for the problems they prioritized, and in turn, asked them to prioritize the top-two types of help needed for their prioritized problems. **Across all problems and among respondents who reported needs, Advice or Education (21 percent), Activities (21 percent), General Information (21 percent), Counseling (21 percent), and Emotional Support (20 percent) were all reported relatively frequently.** Of individuals who did have problems, 24 percent indicated that they did not have any needs. Compared with other pay-grade groups, junior enlisted were less likely to indicate that they had no needs, and individuals with a greater number of issues were less likely to indicate that they had no needs. In addition, pay-grade group was a consistent predictor of the types of help needed. Specifically, **junior enlisted respondents were more likely to report many types of help needed than were respondents of other pay-grade groups.**

We also examined the linkage of the most frequently selected and prioritized problems with the types of help needed to cope with those problems. To address prioritized problems for Military Practices and Culture challenges, soldiers report they need the following types of help: General Information (i.e., about rules or policies or about what is available and how to access it), and Advice or Education (i.e., from people with experience to recommend the best solution for someone in a similar situation). For soldiers who prioritized the Work/Life Balance problem domain, a commonly reported type of assistance needed was Activities for fitness, recreation, stress relief, and family bonding. For their Own Well-Being, soldiers reported that the types of assistance they needed most were Emotional or Social Support, Professional Counseling, and Activities.

What Types of Resources Did Soldiers Use to Try to Meet Their Needs?

The large majority (85 percent) of respondents with reported problems and needs reached out to resources, whether individuals or programs, to meet the needs they

described in the survey. Of those who used resources, **the majority (61 percent) used both military and nonmilitary resources.** Popular military resources accessed for problems included the chain of command (40 percent), unit members not in the chain of command (39 percent), and a doctor or counselor provided by the military (33 percent). Popular nonmilitary resources included personal networks of family and friends (38 percent) and Internet resources, such as search engines, information pages, and social media sites (25 percent). The hypothesis was that urbanicity and distance of residence to post would predict both outcomes, but this did not hold true. **The only statistically significant predictor of the total number of contacts was total number of issues reported at the beginning of the survey.**

How Well, and Easily, Were Soldiers' Needs Met?

We also examined the barriers that soldiers experienced accessing resources used to address their needs, and the extent to which the resources addressed soldiers' needs for help. The most frequently reported barriers experienced by soldiers were long wait lists/response times for a military counselor or medical doctor (26 percent) and for CYS (21 percent); the perception that contacting the chain of command might hurt their career (19 percent); and experiencing the chain of command as unwelcoming or unfriendly (18 percent). **In general, both military and nonmilitary resources were rated as "all right" at meeting needs associated with specific problems** (which fell in the middle of a scale that went from "not at all" to "very well"). The findings from regression analyses of satisfaction with resources suggest that the Army is providing sufficient resources for soldiers to address their pressing needs, but that some personnel, such as junior enlisted and those who live farther from post, may not be benefiting as much from these resources as their colleagues. Note also that because we asked soldiers in detail about their most-pressing problems, by definition, we did not explore all of the challenges they faced in sufficient depth to determine if other, less-pressing needs might have been unmet.

What Impact Would Soldiers and Their Families Feel If Resources Were No Longer Available?

Soldiers who reported using any resources for their most pressing problems in the past year were asked to imagine the impact on them and their families if each of the types of military resources were no longer available. Although going to the chain of command for help is perceived by some respondents as having potentially negative implications, the loss of the chain of command as a resource for helping to resolve problems was rated as having a serious impact by 35 percent of soldiers—almost as many as the number who rated loss of treatment and counseling as having a serious impact (38 percent). These results suggest a range of different experiences with the role of chain of command as a resource for problem-solving.

Removal of access to other resources were perceived by our respondents as having less impact, although there are some important caveats to be considered. **The majority of respondents reported that they and their families would feel little to no effect if they lost access to FRGs (66 percent), relief or aid societies such as Army Emergency Relief (57 percent), and CYS (59 percent).** These are perceived impacts, and several aspects of the data and the programs themselves are relevant. Keep in mind that military resources vary in the degree to which they are designed to support soldiers generally (e.g., the chain of command) or to focus on targeted needs of very specific, and in some cases vulnerable, populations. For example, CYS is only a resource for soldiers with children, who perceived a significantly greater impact of loss of CYS resources than did soldiers without children. Likewise, FRGs are a resource for spouses and families, rather than soldiers specifically, so it is perhaps not surprising that soldiers report that they would feel little impact if they lost access to FRGs. However, the results suggest that FRGs could do a better job of helping soldiers, and not just spouses, to deal with family problems. Further, as so few respondents reported using a relief or aid society, it is possible that soldiers do not perceive the loss of this resource as serious because they have never used it, though that *does not negate its importance to those who do*. While the impact of removing this resource was rated as having little impact on respondents, it is unlikely that removing the programs would be without consequences. Certainly, our regression analysis revealed that, **for every resource, prior use of that specific resource significantly predicted greater perceived impact of resource loss**, indicating that soldiers who used the resource to help with one of their pressing needs would feel the most impact if the resource was taken away. Also recall that the survey asked these questions only of respondents who accessed resources for help meeting needs related to their top problems. It is possible that many users of these services may not have reported problems or needs, but would have had problems or needs—for childcare, for example—had these services not been available.

How Are Problems, Needs, and Resource Use Related to Attitudes About the Army?

We then examined how problems and needs related to various attitudes of relevance to the Army: perceived organizational support to the soldier from the Army, perceived adjustment to military life, and intentions to remain in the Army. We also categorized soldiers into a number of groups based on their status regarding problem resolution, help needed, resources accessed, and whether those resources met their needs. Membership in these groups was used as a predictor of attitudes, along with soldier demographic and post characteristics. We found consistent results across measures: **Soldiers who had one or more unmet needs had worse attitudes toward the Army than did those who accessed resources and had their needs met.** This finding demonstrates that reducing unmet needs may be a fruitful pathway to improving soldiers' attitudes toward the Army, thereby improving readiness as measured by soldiers' intentions to

remain in the Army as well as their spouses' support for those intentions.¹ Unmet needs also predicted soldiers' perceptions of the Army's commitment to them—and perceived organizational support is associated with increased retention intentions and improved job performance (Kurtessis et al., 2015).

Another consistent finding is that **respondents who had needs but used no resources had similar attitudes to soldiers who accessed resources and had their needs met**. Although it requires more exploration to determine the specific underlying dynamics, this finding suggests that some soldiers may be able to deal with some problems on their own, without the need of the Army's assistance.

Implications of Study Findings

To our knowledge, this survey represents the first Army-wide comprehensive and systematic needs assessment of soldiers. Thus, it was able to gauge relative importance of the problems that soldiers and families face, unlike studies that would focus only on a more specific set of concerns (e.g., health, deployment experiences, and spouse education and employment). The novel way the information was gathered in this study points to several high-level themes about problems and resource use in Army soldiers.

First, this study identified distinctive groups of soldiers with regard to their problems, types of help needed, and resource use. One is a group that appears to be resilient to or coping successfully with the challenges it faces.² For example, many individuals who reported that they had experienced problems did not report any needs for assistance. For these soldiers, it seems possible that they were able to deal with their problems on their own. We identified another group that had both problems and needs but did not use resources. The members of this group may seem to be a lost opportunity at connecting them with the system in place to help them. However, we also found that their attitudes toward the Army do not differ significantly from soldiers who accessed resources and had their needs met, suggesting that this group may also be resilient to its reported challenges.

Other subgroups of soldiers do not appear to be faring as well: specifically, junior enlisted soldiers. Based on the comprehensive array of issues and problem domains presented to respondents in our survey, we know that the most-frequent problem domains

¹ Note that retention is not a specified component of unit readiness as described in AR 220-1, but it does affect key components of personnel readiness; also, soldier and spouse support for retention are linked to retention itself (e.g., Heffner and Gade, 2003; Segal and Harris, 1993). In fact, the regulation for the Army Retention Program (AR 601-280, 2011) does state that its goals include reenlistment of qualified soldiers in order to support both end-state and readiness requirements, hence drawing a direct tie between retention and readiness.

² Note that resilience does not have a standard definition in the scientific literature, but generally encapsulates the concept of individuals or families being able to bounce back or successfully cope with stressors. See, e.g., Meadows, Miller, and Robson (2015).

confronting soldiers and their families in the past year were related to Military Practices and Culture, Work/Life Balance, and Soldier's Own Well-Being. Junior enlisted soldiers tended to report more issues within problem domains than did other pay-grade groups. More of the junior enlisted personnel also reported less-common problems, such as Financial or Legal Problems. This finding suggests that although it may be tempting to focus resources on the most common problems across the Army population, an exclusive focus on modal problems would negatively affect some demographic groups in which less common but still serious problems concentrate disproportionately (in this example, junior enlisted personnel). Across all problems and among respondents who reported needs, Advice, Activities, and General Information were frequently reported. Junior enlisted stand out as a demographic group with the highest rates of reporting help needed compared with other pay-grade groups.

