

## Informed Consent Form for Participation in Research

**Version Date:** 11.18.13

**Study Title:** Relationships Among Military Personnel (RAMP) Project

**Principal Investigator:** Elizabeth Allen, Ph.D.

**COMIRB No:** 12-0916

**Phase 1, Survey 1**

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You are being asked to be in a military couples research study done by researchers at the University of Colorado Denver and sponsored by the Department of Defense Telemedicine and Advanced Technology Research Center (TATRC). This form gives you information about the study. Please read the information below and contact us to ask questions about anything you do not understand before deciding whether or not to take part in the study. This information is important, so we recommend that you read it carefully in a quiet, private setting where you can take your time before making any decisions to participate.

### Why is this study being done?

This study is designed to learn more about relationship and psychological health among male Army Soldiers and their wives or girlfriends after deployment. Up to 1500 people will be included in the study. You can learn more about this study by visiting our website: <http://www.RAMPproject.net>

### What happens if I join this study?

If you join the study you and your partner will be asked to **separately** do an online survey about your military, relationship, and personal experiences. Many of these questions are **very personal**, asking about things such as sexual and aggressive behaviors, drug and alcohol use, and mental health. **There will be some explicit questions about exposure to combat and the aftermath of combat.** We will also ask you some demographic information, such as your age, sex, and ethnicity, and some non-classified information about rank, deployment history, military unit and similar information. So that we can send you a link to the survey, you will be asked to provide your name and a personal email address. We will also ask for your partner's name and his or her personal email address, so that we can match you up as a couple. Use of military email addresses are not allowed for this study.

If you pass our eligibility screening, we will send each of you an email that contains a direct, unique link to your personal survey. **Each person will have a different link.** The survey will only be available online, so you must have Internet access to do it. Because the survey can be done online, you can do the survey anywhere in the world or even be deployed overseas. We ask that you find a time and place to do the survey accurately and in private. Please do not do your partner's survey for him or her. Additionally, soldiers completing surveys must use personal computers, or computers authorized for personal usage.

The survey takes an average of 60 minutes, but could range between 45 to 75 minutes, depending on your test-taking style. You can do the survey in multiple sittings. That is,

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you can go in and out of your own survey as much as you like until it is done. Once the survey is completed it cannot be opened again. After you get the link to your survey, you will have four weeks to do it in order to get compensation. If you do it within one week of getting the link, you will be entered in a drawing for additional compensation. If you have not yet completed it, we will send you reminders to do the survey as the deadline approaches. If you have not done the survey after four weeks, your survey link will be deactivated and the survey will no longer be available to you.

After you do the survey, we will send you your compensation. (Please see “Will I be paid for being in the study?” below.) We cannot give you duty release time or childcare compensation for the time you take to do the survey.

Please note that if you and your partner finish this survey, you both may be eligible to do 4 more online surveys, spaced about 6 months apart. At the end of this first survey, we will ask you if you are interested in receiving more surveys. If you are interested and eligible, our research team will send you an invitation to the first additional survey. If you and your partner do this first additional survey, you will continue to be sent invitations to the last three surveys unless you tell us that you are no longer interested in being in the study. You do NOT have to be interested in these additional surveys to take this current survey. For all surveys, we retain the right to discontinue your participation at any time for overriding reasons such as safety or interruptions in study funding. You can also read about joining the study through our website, <http://www.RAMPproject.net>, and then clicking on the “Participant Requirements” tab.

### What are the possible discomforts or risks?

The questions we ask are very personal, and may encourage you to think about personal issues in your life. This self-exploration can be positive, although someone experiencing turmoil in personal matters could feel distress by answering the questions. Given this concern, you are able to skip selected items if you feel uncomfortable answering them. Yet, please understand that your feedback is the most valuable when it is complete. If you are in personal or emotional distress, resources and referral sources can also be accessed from our study website at anytime: <http://www.RAMPproject.net>. Another risk is problems or distress you may have if your confidentiality is violated. Due to the highly personal nature of the questions, you should be sure to do them privately. At the beginning of the survey, we ask that **you do your survey privately so that no one can see your answers**. Because your privacy is so important, we have taken several steps to ensure that the answers you provide on our surveys will be kept confidential and private. Each person will have a unique link to his or her survey. In addition, the “back” button is shut off within your survey to prevent a person from using your link to view your responses to previous pages of the survey. That is, if you log out of the survey and then back in, you will be returned to the questions you have not answered yet, while the questions you already answered will be blocked. Our online survey provider uses firewall, encryption, SSL, and intrusion protection to ensure the privacy of your responses. All data is stored securely and survey responses are stored separately from your name, personal email, or other identifying information that we use to contact you or send you payment. You will NOT put your name on your surveys.

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We will do everything we can to keep others from learning about your participation in the research. We will not share any of your information with your partner or military command. To further help us protect your privacy, the investigators have obtained a Confidentiality Certificate from the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The investigators can use this certificate to refuse to disclose information (for example if there were a court subpoena) that may identify you in any federal, state, or local civil, criminal, administrative, legislative, or other proceedings. Disclosure will be necessary, however, upon request of NIH for the purpose of audit or evaluation. You should understand that a Confidentiality Certificate does not prevent you or a member of your family from voluntarily releasing information about yourself or your involvement in this research. If an insurer or employer learns about your participation, and obtains YOUR consent to receive research information, then the investigator may not use the Certificate of Confidentiality to withhold this information. Finally, you should understand that there are some things we cannot keep private. We do NOT ask these things, but if you choose to give us information about child neglect or child abuse, we have to report that to Social Services. We do NOT ask this, but if you choose to tell us you are going to illegally physically hurt yourself or someone else, we have to report that to the police. That is, the Certificate of Confidentiality will not be used to prevent disclosure to local authorities of child abuse and neglect, or harm to self or others.

