
Spiritual Impact Of War

26 September 2012

**CH (COL) Mike Strohm
Command Chaplain
1st Sustainment Command (Theater)**

Fort Bragg, NC - Camp Arifjan, Kuwait - Kabul, Afghanistan

Battlemind to Home III Symposium
www.mfri.purdue.edu

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- What do you hope to get out of this session?

Battlemind to Home III Symposium
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Consider applying this statement to your own life experience:

“We have all deployed sometime in our life regardless of being in the military or not.”

John Van Epp, PhD
researcher, author and founder Love Thinks
<http://www.lovethinks.com/vanepp/>

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Outcome

Support the discussion of a collaborative and integrative care partnership between civilian clergy, community leaders, as well as private and governmental care providers.

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Force Protection

- Effects of prolonged exposure to suffering and on-going demands may create:
 - Symptoms of post traumatic stress and fatigue
 - Secondary traumatic stress
 - Vicarious trauma
 - Burnout
- Understanding and protecting against this risk factor may:
 - Increase retention
 - Reduce recidivism
 - Mitigate decreased performance

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Army Spectrum of Counseling

Life Skill Education

IMCOM/ACS

- Army Family Team Building
- Financial Readiness
- Relocation Readiness
- Unit and Rear Detachment Commander Training
- Military OneSource
- Exceptional Family Member Program
- Waiting Families
- Army Family Action Plan
- Family Readiness Groups
- Virtual Family Readiness Groups

- Operation READY
- Spouse Employment
- Parent Support and Education
- Volunteer Coordination
- Army Education Center
- Mob/Deployment Program
- New Parent Support Home Visitation

ACSIM

- Housing

IMCOM/CYSS

- Youth Workforce Preparation: *4-H Citizenship, Teen Supreme-Job Ready, Career Launch, and Promise Passport*
- Character Counts!
- School Transition/ Youth Education and Sponsorship Support
- Operation: Military Kids/Operation: Proud Partners/ Operation: Child Care
- Army Teen Panel
- Triple Play
- Youth Leadership Forums

OCCH

- Chaplains
- Chapel Youth Groups
- Chapel Religious Education
- Strong Bonds

HRC

- ACAP
- Alcohol & Drug Abuse Prevention Training (ADAPT)

IMCOM-HR

- Alcohol & Drug Abuse Prevention Training (ADAPT)

IMCOM/SR

- Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers
- Sports, Fitness and Recreational Activities
- Libraries

Supportive Counseling

IMCOM-HR

- Suicide Prevention Training
- EAP

OCCH

- Chaplains

IMCOM/ACS

- Military OneSource
- Military Family Life Consultants
- Community Support Coordinators
- Victim Advocacy
- New Parent Support Home Visitation