Our findings also reveal the types of programs needed most by soldiers and their families. Programs that focus on providing advice for challenges related to Military Practices and Culture, for example, would be responding to one of the highest demand signals in the data. In addition, for all the most common problem-need pairs, we could identify an Army resource whose mission seemed to encompass the needs. However, the fact that some needs still go unmet despite this apparent full coverage of soldier needs by existing Army programs raises further questions.

Primarily, can soldiers and their families *find* these programs? That is, to what extent are soldiers and their families aware of available resources, what they do, and how to access them? Ensuring awareness of existing support services, particularly to Army personnel and families with the greatest need (junior enlisted personnel, dual-military couples, single parents), is a perennial leadership challenge (e.g., Booth, Segal, and Bell, 2007), which has been raised in previous studies as well (Booth, Segal, and Bell, 2007; Castro, Adler, and Britt, 2006; Miller et al., 2011b).

Thus, another key way of looking at the data is to examine those who had *any unmet needs*. About 11 percent of all soldiers have at least one unmet need, and about 22 percent of soldiers who expressed having needs on the survey and reached out to resources had at least one unmet need. Figure 6.1 summarizes the overall survey findings for all soldiers who responded to the survey, showing the progression of respondents through the coping process embedded in the survey.

A substantial proportion of soldiers faced challenges for which they identified a need and reached out to resources for assistance, but found that the assistance was not sufficient. These types of experiences are worthwhile to explore further. Also, individuals who accessed resources typically accessed multiple types of resources. Our data do not reveal “dosage”: That is, any person who attempted to use a resource was counted, but we did not ask how many times a given resource was accessed or the amount or type of help provided. It is therefore possible that the resource itself was adequate to meet the need, but the dosage that soldiers obtained from the resource was not sufficient.

Figure 6.1
Progression of Soldiers With Problems, Help Needed, Resources Accessed, and Needs Not Met

NOTE: This figure represents the progression of the survey through problems, needs, resource use, and satisfaction with resources, showing the proportion of soldiers who meet each description. For example, survey findings show that approximately seven out of ten Army soldiers reported problems and needs and that one out of ten of Army soldiers continued to have unmet needs despite using resources for their needs.

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Another possibility is that soldiers reached out to many resources, but none of the resources were appropriate for their problem and/or need. That is, the results could represent some soldiers and their families searching for the resource that would actually meet their needs. Thus, the high average number of resources accessed could indicate multiple referrals as soldiers, and providers, attempt to locate the solution. In some cases, they may never successfully do so. In other cases, the soldiers' answers could reflect the experience of being on course to find a solution but not yet reaching one at the time of the survey.

Another theme is that navigating the system is a challenge. This concern has also been noted in previous research, and military efforts to address it have included listing

resources on websites, colocating multiple resources within one center, and standing up Army OneSource/Military OneSource to help guide service members and spouses. As we note above, the Military Practices and Culture domain, which includes issues such as “lack of proper guidance or sponsorship” and “figuring out how to use ‘the system’—where to go, with whom to talk” among the underlying issues within that domain, is the most frequently reported prioritized problem. Other problem domains include issues that speak more tangentially to navigation problems as well, including problems with the health care system. The types of help that respondents reported they need could also point in the direction of confusion regarding how best to approach problem-solving. Advice or Education from those with experience in a given situation was reported as one of the top types of help needed, and the need was particularly prominent for junior enlisted soldiers.

Given the proliferation of programs during the long years of war and the time demands on both junior soldiers and rising NCOs and officers who might normally be expected to help guide them, it is possible that the current generation of midlevel and new soldiers is less versed with the options now available to assist them (e.g., Langkamer Ratwani et al., 2012; Shanker, 2014).

Furthermore, our findings suggest that even if the chain of command within the unit is fully prepared to assist soldiers with navigating the system, some soldiers are wary of accessing this resource. When asked about barriers both for resources that were accessed and resources that were not, relatively high proportions of soldiers (19 percent) indicated that they had concerns about career effects when reaching out to their chain of command. Moreover, for those who did reach out to that resource, another relatively frequently reported barrier was a sense that the chain of command was not particularly friendly. These concerns permeate other findings, as well.

Although the impact of removing the chain of command as a source of help was one of the larger reported impacts, write-ins for problems generated a specific theme of toxic and poor leadership, particularly among junior enlisted personnel. The phrase “toxic leadership” has been employed in recent years to refer to leaders who are selfish, uncaring, highly critical, abusive, aggressive, manipulative, controlling, and self-promoting at the expense of others (Steele, 2011). Both the specific phrase and behaviors conceptually similar to this concept were generated in our survey problem write-ins. Such leaders may actually succeed in meeting organizational goals and mission objectives; it is the method by which they do so that can erode unit morale and climate. The Center for Army Leadership conducted an in-depth analysis of toxic leadership within the Army using the research literature and anonymous data from its 2009 and 2010 CASAL, which does not include junior enlisted personnel. That examination found that the vast majority (83 percent) of Army leaders had observed a toxic leader in the previous year, and more than a third had direct interaction with three or more such leaders (Steele, 2011). This finding is of concern because toxic, hostile, or otherwise poor leadership has a negative impact on perceptions of organizational support in

turn (Kurtessis et al., 2015). Outcomes of low perceived organizational support include low commitment; that is, in the employment social exchange, the organization is not supportive, and the employee is not committed.

While it is possible that the chain of command is a victim of continued high operational tempo and is being asked to do more with less as the Army downsizes, it is also possible that the culture has changed in ways not foreseen. Caring for and maintaining the well-being of their soldiers has consistently been one of the duties of unit NCOs. However, an Army in garrison rather than deployed (or preparing for deployment) is a relatively new Army to many of its members, and it has been suggested that the culture of NCOs checking on the well-being of their personnel is not as well understood and implemented in today's Army, and that this level of involvement in the well-being of personnel requires new and unfamiliar skills for NCOs (e.g., U.S. Department of the Army, 2010; Langkamer Ratwani et al., 2012).

A final theme throughout was issues with soldiers' health and well-being, including finding adequate time for sleep, a healthy diet and physical exercise, as well as mood changes, such as depression, impatience, anger, aggression, and anxiety. A substantial percentage of soldiers also reported needing counseling to address their problems, and those who actually used counseling or a physician reported long wait times to see a doctor as a barrier to care. This theme spanned several problem domains; thus, we synthesize them here. Although not one of the three most frequently reported problem domains, challenges in the Health Care System Problems domain were prioritized by about a quarter reporting issues more generally. Our exploration of the prioritized "other" problems also revealed comments that frequently addressed the Health Care System Problems domain. Issues that were commonly reported in other problem domains also reveal issues related to soldier health and well-being, broadly speaking. For example, the issues "finding time for sleep/healthy diet/physical exercise" (an issue in the domain of Work/Life Balance) and "mood changes: depression, . . . , anxiety" (within Soldier's Own Well-Being) may also be relevant when considering the overall demand signal for the health care system. Professional counseling was a frequently prioritized type of help needed, and while "professional counseling" may be somewhat subject to interpretation (e.g., some soldiers may consider chaplains to be professional counselors), the sheer frequency of the soldiers reporting that type of need is surprising given the contravening narrative surrounding issues of stigma. Further, an examination of the problem-need linkage revealed that counseling as a need was linked specifically with the problem domains of Military Practices and Culture and Soldier's Own Well-Being, suggesting that soldiers perceive a need for counseling to address a broad range of problems.

Of those soldiers who accessed a military doctor or counselor, however, 26 percent reported a long wait time as a barrier. Those who accessed a military doctor or counselor reported that they met their needs at a level that is just below "all right." This could be a sign of problems with dosage, access, over-optimistic expectations about how rapid improvement should be, or simply difficult-to-resolve challenges. The examina-

tion of the write-ins provided potential explanations: To address issues in the domain of Health Care System Problems, soldiers reported that they needed more health care providers (to reduce wait times); providers to help with chronic issues such as injuries, pain management, mental health; and more or more-fully staffed urgent care/walk-in centers as an alternative to the emergency room or a long wait for a primary care physician. It is possible that partnering with civilian community resources may enable the Army to meet some of these needs more readily.

