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## The Occupational Impact of Reintegration After Military Deployment

Kelli Zahariades

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# The Occupational Impact of Reintegration After Military Deployment

Kelli Zahariades, OTS; Becki Cohill, OTD, OTR/L; Susan MacDermott, OTD, OTR/L; Karen Park, OTD, OTR/L

## BACKGROUND

After the completion of a deployment, begins the 3–6-month period of reintegration. The reintegration of an integral member of the family who has been absent for 6-12 months means re-establishing **occupations, relationships, roles, and routines** (Walsh & Rosenblum, 2018). Many MSMV experience stress from re-establishing the bond between themselves and their child, and their spouse (Arvanitis, 2013). The post-deployment reintegration process is even more challenging if the MSMV is experiencing trauma such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, anxiety, or other **mental health or physical health challenges** (Walsh & Rosenblum, 2018).

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this project was to research the occupational impact of military reintegration, as well as identify and expand the potential role of OT with this population, resulting in a more successful **transition** between the **occupations, roles, and routines** from active deployment to post-deployment stages.

## METHODS

- Phenomenological mixed methods study
- Guided by the **Person Environment Occupation (PEO) model**.
- **Online surveys** (n=60) and **virtual interviews** (n=7) were used to collect data on the lived experiences and challenges of the population
- Survey and interview questions were routines-based and guided by the **Quality-of-Life Scale (QOLS)**.
- The open-ended interview was semi-structured. The online survey asked participants to rate their satisfaction and personal experiences with reintegration.

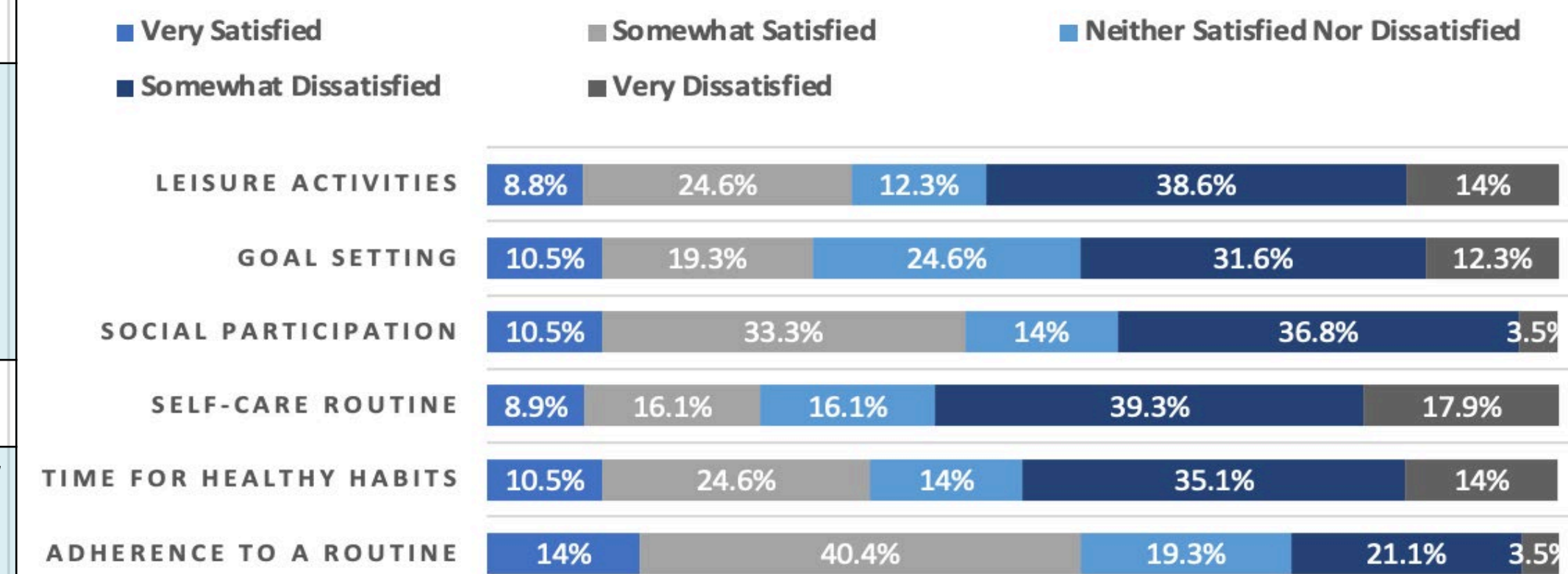
**Population:** U.S. military servicemembers and/or their spouse who have experienced at least 1 deployment

**Recruitment:** Via military support groups on Facebook and snowball sampling with personal contacts

## RESULTS

Themes	Quotes
<b>Servicemember Comes First</b>	<p><i>“Any time I would have spent on myself is now spent on my spouse”</i></p> <p><i>“Pretty much everything goes to the wayside when he gets home”</i></p>
<b>Finding Balance</b>	<p><i>“Finding balance is the hardest part”</i></p>
<b>Managing Expectations</b>	<p><i>“I never know what version of my husband I will be get coming home to me”</i></p> <p><i>“During deployment, you’re going to change a little bit, they are going to too”</i></p>
<b>Gain/Loss of Independence</b>	<p><i>“I didn’t have to check in with anyone while he was deployed”</i></p> <p><i>“I became codependent when he returned.”</i></p> <p><i>“Now there’s someone to check in with”</i></p>
<b>Lack of Resources</b>	<p><i>“The courses were outdated and developed by the command, not by those experiencing it”</i></p> <p><i>“The military does a horrible job to prepare you. What makes it hard is you have to change a culture”</i></p>

Rate The Following Statements Regarding Your Level Of Satisfaction During Reintegration



## DISCUSSION

The results of this study concluded that many military servicemembers and their spouses experience difficulty with role fulfilment, routine adherence, occupational performance, and some QOL factors following the return from deployment. While many participants spoke to their challenges during reintegration, the survey results did indicate that not all individuals who participated share the same degree of struggle during post deployment reintegration.