Treatment

OCCH

- Family Life Chaplains

Veteran Affairs

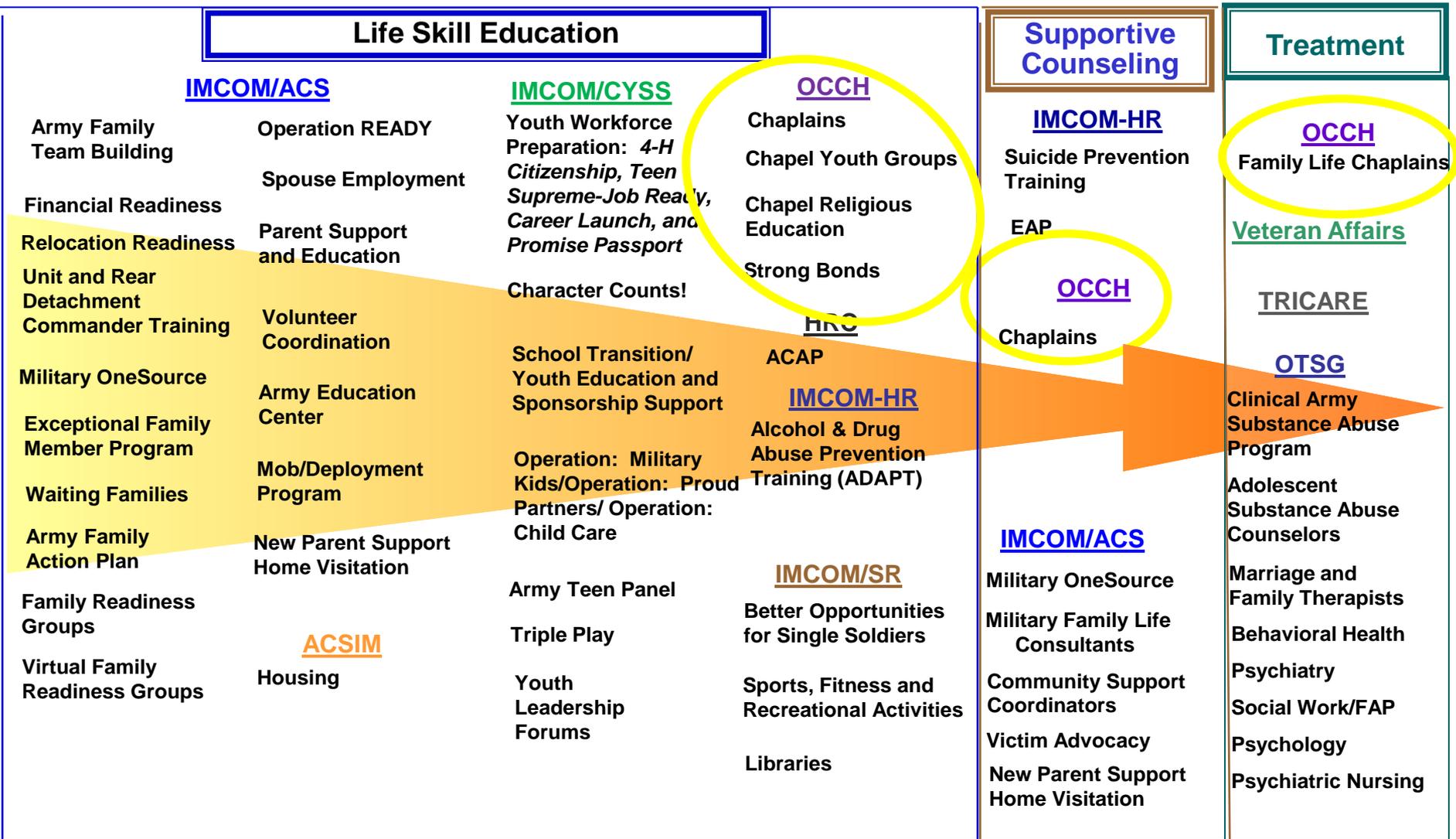
TRICARE

OTSG

- Clinical Army Substance Abuse Program
- Adolescent Substance Abuse Counselors
- Marriage and Family Therapists
- Behavioral Health
- Psychiatry
- Social Work/FAP
- Psychology
- Psychiatric Nursing

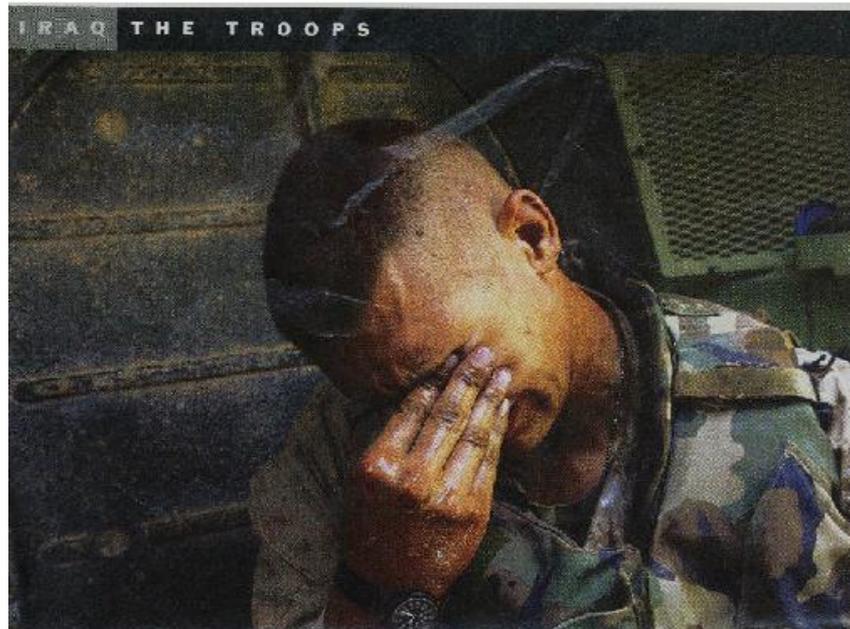
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Army Spectrum of Counseling