How Study Findings Can Support Necessary Organizational Changes

Ultimately, modification of the benefits package offered to soldiers and their families can be seen as implementation of an organizational change effort. While often considered, such efforts are easier discussed than they are successfully implemented, as witnessed by a large literature replete with cautionary tales (e.g., Kotter, 1995; Fernandez and Rainey, 2006; Martins, 2011). Guidance exists for some best practices synthesized from the work that has been done (e.g., Fernandez and Rainey, 2006), although the suggestions themselves may seem so basic as to not need mention.

However, taking some of the basic recommendations for granted may foil change efforts. For example, one of the initial suggestions is to persuade relevant stakeholders that change is indeed both necessary and achievable. That is, change represents a viable solution to a legitimate problem. This survey represents one piece of the conversation needed to make that argument with one very relevant group of stakeholders: soldiers and their families. It is widely known that the Army is in the process of downsizing and must use its resources wisely. Helping soldiers understand how the Army is working through the process of most efficiently using the resources for their well-being based on their own reported problems and needs must be part of their discussion. Discussion of the resources harvested by reductions in services should also explain where the resources are being reallocated and how the reallocation aligns with soldier and family needs.

We offer the following cautions. A careful communication plan describing a change and rationale for it, directed to the relevant audiences, is required for any changes to programs—discussion of perceived impact of removal, and satisfaction, as based on information from this survey, is not sufficient to justify the removal of resources. The data in the survey represent a special subset: people with problems. Those who are successfully using resources preventatively or preemptively, who are able to avoid serious problems, are deliberately not our focus. While our data fill a key gap in the Army's situational awareness of the quality of life space, they are not sufficient in and of themselves for leaders to make final decisions. Multiple types of data would be required to craft a compelling argument for decisionmakers (and soldiers and families themselves). Much of it, the Army may already have on hand. These data include information on usage and satisfaction of resources by the general population, population demographics, cost/benefit considerations, and considerations of reversibility of any

decisions. In addition, we offer that explicit consideration of the context is a necessity. A program may serve a vital function as a gateway to resources, even if it is not itself seen as essential. Our findings suggest that navigation of the resource environment is itself a vital resource function, though soldiers may not identify it as such. Another consideration is the essential nature of some programs for relatively small constituencies: Even if a program is not widely used, does not solve problems for the majority of the population of those with problems, and the cost-benefit analysis works out in favor of program elimination, some programs may have an inherent importance to vulnerable constituencies that would make their elimination problematic in the context of DoD's "social compact" with service members and their families (Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense, 2002).

Where Additional Research and Analysis Are Needed

Although the survey provided a wealth of information, the discussion in this chapter highlights several important areas into which more research is needed. Moreover, the first broad application of the methodology revealed some areas the Army should explore further. One example is the group of soldiers who indicated they have problems but no needs for assistance. Our data offer some insight into this group and suggest the possibility that soldiers and their families overcome their problems with application of coping skills and resources such that their problems are resolved (i.e., they are resilient). However, we would recommend a set of branching questions to delve more deeply into these soldiers' reactions and attitudes toward their problems and finding solutions.

Another area the Army will likely want to know more about is the process of how resources are accessed. For example, do people simultaneously access many resources for a complicated problem, or do they access resources sequentially in response to not being satisfied with prior resources? Although we can speculate, additional information on intensity of resource use and reasons for seeking multiple resources would be useful. Additional analysis of existing data at the garrison level and qualitative data collection may help shed light on the particulars with regard to these findings, as well as how best to apply findings at the local garrison level.

The Army also may want to consider complementing this study with information from the spouse perspective. While our data speak in large part to both soldiers' and families' challenges, our findings with regard to impact of removal of resources (e.g., CYS and FRGs) suggest it could be wise to collect these data in particular from the spouse perspective as well.

The Army should consider the following:

- In existing leadership training, discuss negative soldier perceptions regarding the chain of command and the potential consequences of those perceptions. Such

training should highlight that it is better for the Army if soldiers feel comfortable coming to leadership with problems than for problems to remain hidden and potentially worsen or interfere with readiness; it should also be made clear that training that merely informs participants that a problem is common can actually be harmful because it normalizes biases or existing behavior (see, e.g., diversity training; King, 2015). This training could also ensure that leaders themselves are fully aware of where to refer soldiers for what types of problems so that their own lack of awareness or discomfort with sensitive issues does not lead to an implicit or explicit message to subordinates that they do not want to be approached.

- Seek additional ways to make soldiers and those who assist them more aware of available resources and how to get them. Some specific suggestions to consider and assess include offering additional training to NCOs to assist with this navigation; additional marketing of ACS and Army OneSource, which are designed as one-stop referral shops for installation or local community support; ensuring that resource providers are generally aware of available resources and can provide referrals; and communicating to soldiers using email announcements from unit leaders and through social media. Soldiers indicate these are some of the best ways to tell them about resources to help them address their problems, and these venues are more amenable to top-down Army initiatives than are other modes of outreach, such as through friends and family, another top soldier choice.
- Explore ways to improve user navigation of resources and coordination among resources to improve efficiency. There may be a better way to assist navigation through the system; we have already outlined some possibilities to leverage existing resources. Further, subsequent research drawing from and supplementing the data gathered in the current study may speak to the issues underlying this finding and clarify the dynamics.
- Increase capacity for childcare, professional counseling, and medical care. Although some of the barriers reported are not new issues, such as long wait times at CYS and military treatment facilities, our survey results suggest that they are still persistent and are not necessarily triaged effectively by the systems when confronted with soldiers addressing specific problems and needs. Wait times for counselors and doctors provided by the military are particularly troubling in light of the numbers of soldiers who indicated needs for counseling and emotional support and military efforts over the past decade to meet this demand.
- Partner with civilian systems to address health care demand. Issues of supply would need examination for behavioral health and specialty care in some areas, as would issues of quality of care for behavioral health in the civilian market (Institute of Medicine of the National Academies, 2006; President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health, 2003; Burnam et al., 2008). However, well-known models for partnering with the civilian health care system already exist, such as the Fort Drum Military-Civilian Regional Healthcare Partner-

ship. Other research indicates that such partnerships can take time to develop and depend on the local community and installation characteristics (e.g., Lachman, Resetar, and Camm, 2016; Moore et al., 2016; Pedersen et al., 2015), and guidance on how to go about creating these partnerships can be somewhat limited in the Army medical domain (Moore et al., 2016). Resources such as the Privatization and Partnerships Division at the Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff for Installation Management are available to assist these efforts. Our findings suggest it may be worthwhile exploring the policies necessary to facilitate these types of collaborations at the installation and regional level, to ensure that the partnerships are being developed and implemented effectively (e.g., Lachman, Resetar, and Camm, 2016; Moore et al., 2016; Pedersen et al., 2015). To address soldier suggestions for more urgent-care clinics, chiropractors, physical therapists, and pain management specialists, garrison-level collaborations with local providers may be more efficient and expedient in areas with sufficient resources.

Work is under way to answer some of the questions raised by the current data. The Army is well positioned to answer many of the remaining questions about satisfaction and usage, costs and benefits, and projections of the demographics of the future force, and now has relevant information about what soldiers themselves see as their greatest problems, most frequent needs, and the resources that they consider in addressing their own challenges. This information contributes to ongoing efforts to maintain a fighting force that can cope with life's challenges and focus on the mission of the Army.

Survey Instrument

This study recruited soldiers through email messages to take a web-based survey. The survey web page was programmed so that soldiers were presented only the items that might apply to them (e.g., single soldiers did not see items about spouses, soldiers without children did not see items about children). In addition to skipping questions that did not apply to the respondent, the web-based version was programmed to auto-fill some questions based on prior responses. For example, the survey displayed which problems had been selected as top-two problems when asking the respondent about what types of help were needed. The full text of the survey is presented in this appendix, with notes in brackets indicating skip patterns and auto-fills that were in place programmatically in the web-based version of the survey. The response options to non-demographic items (e.g., questions on problems, needs, resources, and barriers) were randomized to prevent order effects in survey responses.

Welcome to the Today's Soldier Survey

If you are a Soldier who is 18 years or older, please continue to the next page. This survey is designed for Soldiers in the Active Component who are 18 years or older. Future versions of the survey may be adapted to address a wider population. If you are not a Soldier who is 18 years or older, you may discontinue the survey and we thank you for your interest.

Today's Soldier Survey

SURVEY APPROVAL AUTHORITY:

U.S. ARMY RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR THE BEHAVIORAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

SURVEY CONTROL NUMBER: DAPE-ARI-AO-14-17

RCS: MILPC-3

Privacy Advisory: Please note that this consent form provides information that describes why this information is being collected and how it will be used.

