

# PREP®

## Abstracts of Latest Research

**Stanley, S. M., Allen, E. S., Markman, H. J., Rhoades, G. K., & Prentice, D. (in press). Decreasing divorce in Army couples: Results from a randomized clinical trial using PREP for Strong Bonds. *Journal of Couple and Relationship Therapy*.**

Findings from a large, randomized controlled trial of couple education are presented in this brief report. Married Army couples were assigned to either PREP for Strong Bonds (n = 248) delivered by Army chaplains or to a no-treatment control group (n = 228). One year after the intervention, couples who received PREP for Strong Bonds had 1/3 the rate of divorce of the control group. Specifically, 6.20% of the control group divorced while 2.03% of the intervention group divorced. These findings suggest that couple education can reduce the risk of divorce, at least in the short run with military couples.

**Stanley, S. M., Rhoades, G. K., Amato, P. R., Markman, H. J., & Johnson, C. A. (in press). The timing of cohabitation and engagement: Impact on first and second marriages. *Journal of Marriage and Family*.**

Using a multi-state sample of marriages that took place in the 1990s, this study examined associations between premarital cohabitation history and marital quality in first (N = 437) and second marriages (N = 200), and marital instability in first marriages (intact N = 521, divorced N = 124). For first marriages, cohabiting with the spouse without first being engaged or married was associated with more negative interaction, higher self-reported divorce proneness, and a greater probability of divorce compared to cohabiting after engagement or marriage (with patterns in the same direction for marital positivity). In contrast, there was a general risk associated with premarital cohabitation for second marriages on self-reported indices of marital quality, with or without engagement when cohabitation began.

**Allen, E., Rhoades, G. K., Stanley, S. M., & Markman, H. J. (in press). Hitting Home: Relationships between Recent Deployment, Post Traumatic Stress Symptoms, and Marital Functioning for Army Couples. *Journal of Family Psychology*.**

Using a sample of 434 couples consisting of Active Duty Army husbands married to civilian wives, relationships between recent deployment, current PTSD symptoms, and a range of marital outcomes were investigated. Self-reports from both husbands and wives regarding relationship functioning did not differ between couples who were and were not separated due to deployment in the prior year. However, deployment in the past year was related to higher levels of current PTSD symptoms for husbands, and husbands' current PTSD symptoms were associated with lower marital satisfaction, confidence in the relationship, positive bonding between the spouses, parenting alliance, and dedication to the relationship for both husbands and wives. In addition, husbands' current PTSD symptoms were associated with higher levels of negative communication for both husbands and wives and lower satisfaction with sacrifice for the relationship for husbands. Once positive bonding and negative communication were controlled, husband PTSD symptoms no longer significantly predicted marital satisfaction for wives. Husband PTSD symptoms continued to exert a significant, but reduced, unique effect on husband marital satisfaction once these variables were accounted for. The results provide greater understanding of the impact of military experiences on relationship functioning and suggest areas for intervention with military couples.