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An Army Chaplain Model



Army Chaplain Corps Model

- “Ministry Of Presence”
 - establish the therapeutic pastoral alliance
- “Provide” or “Perform”
 - meet the religious support requirement,
“the free exercise of religion”
- “Bring God to Soldiers and Soldiers to God”
 - respond to Soldiers and Families who accept spiritual support
- Distributed Force Structure
 - Battalions and Brigades

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Spiritual Trauma

mTBI – “my Theology’s Been Injured”,

CH (COL) Ron Thomas, 1st Corps Command Chaplain

- Questions various sacred and spiritual beliefs
 - Where was God?
 - Does He exist?
- Questions the meaning of life
- Pervasive hopelessness – lows are too low
- Pervasive aggressiveness – highs are too high
- More Topics:
 - “Guilt” contrasted with “Shame and Blame”
 - “Forgiveness”
 - “Redemption,” “Cleansing,” “Renewal”

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Spiritual Trauma

PTSD – “Passing Through the Shadow Of Death”,

Marshelle Waddell, spouse of combat veteran

- Shattered deeply held assumptions:
 - “Life has meaning”
 - “World is a safe place” or at least “benevolent”
 - “Worldview,” “perspective”
 - “Bad things happen only to other people”
 - “Power to change things”
 - “Future is limitless”

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“Relationships are the *laboratory* of life”

“Relationships are the *laboratory* of spiritual life”

Relationship Injuries

- **Conflict within close relationships**
- **Isolation, withdrawal**
- **Mistrust**
- **Sexual dysfunction**
- **Loss of boundaries**
- **Ethical violations**

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Performance Injuries

- Low morale
- Late for work
- Errors in judgment
- Lack of promotion
- Low motivation
- Feelings of Inadequacy
- Poor communication
- Staff conflicts
- Apathy
- Negativity
- Detached
- Absenteeism
- Withdrawal
- Silencing response
- Stigma - fear of perception, weak

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Family Operational Picture

(Office of The Surgeon General, Epidemiological Consultation Report)

- Families are resilient
- Stressed by cumulative effects of war and repeated deployments
- Families support the mission and want Soldiers to be victorious
- Parent and child conflict varies depending on developmental stages
- Increase in Post Traumatic Stress Disorder cases and Traumatic Brain Injury
- Indicators of Family stress:
 - Divorce
 - Domestic Violence
 - Child Neglect
 - Child/Youth Behavioral Issues
 - Increased relationship / marital discord during reintegration ➡ 70%

(Office of The Surgeon General, EPICON Report)