Purpose of the Survey

The Army wants to learn more about the needs of Soldiers and their families and how well those needs are being met. The Army has asked the RAND Corporation, a non-profit research organization, to develop a survey that will provide the Army with up-to-date information on whether those needs are being met, which support services are working well, and which need improvement.

You, along with other Soldiers, are being asked to take this survey. Your participation in the survey will help Soldiers and Army families by informing installation commands about the strengths and weaknesses of its Soldier and family support programs. This knowledge will guide future improvements to these programs. In a time of declining resources, it will enable the Army to prioritize services that are most important to you. Your responses are critical in ensuring that the Army has the best information possible in order to support its Soldiers and their families.

Who Is Being Asked to Take the Survey

This survey is being offered to Soldiers ages 18 years and older.

What Survey Participation Involves

Participation involves completing this Web-based survey, which should take about 20 minutes to complete.

The survey will ask you about different kinds of problems you may have encountered in the past year, about what kinds of assistance you needed to help you with those problems, and whether you were satisfied with the kinds of support available to you for those problems. Finally, we will ask some background questions, and you will have the opportunity to comment on the survey itself or on issues that the survey did not cover.

This information will be used to assist Army leaders in learning how well units are meeting the needs of Soldiers and their families. This information will also help leadership decide where they should focus Soldier and family support efforts.

Confidentiality

We will treat your answers as confidential. This survey is not designed to collect personally identifying information, but if it is provided it will be deleted by the research team before they analyze the results. Your responses will be combined with other survey respondents to report the views and experiences of Soldiers. Only members of the RAND research team will have access to individual responses.

Participation Is Entirely Voluntary

Your participation in this survey is voluntary. Your command will not know whether you participated in this survey, nor will it know how you answered survey questions. You may decide not to participate now or at any time. If you feel uncomfortable answer-

ing any of the questions, you may skip to the next question. You may stop taking the survey at any time without any negative consequences.

Whom to Contact

If you have any technical issues in taking this survey, please contact [Survey Help](#) [[link to send email to technical assistance](#)].

If you have any questions about the purpose or content of the survey, please send them to:

Carra Sims
csims@rand.org
(703) 413-1100 ext. 5212

If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject, please contact:

Human Subjects Protection Committee
hspcadmin@rand.org
(310) 393-0411 ext. 6124

Consent to participate:

- ☐ I am under 18 years of age. [[If checked, show message: This survey is intended for service members 18 and older. If you are under 18 years of age, we thank you for your interest and you may now discontinue the survey.](#)]
- ☐ I am 18 or older, but I do not want to participate in this survey. [[If checked, show survey exit message.](#)]
- ☐ I am 18 or older, and I have read and understand this statement. I agree to participate in this survey. [[If checked, proceed to next item.](#)]

Study Information

1. How did you hear about this survey?

Please check all that apply:

- ☐ Survey invitation email
- ☐ Flyer/poster on post
- ☐ Email/announcement from unit leader
- ☐ Email/announcement from Family Readiness Group (FRG)
- ☐ Friend/family/coworker
- ☐ Unit newsletter
- ☐ Unit website
- ☐ Installation newspaper
- ☐ Installation website
- ☐ TV
- ☐ Social media (Twitter, Facebook)
- ☐ Other _____

2. Not including this study, how many military-related surveys or research focus groups have you been asked to participate in within the past year?

- ☐ 0 (none)
- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2–4
- ☐ 5 or more

Key Demographics

3. Which best describes you?

Check one:

- ☐ Single service member
- ☐ Married service member
- ☐ Service member's civilian spouse [If checked, show message: This survey is intended for service members 18 and older. If you do not meet this requirement, we thank you for your interest and you may now discontinue the survey.]
- ☐ None of the above [If checked, show message: This survey is intended for service members 18 and older. If you are do not meet this requirement, we thank you for your interest and you may now discontinue the survey.]

Please tell us about your military status so we can be aware of which policies and programs may apply to you.

4. What is your Service?

Check one:

- ☐ Army
- ☐ Navy [If checked, show message: This survey is intended only for Army Active Duty service members. If you are not a member of the Army, we thank you for your interest and you may now discontinue the survey.]
- ☐ Air Force [If checked, show message: This survey is intended only for Army Active Duty service members. If you are not a member of the Army, we thank you for your interest and you may now discontinue the survey.]
- ☐ Marines [If checked, show message: This survey is intended only for Army Active Duty service members. If you are not a member of the Army, we thank you for your interest and you may now discontinue the survey.]
- ☐ None of the above [If checked, show message: This survey is intended only for Army Active Duty service members. If you are not a member of the Army, we thank you for your interest and you may now discontinue the survey.]

5. What is your current service status?

Check all that apply:

- ☐ Active duty
- ☐ National Guard [If checked, display message: This survey is intended only for Active Duty Army service members. We thank you for your interest and you may now discontinue the survey.]
- ☐ Reserve [If checked, display message: This survey is intended only for Active Duty Army service members. We thank you for your interest and you may now discontinue the survey.]

6. Which best describes your spouse? **[Married soldiers only]**

Check all that apply:

- ☐ Never served in the military
- ☐ Military veteran
- ☐ Currently active duty military
- ☐ Currently National Guard or Reserve

7. How many years have you been married to your current spouse? **[Married soldiers only]**

_____ year/s *(If less than 1 year, please enter 0)*

8. How many dependents do you have in each age group [not counting your spouse]? By dependents, we mean people who depend on you [and/or your spouse] for more than half of their financial support.

Age of Dependents	Number	Number Who Live with Me
a. Under 2 years		
b. 2–5 years		
c. 6–13 years		
d. 14–22 years		
e. 23–64 years		
f. 65 years or over		
g. ☐ I have no dependents		

9. Have you returned from a deployment within the past year?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

10. Has your spouse returned from a deployment within the past year? **[Married soldiers only]**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

11. At which military installation are you currently stationed?

[Option to select from drop-down list of all sampled installations]

12. How long have you been stationed at this installation?

_____ Months

Problems

Life unavoidably creates changes for Soldiers and their families that can sometimes take the form of problems. We developed a list of general categories of problems that may come up:

- Military Practices and Culture
- Work/Life Balance
- Household Management
- Financial or Legal Problems
- Spouse's Well-Being
- Health Care System Problems
- Relationship Problems
- Child Well-Being
- Soldier's Own Well-Being

We'd like to ask you to check off the kinds of problems you experienced. Then we will ask about what you needed to deal with these problems, the ways you tried to solve the problems, and your satisfaction with the kinds of assistance available to you.

Military Practices and Culture

13. Please check any problems you experienced with Military Practices and Culture during the past year:

- ☐ Lack of proper guidance or sponsorship
- ☐ Adjusting to military language, organization, culture
- ☐ Figuring out how to use "the system"—where to go, with whom to talk to get help or information
- ☐ Getting people in your unit to listen to you, take you seriously, treat you with respect
- ☐ Rumors/gossip in the military community
- ☐ Not being able to stay at/go to the military installation you prefer
- ☐ Lack of or incorrect information about deployments
- ☐ Poor communication with coworkers or superiors
- ☐ Issues with spouse or partner adjustment to military culture
- ☐ Other problems dealing with military practices and culture

Please specify: _____

- ☐ I did not experience any of the above problems.

Work/Life Balance**14. Please check any problems [you (single soldier)/you or your spouse (married soldier)] experienced related to Work/Life Balance during the past year.**

- ☐ Finding time for sleep/healthy diet/physical exercise
- ☐ Being able to pursue educational opportunities
- ☐ Your spouse being able to pursue educational opportunities or career [married soldiers only]
- ☐ Finding nearby or affordable options for recreation/stress relief/family time
- ☐ Long work hours/inconvenient schedule for you
- ☐ Long work hours/inconvenient schedule for your spouse [married soldiers only]
- ☐ Not enough leave time for Soldiers before or after a deployment or TDY
- ☐ Other problems related to work/life balance

Please specify: _____

- ☐ I did not experience any of the above problems.

Household Management**15. Please check any problems regarding Household Management you experienced in the past year.**

- ☐ Moving/storage of belongings
- ☐ Theft/break-in/vandalism of home or barracks room
- ☐ Transportation issues
- ☐ Bills/checkbook management/budgeting
- ☐ Time management (getting everything done in the amount of time you have)
- ☐ Housework/yard work problems
- ☐ Finding suitable housing or poor housing/barracks quality
- ☐ Home repairs/work orders/car maintenance
- ☐ Other household management problems

Please specify: _____

- ☐ I did not experience any of the above problems.