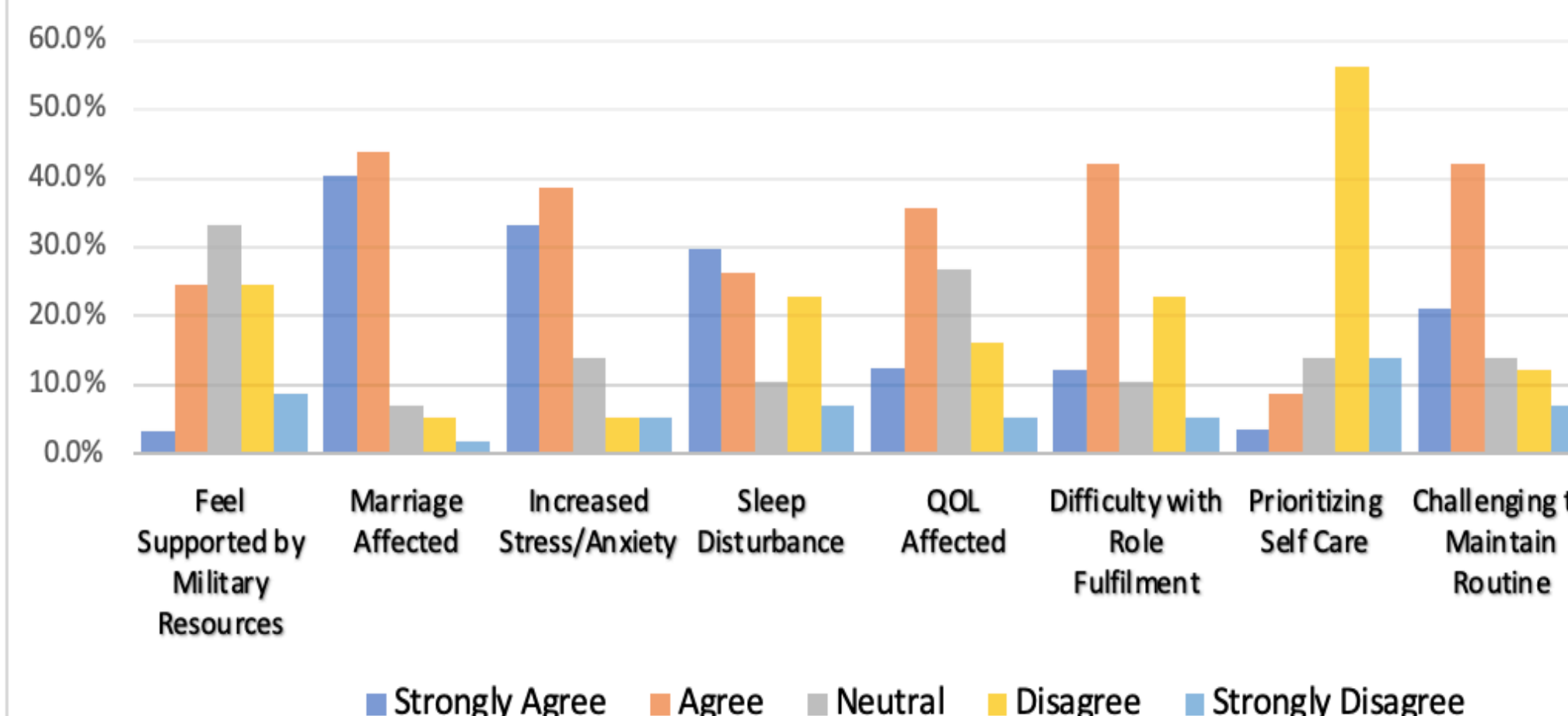
## IMPLICATIONS FOR OT

- Research results help to determine the occupational needs of this population
- This study broadens the role of OT with this population, as well as highlights potential treatment interventions
- This research may be easily translated to apply to other types of transition across the lifespan
- This project may inspire further research on reintegration for military

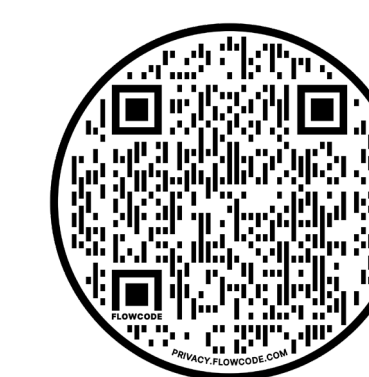
## DISSEMINATION

A program in the form of an informative website was created that displays the details of the project, as well as shares OT-related reintegration resources for military families and OT practitioners to access for use with this population.

Respond to the Following Statements Regarding Your Experience With Reintegration



Please Scan to View Website



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