You can also read about possible discomforts, risks, and confidentiality through our website, <http://www.RAMPproject.net>, and then clicking on the “Risks and Confidentiality” tab.

### **What are the possible benefits of the study?**

This study is designed to learn more about relationship and psychological health among male Army Soldiers and their wives or girlfriends after deployment. This study is not designed to treat any illness or to improve your health, although we do have specific personal and/or relationship distress resources available for you to check out on our study website, <http://www.RAMPproject.net>, under the “Resources” tab.

By participating in an accurate and thorough manner, you can help Army couples and families by helping us understand the challenges Army couples face and how best to help them. Additionally, most people report that completing these types of surveys is a positive experience for themselves and their relationship.

### **Will I be paid for being in the study?**

If you complete this survey, you will be sent a \$50.00 gift card of your choice from a list of vendors we will provide at the end of the survey (for example, Target, Amazon, Wal-Mart). You can choose to have an electronic gift card sent to your personal email address, or a gift card mailed to the physical address of your choice. Additionally, if you complete your survey within **one week** of us sending it to you, you will be entered into a drawing for an additional \$50 gift card. If you choose to have a card mailed, we will ask

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you for the address you wish us to mail it to. This will be kept separate from your survey responses. If you are active duty military, you may only be compensated if you are off duty or on leave status during your participation.

Additionally, if you are interested in and eligible for the additional surveys as described above, you would get a \$75.00 gift card when you finish each additional survey and additional drawing entries for \$50 gift cards if you complete surveys within **one week** of us sending the link to your survey. These gift cards are considered reportable income. For more information, please visit our website, <http://www.RAMPproject.net>.

### **Will I have to pay for anything?**

It will not cost you anything to be in the study.

### **Is my participation voluntary?**

Taking part in this study is voluntary. You have the right to choose not to take part in this study. If you choose to take part, you have the right to stop at any time. If you refuse or decide to withdraw later, you will not lose any benefits or rights to which you are entitled.

### **Who will see my research information?**

With the exceptions we described above only the researchers doing this study will have access to the survey responses. Information gained from this study will be used in scientific presentations and publications, but you will in no way be personally identified because it will be a combination of all the survey responses from hundreds of participants, without your identifying information paired with your responses.

There are federal and state laws to protect your privacy and the University of Colorado Denver has rules to protect information about you. As we have described above, we will do everything we can to keep your records a secret, but it cannot be guaranteed. You can cancel your permission for us to use your information at any time by writing to the study's Primary Investigator, at the name and address listed below or by emailing us at [RelationshipStudiesLab@ucdenver.edu](mailto:RelationshipStudiesLab@ucdenver.edu). Our contact information is also available through our website, <http://www.RAMPproject.net>, and then clicking on the "Contact Us" tab. If you decide to cancel your permission for us to use your information, your part in this study will end, no further information about you will be collected, and we will destroy your information already collected in this study.

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Officials at the University of Colorado Denver who are in charge of making sure that we follow all of the rules for research may review our records to ensure that we are

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following our agreement to protect your information. Representatives of the U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command (USAMRMC) are also authorized to review research records to ensure that we follow the rules for protecting our participants.

### **Who do I call if I have questions?**

The primary researcher carrying out this study is Elizabeth Allen, Ph.D., director of the Relationship Studies Lab at the University of Colorado Denver. Dr. Allen and members of the Relationship Studies Lab are available to answer any questions or concerns you have about the study. If you have questions, concerns, or complaints at any time, you may call the Relationship Studies Lab at 720-263-RAMP (7267) or email us at [RelationshipStudiesLab@ucdenver.edu](mailto:RelationshipStudiesLab@ucdenver.edu). Our contact information is also available anytime on our website, <http://www.RAMPproject.net>, and then clicking on the “Contact Us” tab.

If you like, you can print out a copy of this consent form to keep. Or, you can download, print, or view a copy of this consent form anytime from our study website, <http://www.RAMPproject.net>.

You may have questions about your rights as someone in this study. You can call Dr. Elizabeth Allen at 303-352-3656 with questions. You can also contact the University of Colorado Denver Institutional Review Board by phone, 303-724-1055, or by mail:

Colorado Multiple Institutional Review Board (COMIRB)  
Campus Mail Box F490  
13001 E. 17th Place, Room N3214  
Aurora, CO 80045

### **Agreement to be in this study and use my data**

By checking the “I agree” box below, you agree to the following statements:

- I have read this form about the study.
- I understand the possible risks and benefits of this study.
- I understand and authorize the access, use and disclosure of my information as stated in this form.
- I know that being in this study is voluntary.
- I choose to be in this study.
- I can print a copy of this form now from my browser or refer back to this informed consent information at anytime on the study website, <http://www.RAMPproject.net>.

I AGREE

I DO NOT AGREE

Please type your name in the box below to serve as an electronic signature for this form.

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