Financial or Legal Problems

16. Please check any Financial or Legal problems you experienced in the past year:

- ☐ Pay issues (access to pay, errors)
- ☐ Trouble paying debt or bills
- ☐ Car or other property item repossession
- ☐ Bankruptcy or foreclosure
- ☐ Power of attorney problems
- ☐ Child custody/family legal problems
- ☐ Filing for legal separation or divorce
- ☐ Finding suitable employment for nonmilitary spouse [married soldiers only]
- ☐ Job security/preparation to transition
- ☐ UCMJ or other disciplinary problems
- ☐ Other financial or legal problems

Please specify: _____

- ☐ I did not experience any of the above problems.

Health Care System Problems

17. Please check any problems you experienced with Health Care in the past year:

- ☐ Getting access to military health care (e.g., waiting time for an appointment; distance to treatment facility; availability of needed services; hours/days open)
- ☐ Understanding your military health benefits
- ☐ Problems handling military health insurance claims
- ☐ Managing dependents' health problems
- ☐ Understanding dependents' military health benefits
- ☐ Poor quality of military health care services
- ☐ Problems with managing pregnancy/childbirth
- ☐ Managing health care needs of family members who are not military dependents
- ☐ Problems managing injuries or illness
- ☐ Other health care system problems

Please specify: _____

- ☐ I did not experience any of the above problems.

Relationship Problems

18. Please check any Relationship Problems you experienced with your spouse or partner in the past year:

- ☐ Not applicable: I wasn't in a relationship in the past year.
- ☐ Not enough communication with spouse/partner during a deployment
- ☐ Problems communicating/expressing feelings
- ☐ Growing apart/in different directions
- ☐ Arguments
- ☐ Physical or verbal abuse
- ☐ Infidelity (cheating)
- ☐ Divorce/Separation/End of relationship
- ☐ Little or no physical affection
- ☐ Changing roles or responsibilities in the family/marriage
- ☐ Trouble reuniting/reconnecting after a deployment
- ☐ Trouble starting a relationship
- ☐ Not being stationed together during deployment [married soldiers with active duty spouses only]
- ☐ Other marital/relationship problems

Please specify: _____

- ☐ I did not experience any of the above problems.

Child Well-Being Problems

[Soldiers with dependent children (age 22 or younger) only]

19. Please check any Child Well-Being problems your child or children experienced in the past year:

- ☐ Childcare problems (quality, distance, cost, waiting list, hours, etc.)
- ☐ School problems (quality, distance, expense, access, etc.)
- ☐ Child's poor or dropping grades
- ☐ Emotional/behavior problems at school or daycare
- ☐ Emotional/behavior problems at home
- ☐ Child's trouble bonding with parent
- ☐ Child's health and safety problems
- ☐ Trouble adjusting after moving/relocation
- ☐ Other child well-being problems

Please specify: _____

- ☐ I did not experience any of the above problems.

Problems with Your Own Well-Being

20. Please check any problems you experienced with Your Own Well-Being in the past year.

- ☐ Feeling stressed/overwhelmed/tired
- ☐ Loneliness/boredom
- ☐ Mood changes: depression, impatience, anger, aggression, anxiety
- ☐ Substance abuse (alcohol, tobacco, drugs)
- ☐ Grieving the loss of a friend or loved one
- ☐ Physical injury/illness
- ☐ Problems communicating with others
- ☐ Trouble sleeping
- ☐ Problems as a result of risk-taking (like reckless driving)
- ☐ Difficulty controlling my spending
- ☐ Victim of a crime
- ☐ Other well-being problems

Please specify: _____

- ☐ I did not experience any of the above problems.

Problems with Your Spouse's Well-Being

[Married soldiers only]

21. Please check any problems related to Your Spouse's Well-Being.

In the past year, did YOUR SPOUSE experience problems with:

- ☐ Feeling stressed/overwhelmed/tired
- ☐ Loneliness/boredom
- ☐ Mood changes: depression, impatience, anger, aggression, anxiety
- ☐ Substance abuse (alcohol, tobacco, drugs)
- ☐ Grieving the loss of a friend or loved one
- ☐ Physical injury/illness
- ☐ Problems communicating with others
- ☐ Trouble sleeping
- ☐ Risk-taking (like reckless driving)
- ☐ Difficulty controlling spending
- ☐ Victim of a crime
- ☐ Other problems related to your spouse's well-being

Please specify: _____

- ☐ My spouse did not experience any of the above problems.

Other Problems

22. If you didn't see a description of the challenges you faced, please briefly describe any OTHER type of problem you experienced in the past 12 months. You'll have a chance at the end of the survey to provide more detail about these issues, if you wish.

[Three empty numbered text boxes for write-in responses]

1.
2.
3.

Top-Two Problems

[If the soldier selected two or fewer problems, survey skips to section "Problems linked to needs." If the soldier selected more than two problems, they are prompted to select top two problems in question 23.]

23. Check the TWO most significant problems from the list of problems you indicated you faced in the past 12 months.

[Displays all issues selected from each problem domain, organized by problem domain.

Sample auto-filled display for a respondent who selected three Military Practices and Culture issues, four Household Management issues, and one Own Well-Being issue:]

☐ **Military Practices and Culture**

- Figuring out how to use the "system"—where to go, with whom to talk to get help or information
- Not being able to stay at/go to the military installation you prefer
- Issues with spouse or partner adjustment to military culture

☐ **Household Management**

- Moving/storage of belongings
- Transportation issues
- Time management (getting everything done in the amount of time you have)
- Home repairs/work orders/car maintenance

☐ **Problems with your Own Well-Being**

- Loneliness/Boredom

*If you're having trouble deciding on only two, please pick the two that you would like to address in the survey right now. There will be a place for additional comments at the end of the survey where you can describe other problems.

Problems Linked to Needs

First Top-Two Problem Linked to Needs

24. What kinds of help did you NEED to deal with the problem below?

[Problem and issues auto-filled below from results of question 23, or, for respondents who selected two or fewer problem areas, item auto-fills with first problem from Problems portion of the survey, items 13 through 22. Display below simulated for respondent who selected three issues from Military Practices and Culture and then selected this problem area as a top-two problem in question 23.]

Military Practices and Culture

- Figuring out how to use the “system”—where to go, with whom to talk to get help or information
- Not being able to stay at/go to the military installation you prefer
- Issues with spouse or partner adjustment to military culture

Please check all that apply:

- ☐ General information: for example, about rules or policies, or about what’s available and how to access it
- ☐ Specific information: for example, about training or deployment schedules or how spouses can reach deployed troops
- ☐ An advocate: someone to try to get help for you
- ☐ Advice or education: people with experience to recommend the best solution for someone in your situation
- ☐ Emotional or social support
- ☐ Professional counseling
- ☐ A helping hand: loans, donations, services to help out with some of your responsibilities
- ☐ Activities: for fitness, recreation, stress relief, family bonding
- ☐ Other needs that don’t fit into the categories above

Please specify: _____

- ☐ I had no need for assistance in this area.

[If the soldier has selected more than two needs, an additional prompt on the next screen asks the soldier to pick the top two greatest needs. The following example is for a respondent who selected four types of needs for problems with Military Practices and Culture.]

The following is a list of the types of needs you indicated that you had for dealing with your problems. For each problem category, please pick which TWO you think were the greatest, most significant needs you had:

Military Practices and Culture (pick two)

- ☐ An advocate
- ☐ Advice or education
- ☐ Emotional or social support
- ☐ Activities

[If only one problem area was selected, and respondent selects “I had no need for assistance in this area,” respondents skips to Background Information.

If only one problem area was selected, and respondent indicates a need, survey skips to Needs/Ways of Meeting Needs.

If a second problem area was selected, the respondent proceeds to question 25.]

Second Top Two Problem Linked to Needs

25. What kinds of help did you NEED to deal with the problem below?

[Problem and issues auto-filled below from results of question 23, or, for respondents who selected two problem areas, item auto-fills with second problem from Problems portion of the survey, items 13 through 22. Display below simulated for respondent who selected one issue from Problems with your Own Well-Being and then selected this problem area as a top-two problem in question 23.]

☐ **Problems with your Own Well-Being**

— Loneliness/Boredom

Please check all that apply:

- ☐ General information: for example, about rules or policies, or about what's available and how to access it
- ☐ Specific information: for example, about training or deployment schedules or how spouses can reach deployed troops
- ☐ An advocate: someone to try to get help for you
- ☐ Advice or education: people with experience to recommend the best solution for someone in your situation
- ☐ Emotional or social support
- ☐ Professional counseling
- ☐ A helping hand: loans, donations, services to help out with some of your responsibilities
- ☐ Activities: for fitness, recreation, stress relief, family bonding
- ☐ Other needs that don't fit into the categories above

Please specify: _____

- ☐ I had no need for assistance in this area.

[If the soldier has selected more than two needs, an additional prompt on the next screen asks the soldier to pick the top two greatest needs, as shown in the example in item 24.]