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Family Operational Picture

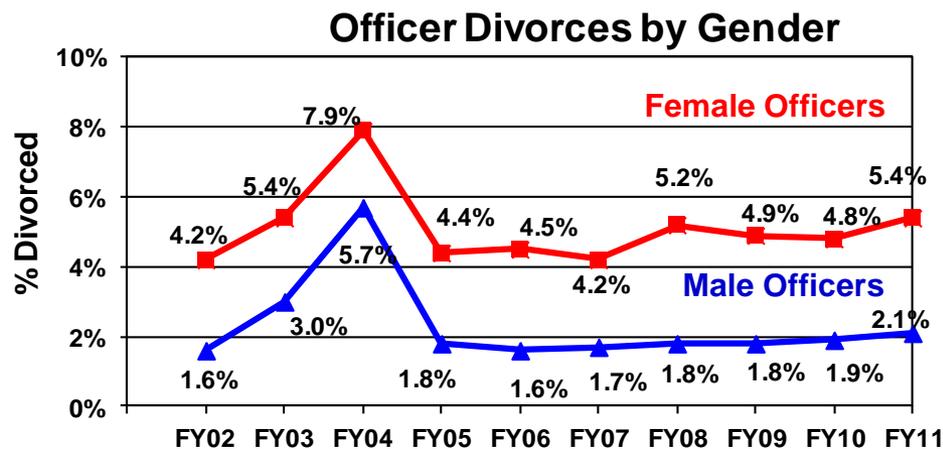
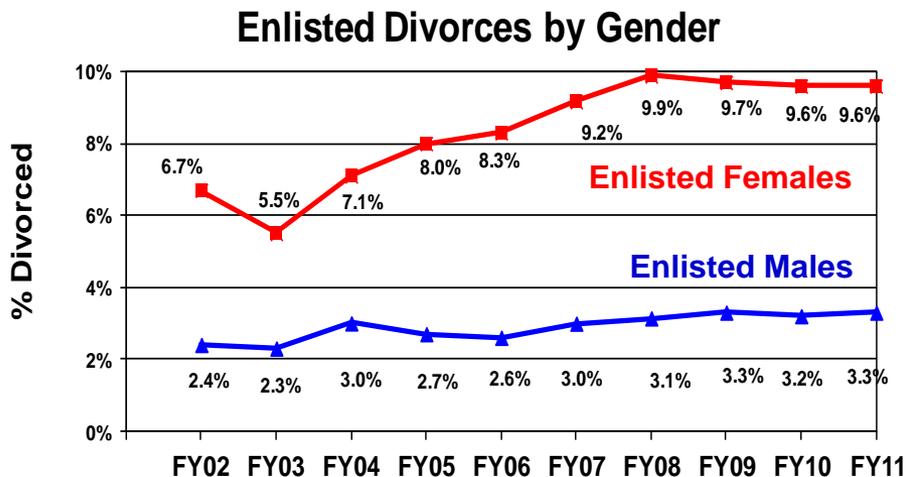
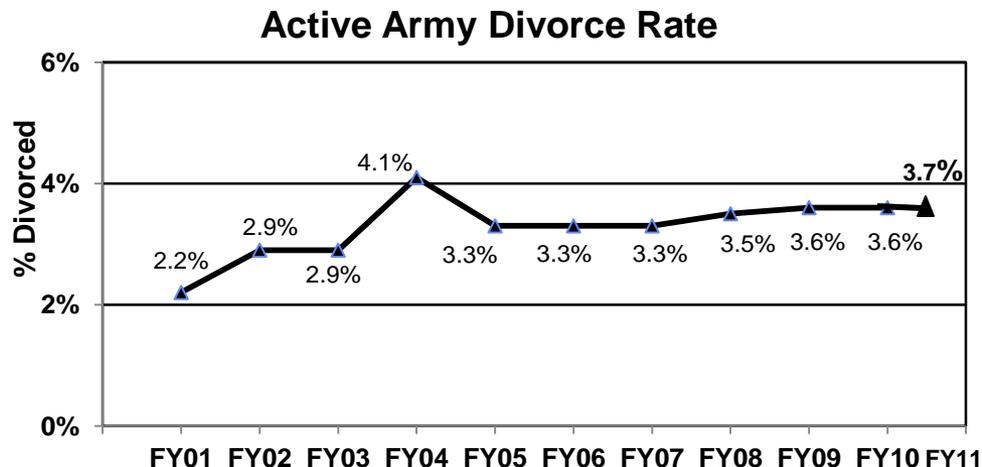
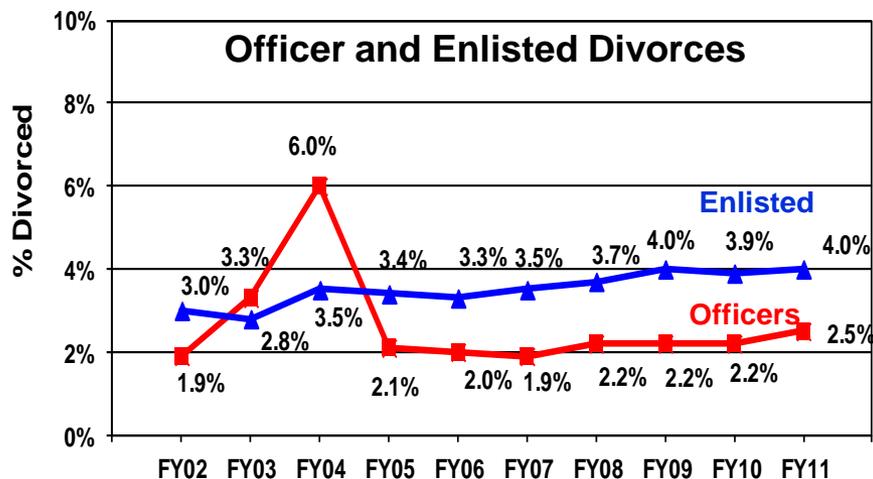
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Army Divorces for Officers & Enlisted



