



# Challenges in Transitioning from Civil to Military Culture: Hyper-Selective Disclosure through ICTs



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## Abstract

Explored transition disclosure practices of **Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC)** students

**Hyper-competitive** nature and **peer assessment** system for evaluation encourage different **levels of privacy** for different audiences

Shared implications for **designing ICTs** to help them



## The Hyper-Competitive Environment

**Peer ranking** system for evaluations

*They look at how you're ranked in your peer evaluations, but also performance and extracurricular activities (P7)*

Peer ranking affects **future career**

*We compete against peers. There is national ranking called the OML by which we rank every cadet in the nation. Your standing in that influences what you get, whether you go to active duty, or to the national guard, or you're working in the kitchen in the basement. (P2)*

**Hyper-masculine** nature of ROTC

*You have to have a certain mental toughness ... you don't want to come across as being someone who is weak. (P2)*

Leads to disclose problems with **ROTC peers** depending on the **context**.

*"It depends on the situation, because if it's a breakup I would go to girl friends first, then go to ROTC guys" (P4)*

## Formal support infrastructures

Strong **infrastructural** support for injuries, mental health and academic issues.

*"Regarding injuries, we already have athletic training staffs, so they are always there to help us out."(P2)*

*"There is an honor society called Scabbard and Blade...they have tutoring sessions where any cadet can work on homework." (P7)*

## Social Media: From real identity to anonymity

Participants share **general issues** in social media

*Through social media, a bunch of people posted on my page: 'I'm so sorry,' and that really helped to know I wasn't alone because it did feel like I was kind of alone. (P1)*

Prefer **anonymous** media for problems **related to ROTC and personal crises**.

*I did like that it was anonymous because of my pride, I don't want to broadcast it. (P6)*

*If there was Yik Yak at the time, I would probably have used it, since it is anonymous nobody would have known that I'm in a relationship. (P4)*

## Family: No fear of judgment

More **open** to sharing their personal challenges **beyond** their ROTC crowd.

*"With an ROTC friend, if he asks me 'how are you doing?'; I would say, 'I am fine. But I might text a friend from high school and say 'It is awful and this is ruining my life right now.'" (P2)*

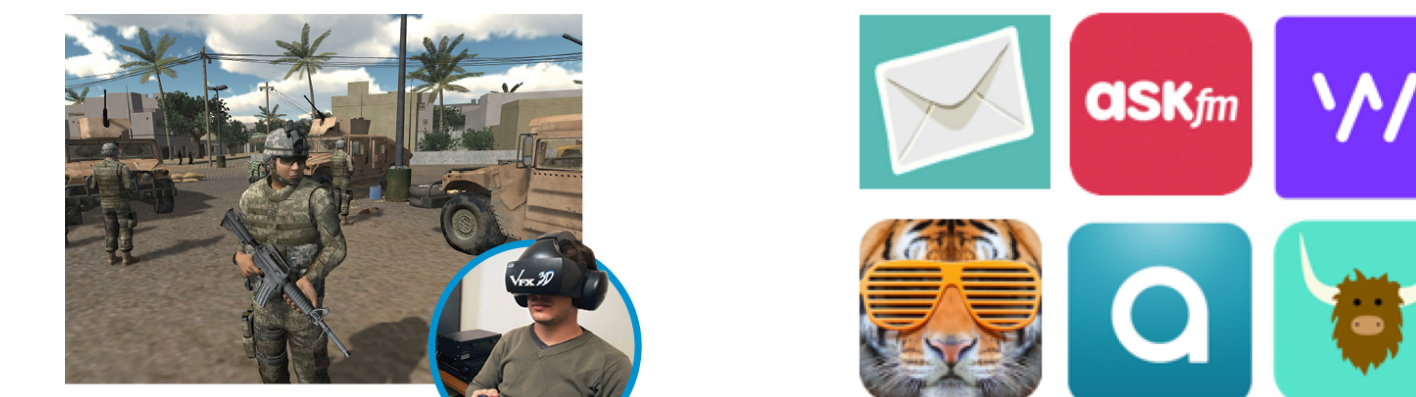
Participant expressed concerns of the **stereotypes** about **sexual assault** victims in the military.

*"With the sexual harassment, I don't talk about that at all... My worst fear was that people are going to think I was lying or doing to get back at him. I tried to do what I could to not let that assumption happen." (P3)*

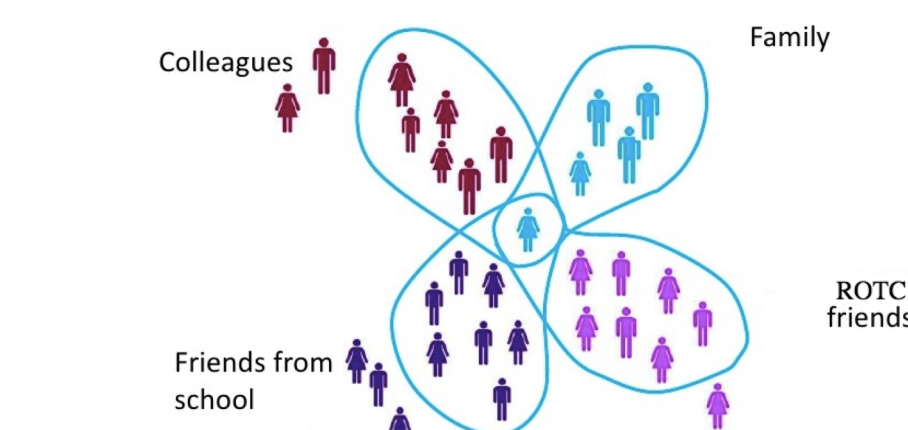
## Discussion

**Peer assessment** system encourages to **hyper-selective disclosure** in transition

**Implications for designing ICTs**



Design for cultural translation      Design for supportive anonymity



Design context collapse and audience selection

## Conclusion & Future work

A **qualitative interview** study of ROTC students to explore how they use ICTs to cope with personal crises.

Other collectivist groups in transition (**immigrant students, student athletes**) and their willingness to disclose personal issues to others should be studied.

## References

Dosono, B., Rashidi, Y., Akter, T., Semaan, B., Kapadia, A. (2017). Challenges in transitioning from civil to military culture: Hyper-selective disclosure through ICTs. Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction, 1(2). ACM.

## Research Questions

**R1:** What **emergent challenges** do ROTC students deal with? How do ROTC students **cope** with these challenges? What are their **privacy concerns** when seeking (or not seeking) support?

**R2:** What **role** do ICTs play while **seeking support**? How does the **level of privacy** afforded by the ICTs affect the student's ability to seek support when coping with emergent challenges?

**R3:** How are ROTC students **transitioning** as they move into military culture?

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