[If respondent selects "I had no need for assistance in this area" for the second problem and had also responded this way for the first problem, respondent skips to Background Information.

If the respondent indicates a need for either first or second problem, survey proceeds to Needs/Ways of Meeting Needs.]

Needs/Ways of Meeting Needs

26. [Question auto-fills based on answers about problems and needs from prior questions. The following simulates a display for a respondent who chose a need for Specific Information for problems with Military Practices and Culture.]

Please check any of the following you used or tried to use to try to meet this need that you said you had:

For help with Military Practices and Culture problems, you said that you needed: Specific Information: for example, about training or deployment schedules, or how spouses can reach deployed troops

Army Contacts

- ☐ Army Family Readiness Group
- ☐ Unit members not in the chain of command
- ☐ Installation Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) (for example, recreation/sports services such as intramural sports, libraries, post gymnasium)
- ☐ Army Community Service (ACS) (for example, financial services, relocation assistance, family services)
- ☐ Child and Youth Services (for example, on-post childcare, youth sports)
- ☐ Army OneSource, post homepage, or other military Internet resources or social media (such as Twitter, Facebook)
- ☐ Chain of command (squad leaders, NCOs/officers, Rear Detachment Commanders, SHARP advocates, or designated POCs for family issues)
- ☐ Chaplain or members of military religious or spiritual group
- ☐ Counselor or doctor provided by the military
- ☐ Relief/aid society (Army Emergency Relief)
- ☐ Other military contacts

Please specify: _____

Nonmilitary Contacts

- ☐ Government or community resources for family services (for example, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, WIC, public library, Head Start, community center)
- ☐ Private clubs, organizations, recreation or fitness centers
- ☐ Private off-post childcare
- ☐ Religious or spiritual group or leader
- ☐ Private doctor or counselor
- ☐ Internet resources (such as WebMD, Google, Craigslist, Wikipedia, Yahoo, Twitter, Facebook)
- ☐ Personal networks (friends, family)
- ☐ Other nonmilitary contacts

Please specify: _____

I didn't contact anyone for help with this need.

[This item repeats as needed for each problem-need pair, as many as four (e.g., two needs for each of top-two problems).]

Potential Challenges in Using Resources

27. If you said you DID NOT USE any of the resources listed above for the particular needs you chose, please check the boxes for reasons you did not use those resources.

[This item auto-fills based on the resources the respondent indicated not using. The following simulates a display for a respondent who did not select AFRG, Unit members, etc. to assist with needs in Needs/Ways of Meeting Needs.]

Please check any that apply:

Resources Not Used	Not Applicable for My Needs	Other Things Met My Needs	Difficult to Find Information About It/ Never Heard of It	Inconvenient Location or Access	Might Hurt My Career or Reputation to Use It	Not Welcoming/ Unfriendly	Long Wait List/Response Time	Poor Reputation or Service
Army Family Readiness Group	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Unit members not in the chain of command	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Installation Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Army Community Services (ACS)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Chaplain or members of military religious group	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Counselor or MD	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Relief or Aid Society	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

28. For the resources you DID USE, did you have any of the following problems? Please check any that apply.

[This item auto-fills based on the resources the respondent indicated using. The following simulates a display for a respondent who indicated using Chain of Command, Child and Youth Services, and Army OneSource to assist with needs in Needs/Ways of Meeting Needs.]

[illegible]

Characteristics Related to Use of Personal Networks

29. We'd like to know more about your Personal Networks, which you indicated that you [auto-fill: did/did not] contact for the particular needs you described earlier in the survey. Please check all of the statements that apply to your Personal Networks (friends and family):

- ☐ I have friends or family members who make an effort to help me with my problems and needs.
- ☐ People in my personal networks do not have the ability or resources to help me.
- ☐ Most or all of my friends and family live too far away from me.
- ☐ There is at least one person I can always count on to be there for me.
- ☐ I do not have many close relationships.
- ☐ I don't like to reveal my problems or needs to my friends and family.
- ☐ People in my personal networks have a good understanding of what military life is like.
- ☐ I connect to them via social media.

Satisfaction with Ways for Meeting Needs

30. To review, you indicated that the most important problems and needs for you in the past year were:

[This item auto-fills from problems, needs, and resources used selected in prior items. The following simulates a display for a respondent who indicated two needs within the Health Care System Problems domain and two needs within the Soldier's Own Well-Being problem domain.]

Health Care System Problems

General information

An advocate

Your Own Well-Being

Emotional or social support

Professional counseling

Please tell us how well each of these contacts you made helped to meet your needs with:

Health Care System Problems

General information

	Very Well	Well	All Right	Not Very Well	Not at All
Chain of Command	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Child and Youth Services	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Army OneSource, post homepage, other military internet resources	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Comments:					

[This item repeats as needed for each problem-need pair, as many as four (e.g., two needs for each of top-two problems).

31. [This item displays only for respondents who report using a resource to help meet their needs. Respondents with needs but who did not use resources, as well as respondents without problems or needs, are not shown this item.] What impact, if any, might there be if you were no longer able to access the following resources to help you address any problems you or your family might face?

If The Following Were No Longer Available to Help You...	Little to No Impact on Me or My Family	Some Impact on Me or My Family	Serious Impact on Me or My Family	I Don't Know Whether There Would Be Any Impact
Army Family Readiness Group	☐	☐	☐	☐
Unit members not in the chain of command	☐	☐	☐	☐
Installation Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Army Community Service (ACS)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Child and Youth Services	☐	☐	☐	☐
Army OneSource, post homepage, other military internet resources	☐	☐	☐	☐
Chain of Command	☐	☐	☐	☐
Chaplain or military religious group	☐	☐	☐	☐
Treatment or counseling	☐	☐	☐	☐
Relief or Aid Society	☐	☐	☐	☐
Comments:				

NOTE: This chart contains military-only resources.

32. What is the best way to get information to you about services available to help meet your needs?

[This item displays only if respondent reported needs for problems. Respondents who did not report problems or needs were not shown this item.]

Please check all that apply:

- ☐ Postcard in the mail
- ☐ Flyer/poster on post
- ☐ Email/announcement from unit leader
- ☐ Email/announcement from Family Readiness Group (FRG)
- ☐ Friend/family/co-worker
- ☐ Unit newsletter
- ☐ Unit website
- ☐ Installation newspaper
- ☐ Installation website
- ☐ TV
- ☐ Social media (Twitter, Facebook, phone app)
- ☐ Other _____

Background Information

Note: approximately 5 minutes left to complete the survey.

Please tell us more about you (and your family, if applicable). This information will help us make sure we have surveys from many different types of people, and will help us understand the most important issues facing them. We are not asking for any identifying information.

Military Experience

33. What is your current rank or pay grade?

- ☐ Private to Specialist/Corporal (E1–E4)
- ☐ Sergeant or Staff Sergeant (E5–E6)
- ☐ Sergeant First Class to Sergeant Major/Command Sergeant Major (E7–E9)
- ☐ Warrant Officer (WO1–CW5)
- ☐ Second Lieutenant to Captain (O1–O3)
- ☐ Major or above (O4 or higher)

34. How many years of active duty service have you completed?

- ☐ One year or less
- ☐ 2 years
- ☐ 3 years
- ☐ 4 years
- ☐ 5 years
- ☐ 6–9 years
- ☐ 10–19 years
- ☐ 20 years or more

35. Are you:

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

36. How old are you?

- ☐ 18–24
- ☐ 25–29
- ☐ 30–34
- ☐ 35–39
- ☐ 40 or older

37. What is the highest degree or level of school that you have completed?

- ☐ 12 years of school or less, no diploma
- ☐ High school diploma or equivalent (such as GED)
- ☐ Some college or trade school, but no degree
- ☐ Associate degree (e.g., AA, AS) or trade school certificate (such as cosmetician)
- ☐ Bachelor's degree or equivalent (e.g., BA, AB, BS, Nursing)
- ☐ Graduate degree (e.g., MA/MS/Ph.D./MD/JD/DVM)

Deployment

38. In the past three years, about how many months have you been deployed?

_____ Months

39. [If soldier is married to active duty servicemember:] In the past three years, about how many months has your spouse been deployed?

_____ Months

40. How long did your most recent deployment last?

_____ Months

41. How long have you been home since the most recent deployment?

_____ Months

42. [Married soldiers only.] Did your spouse attend any deployment-related briefings offered by the military?

	Yes	No	I Don't Know
a. Before this most recent deployment?	☐	☐	☐
b. During this most recent deployment?	☐	☐	☐
c. Since this most recent deployment?	☐	☐	☐

43. Are you a citizen of the United States? (This information will be used only for research purposes, such as to determine what types of benefits you might have been eligible for in the past year).

