AMES IN ACTION

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KENNESAW STATE UNIVERSITY
CENTER FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF MILITARY AND EMERGENCY SERVICES RESEARCH

USING RESEARCH TO SUPPORT WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

WHAT DID AMES DO?

Edwin Trejo-Rivera, a student intern at the AMES Research Center, recently presented a research project at the Interamerican Congress of Psychology in Asunción, Paraguay. Through his research, Edwin investigated how gender identity norms influence the well-being of female leaders. Traditional norms state that women identify as feminine and men identify as masculine, but Edwin's research found that female leaders had better well-being when they identified with a full range of traits, including both masculine and feminine aspects.

HOW DOES THIS APPLY TO THE MILITARY, VETERANS, EMERGENCY SERVICES, AND/OR THE COMMUNITY?

Supportive workplaces play an important role in the health and functioning of a community. Research in Industrial Organizational Psychology that applies gender role theory to leadership and the workplace typically finds that the well-being of leaders is at risk when they feel their personal traits are incompatible with traits required for a leadership position. This research suggests that to support the well-being of female leaders in workplaces, they should feel comfortable identifying with both masculine and feminine traits.

HOW CAN YOU APPLY THIS INFORMATION?

DON'T PUT YOURSELF IN A BOX

PROVIDE RESOURCES & EXAMINE POLICIES

CREATE NORMS THAT SUPPORT LEADERS

If you are a woman in a leadership position, think about your personality traits. Know that it is okay to show personality traits that are considered "masculine" and "feminine." For example, a leader can be both decisive and nurturing.

Organizations should provide resources such as mentorship to leaders. They can examine how policies and procedures support all leaders. For example, evaluations can be biased against female leaders who show masculine traits.

Organizations should recognize that norms, or unspoken rules that guide behavior, have a strong impact in the workplace. Evaluate if norms support leaders in demonstrating a full range of their personality traits.