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

44. Is English a second language for you?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

45. Are you Spanish/Hispanic/Latino?

- ☐ No, I am not Spanish/Hispanic/Latino
☐ Yes, I am Mexican, Mexican-American, Chicano, Puerto Rican, Cuban, or other Spanish/Hispanic/Latino

46. What is your race? Check one or more races to indicate what you consider yourself to be:

- ☐ White
☐ Black or African American
☐ American Indian or Alaska Native
☐ Asian (e.g., Asian Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese)
☐ Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander (e.g., Samoan, Guamanian, or Chamorro)

47. Did you have caregiver responsibilities for an elderly or disabled family member in the past year? By caregiving, we mean doing things like shopping, home maintenance, transportation, checking on them by phone, handling finances, or arrangements for care.

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

48. [This item for respondents who reported dependents only.] Do one or more of your children receive special education or early intervention services, or are in the Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP)?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

49. [This item for respondents who reported dependents only.] Did anyone take over formal custody or guardianship of your dependents during the last deployment cycle?

- ☐ Yes *(please go to next question)*
☐ No *(please skip next question)*

50. [If Yes to 49:] Who took custody of one or more of your dependents during your last deployment?

Check all that apply:

- ☐ Ex-spouse
☐ Current spouse
☐ Girlfriend/boyfriend
☐ Parent
☐ Sibling
☐ Other relative
☐ Friend in the military
☐ Friend not in the military
☐ Other

Please specify: _____

Housing

51. Did you PCS in the last 12 months? (yes or no)

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

If you have PCS'd or moved locally in the past year, please answer the following questions for the place where you were located for more than half of the time.

52. Which of the following best describes where you live?

- ☐ Barracks on-post
☐ Single soldier military housing on-post
☐ Privatized military housing on-post
☐ Military family housing on-post
☐ Military family housing off-post
☐ Civilian housing that I own or pay mortgage on
☐ Civilian housing that I rent, off-post
☐ With friends or family

53. [If living off post response to item 52:] How far away from the nearest military base do you live (one way)?

- ☐ Less than 5 miles away
- ☐ 5–10 miles away
- ☐ 11–20 miles away
- ☐ 21–40 miles away
- ☐ More than 40 miles away

54. [If living off post response to item 52:] How long does it typically take you to commute to the nearest military base (one way)?

- ☐ Less than 30 minutes away
- ☐ More than 30 minutes to less than 1 hour
- ☐ 1 to 2 hours
- ☐ More than 2 hours away

55. How satisfied are you with the overall quality of your housing at your permanent duty location?

- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ Very dissatisfied

56. [If living situation other than Barracks in item 55:] How satisfied are you with the affordability of your current residence at your permanent duty location?

- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ Very dissatisfied

57. About what percentage of your household groceries do you typically buy at the commissary?

- ☐ 1–10%
- ☐ 11–25%
- ☐ 26–50%
- ☐ 51–74%
- ☐ 75–100%
- ☐ N/A I don't buy groceries at the commissary
- ☐ N/A I am a meal card holder

58. [If respondent is married and indicated that deployed in past year:] Did your spouse move away from the post and its local area during the last deployment cycle?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable because my spouse didn't live on-post or in the local area around the post before the last deployment cycle

59. [If Yes to item 58:] Why did your spouse move away from the post and its local area during the last deployment cycle?

Check all that apply.

- ☐ To save money
- ☐ Best value for the money
- ☐ Safety and security
- ☐ Closer to work/education
- ☐ Better schools
- ☐ Fewer rules
- ☐ Privacy
- ☐ Wanted to live in a specific area or community
- ☐ Military housing was unavailable
- ☐ Civilian housing near the post was unavailable
- ☐ Wanted civilian neighbors
- ☐ Wanted to be closer to friends and family
- ☐ Other

Please specify: _____

Attitudes Toward Military Service

Please tell us about you and your family. This information will help us make sure we have surveys from many different types of people, and will help us understand the most important issues facing them. We are not asking for any identifying information.

60. Overall, how satisfied are you with the military way of life?

- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ Very dissatisfied

61. How satisfied are you with the following:**[Married soldiers only.]** The respect that the Army shows family members

- ☐ Very satisfied
☐ Satisfied
☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
☐ Dissatisfied
☐ Very dissatisfied

[Single soldiers.] The support and concern that the Army has for Army families?

- ☐ Very satisfied
☐ Satisfied
☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
☐ Dissatisfied
☐ Very dissatisfied

[Married soldiers.] The support and concern that the Army has for your Army family?

- ☐ Very satisfied
☐ Satisfied
☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
☐ Dissatisfied
☐ Very dissatisfied

62. [Married soldiers.] Overall, how satisfied do you think your family is with the military way of life?

- ☐ Very satisfied
☐ Satisfied
☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
☐ Dissatisfied
☐ Very dissatisfied

63. [Single soldiers.] In general, how well have you adjusted to the demands of being in the Army?Extremely
well

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Extremely
Badly**[Married soldiers.] In general, how well has your family adjusted to the demands of being an “Army family”?**Extremely
well

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Extremely
Badly

64. How much of a problem is each of the following to you?

The demands the Army makes on my personal time

- ☐ Very serious problem
- ☐ Serious problem
- ☐ Moderate problem
- ☐ Slight problem
- ☐ Not a problem

Separations from my family (my parents, spouse, etc.)

- ☐ Very serious problem
- ☐ Serious problem
- ☐ Moderate problem
- ☐ Slight problem
- ☐ Not a problem

65. How much do you agree with the following:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
To turn down a role with more responsibility for personal or family-related reasons would hurt my career progress in the Army	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
To get ahead in this organization, soldiers are expected to work more than 50 hours a week	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Soldiers are regularly expected to put their jobs before their families and personal responsibilities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
To be rated favorably by unit leadership, soldiers must constantly put their jobs ahead of their families or personal lives	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Even if I do the best job possible, unit leadership would fail to notice	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Soldiers are often expected to stay late at night and/or work on weekends	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The Army really cares about my well-being	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

66. How do you feel about staying in the military?

- ☐ I strongly favor staying
- ☐ I somewhat favor staying
- ☐ I have no opinion one way or the other
- ☐ I somewhat favor leaving
- ☐ I strongly favor leaving
- ☐ N/A I will be retiring soon
- ☐ N/A I will be separated or medically discharged soon

67. [Married soldiers.] How does your spouse feel about your staying in the military?

- ☐ Strongly favors my staying
- ☐ Somewhat favors my staying
- ☐ Has no opinion one way or the other
- ☐ Somewhat favors my leaving
- ☐ Strongly favors my leaving
- ☐ I don't know how my spouse feels

Thank you for taking the time to complete our survey. Please feel free to provide additional comments about any problems or needs you experienced in the past year or your ability to meet those needs with military or nonmilitary assistance. You may also provide any other type of related comments you would like.

NOTE: This survey is for Army Headquarters–level planning and decisionmaking. If you need assistance with a specific problem on your installation, please contact your local commander.

Comments:

Thank you, once again, for taking the time to complete the survey. Your input will help us understand the needs that military personnel and their families have and how we can support them. Below is contact information for Military OneSource, a free 24-hour service that is available 7 days a week to military personnel and their families.

Military OneSource

Whether it is help with childcare, personal finances, emotional support during deployments, relocation information, or resources needed for special circumstances, Military OneSource is there for military personnel and their families. . . . 24/7/365!

The service is available by phone, online, and face-to-face through private counseling sessions in the local community. Highly qualified, master's-prepared consultants provide the service. Personalized consultations on specific issues such as education, special needs, and finances are provided. Customized research detailing community resources and appropriate military referrals are offered. Clients can even get help with simultaneous language interpretation and document translation.

Our interactive Web site includes locators for education, childcare, and elder care, online articles, referrals to military and community resources, financial calculators, live online workshops called webinars, and "Email a consultant." Additional resources include brief videos of consultants addressing common issues, such as communicating as a couple, budgeting, and managing anger.

Face-to-face counseling sessions focus on issues such as normal reactions to abnormal situations (e.g., combat), couples concerns, work/life balance, grief and loss, adjustment to deployment, stress management, and parenting. Persons seeking counseling will receive up to six counseling sessions per issue at no cost to them. To access a counselor in their local community, individuals may call a Military OneSource consultant directly. Service is available in CONUS as well as Hawaii, Alaska, U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico.

Military OneSource is provided by the Department of Defense at no cost to active duty, Guard, and Reserve (regardless of activation status) and their families.

Military OneSource Website: <http://www.militaryonesource.com>

Military OneSource Phone Numbers:

- Stateside: CONUS: 1-800-342-9647
- Overseas: OCONUS Universal Free Phone: 800-3429-6477
- Collect from Overseas: OCONUS Collect: 484-530-5908
- En Español llame al: 1-877-888-0727
- TTY/TDD: 1-800-346-9188

Additional Information on the Sample

The population of interest was CONUS active component soldiers. The sampling frame was constructed in July 2014 from Army personnel files (the Total Army Personnel Database).

Two levels of stratification were used. The first level was defined by installation characteristics developed for IMCOM called “workforce category,” which took into account whether it was a full-service garrison, the population size, the number of multi-mission criteria met, as well as other issues (see the 2012 Army MWR Services survey for greater detail; ICF International, 2012a; ICF International 2012b), as well as urbanicity (AR 215–1). We anticipated that these factors—urbanicity, complexity, and size of post—would affect the breadth of services to assist in solving problems that would be available to participants in their communities, as well as on post. In addition, the sample was constructed to include a particular focus on installations of interest to the Army for examining concepts for installations of the future (termed here “future installation” garrisons [U.S. Army Installation Management Command, 2013]), as well as installations chosen due to such factors as announced changes in tenants, so that needs of soldiers in these installations could be assessed with adequate precision. The second level of stratification was defined by soldier characteristics (rank, family status) shown in research to be relevant to problem-solving resources and problems themselves.

Sample Size

We used administrative personnel files to determine the distribution of each stratum among the soldier stratification variables (shown in Table B.1). Notably, more than a third of the eligible population is made up of junior enlisted personnel who are single, and a quarter are NCOs who are married with children. More than half are junior enlisted, and only about 6 percent are officers. Based on this distribution, we calculated the sample size required to identify differences in needs by soldier characteristics of varying magnitude with sufficient power.

Table B.2 shows the estimated power to detect differences for various group comparisons among the soldier characteristics. Supposing a declared need among

Table B.1
Population Distribution by Rank and Family Status

Population Distribution	Junior Enlisted (%)	NCOs (%)	Officers (%)	Total (%)
Married with children	9.4	25.0	2.8	37.2
Married with no children	9.8	6.3	1.2	17.3
Single	34.7	8.0	2.4	45.1
Total	53.9	39.3	6.4	~100

Table B.2
Sample Size Estimates to Detect Differences in Needs by Soldier Characteristics

Group Comparison	Relative Difference in Prevalence (20% Base Rate)	Survey Completes from Installation Stratum/ Workforce Category	Power to Detect Stated Difference in the Proportion by Stated Group (%)
Married vs single	1.50	2,500	80.0
Married with children vs other	1.50	2,500	80.0
Officers vs. other	1.50	2,500	70.0
Married vs. single	1.33	2,500	50.0
Married with children vs other	1.33	2,500	50.0
Officers vs. other	1.33	2,500	40.0

20 percent of soldiers in the reference group, we found that all comparisons would be adequately powered (70 percent or more power) to identify a moderate difference (1.50 relative difference, 10 percent absolute difference) or greater with a sample size of 2,500.

To be able to identify soldier differences in need within each unique garrison stratum represented by the eight workforce/urbanicity groups, we aimed for a total of 2,500 survey completes from each installation stratum, representing a total sample of 20,000 completes.

Sample Allocation

In the hopes of a response rate of 50 percent, we drew a sample of 5,000 soldiers from each installation stratum to obtain an expected total of 2,500 survey completes. Within each installation stratum, the total number of soldiers sampled from each rank/family stratum will be proportional to size with a minimum of 30 soldiers from each stratum. To ensure the national representativeness of the sample, a garrison will serve as a blocking variable such that the total sample size is uniformly distributed across the garrisons represented by the specific installation workforce/urbanicity category.

Because there is interest in examining differences by future installation, we will first divide garrisons by future installation, allocating half of the sample to soldiers stationed at future installations.

Sampling Weights

Survey estimates were weighted to obtain population representative estimates. Weights were the product of the inverse probability of inclusion in the sample and the inverse probability of nonresponse.

Respondent Representativeness (Weighting)

The proportions of soldiers in each category were compared using standardized mean difference (SMD), to check for meaningful differences between the population and the sample (i.e., respondents). SMD is calculated by the formula:

$$SMD = (P - p) / \text{square root } (p * [1 - p]),$$

where P is the proportion of the population and p is the proportion of the sample.

An absolute value of $SMD > .2$ suggests a lack of representativeness for a sample. As shown in Table B.3, respondents are representative of the population on the key demographics of interest, pay grade, and family status. Respondents are more likely to be white, female, older, and more highly educated than the Army average. Efforts to adjust the weights to account for differences in education level produced excessively large weights, so we did not balance the sample based on education. In addition, we reran the main analyses including gender and education as covariates, and the results did not change. Thus, we concluded that even though the weighting procedure did not adequately account for differences between the sample and population on gender and education, this imbalance did not jeopardize the main findings in the report. Finally, a post-hoc examination of results using poststratification weighting methods (i.e., we again reran the main analyses with these weights) demonstrated that the results using sample weights are robust to weighting method.

Table B.3
Analysis of Representativeness of Respondents

	Population (%, [SD])	Design-Weighted Sample (%, [SD])	N Miss in Sample	SMD
Asian	5.5 (22.8)	5.7 (23.2)	188	0.047
White	58.5 (49.3)	72.7 (44.6)		−0.317
Hispanic	12.8 (33.4)	15.7 (36.4)		−0.079
Black	21.2 (40.9)	22.8 (41.9)		−0.037
Native American/Pacific Islander	1.9 (13.8)	2.8 (16.4)		−0.051
Only White	58.5 (49.3)	56.6 (49.6)		
Married	58.3 (49.3)	58.8 (49.2)	0	−0.010
Pay-Grade Group E1–E4	44.7 (49.7)	42.5 (49.4)	0	0.044
Pay-Grade Group E5–E9	38.7 (48.7)	35.5 (47.8)		0.067
Pay-Grade Group O1–O3	10.4 (30.5)	10.9 (31.2)		−0.018
Pay-Grade Group O4–O6	6.3 (24.2)	11.1 (31.4)		−0.154
Female	14.1 (34.8)	25.0 (43.3)	47	−0.252
Ages 18–24	34.4 (47.5)	22.9 (42.0)	45	0.273
Ages 25–29	24.1 (42.8)	20.1 (40.1)		0.100
Ages 30–34	17.2 (37.7)	18.8 (39.1)		−0.042
Ages 35–39	11.5 (31.9)	15.2 (35.9)		−0.103
Ages 40+	12.8 (33.4)	22.9 (42.0)		−0.241
Has dependents	55.2 (49.7)	52.4 (49.9)	942	0.145
Total	484,842	7,092		

SOURCE: Total Army Personnel Database.

NOTE: Gray rows were not used in balancing.

Abbreviations

ACS	Army Community Service
ACSIM	Assistant Chief of Staff for Installation Management
AR	Army Regulation
CASAL	Center for Army Leadership Annual Survey of Army Leadership
CI	confidence interval
CONUS	continental United States
CYS	Child and Youth Services
DoD	U.S. Department of Defense
DMDC	Defense Manpower Data Center
FRG	Family Readiness Group
IMCOM	U.S. Army Installation Management Command
MWR	Morale, Welfare and Recreation
NCO	noncommissioned officer
OCONUS	outside the continental United States
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan)
OIF	Operation Iraqi Freedom
PCS	permanent change of station
POC	point of contact
PTSD	post-traumatic stress disorder
SE	standard error
SHARP	sexual harassment/assault response and prevention
UCMJ	Uniform Code of Military Justice
WIC	Women, Infants, and Children Program

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Soldiers and their families are susceptible to the same range of problems that face all families, but the nature of military service can exacerbate those problems or introduce new ones. The Army recognizes these challenges and has instituted a wide range of programs and services to help soldiers and their families deal with them. This report describes the results of a unique, holistic survey approach to understanding the most pressing problems soldiers and their families face, the needs those problems generate, the use of resources available to address their needs, and barriers to using those resources. It also reports soldiers' perceived effectiveness of the resources used and projected effect if those resources were no longer available. It also discusses the relationship between how soldiers address their pressing problems and important attitudes toward military service. The survey of more than 7,000 active component soldiers provided insights suggesting that Army programs generally meet the needs of soldiers and their families. There is room for improvement, however, because some soldiers encountered barriers to using resources, and the needs of some soldiers remained unmet even after reaching out to available programs and support providers. Soldiers with unmet needs had worse attitudes toward the Army than did those who accessed resources and had their needs met. We describe options for the Army to consider to improve the ability of leaders and programs to meet the diverse range of soldier and family needs.

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