FY11 Divorce Rates: There was little change in Army divorce rates from FY10 to FY11. Enlisted females continue to have the highest divorce rate (9.6%), and this held true for both those who had deployed (10.3%) and those who had never deployed (8.2%). The most significant increase in divorce rate was noted for non-deployed female Officers (3.7% in FY10 to 5.3% in FY11). A comparison of 3rd quarter data shows declines in divorce rates for virtually all categories of Soldiers, both deployed and non-deployed.

Source: Army Demographics
As of: August 23, 2012

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**AMERICA'S ARMY:
THE STRENGTH OF THE NATION™**



Army Family Covenant

- Signed affirmation of the Secretary of the Army and the Chief of Staff of the Army of their commitment to provide quality programs and services for Soldiers and Families
- Approved in Sep 2007
- Active Duty Installations completed signing ceremonies 2008
- A Senior Review Group, chaired by SA and CSA meets monthly to address Family Readiness issues

Army Family Covenant

We Recognize...

- ... The commitment and increasing sacrifices that our Families are making every day.
- ... The strength of our Soldiers comes from the strength of their Families.

We are Committed to...

- ... Providing Soldiers and Families a Quality of Life that is commensurate with their service.
- ... Providing our Families a strong, supportive environment where they can thrive.
- ... Building a partnership with Army Families that enhances their strength and resilience.

We are Committed to Improving Family Readiness by:

- Standardizing and funding existing Family programs and services
- Increasing accessibility and quality of health care
- Improving Soldier and Family housing
- Ensuring excellence in schools, youth services and child care
- Expanding education and employment opportunities for Family members



SOLDIERS * FAMILIES * ARMY CIVILIANS

ARMY STRONG.

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Why Should the Army / Community Care about Soldier Marriages?

- **Broken Relationships are Expensive**
- **Healthy Relationships *yield* Long Term Benefits**
- **General Refs:**
 - Stanley, Case for Premarriage Educ. (2001)
 - Waynick, et al. (2005)
 - Gallagher. Case for Marriage, (2001)
 - Waite & Gallagher, (2000)

Costs of Marriage Distress:

- Saps Community and Leader Resources
(Whisman, et al, 2006; Gallagher, 2002)
 - Leader-time
 - MP/Social Work Services
 - School Counselor
- Decreased Work Availability (Forthofer, 1996)
- Reduced Focus and Effectiveness (Mueller, 2005)
- Primary Predictor of Negative Events (Henderson, 2006)
 - Combat Stress
 - Suicide
 - Domestic Violence

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Benefits of Marriage Success:

- Increased Retention
 - (Curtis, 2006)
- Increased Effectiveness => Promotion
 - (Waite and Gallagher, 2000)
- Increased Work Availability (Lavy, 2002)
- Early Access to/Compliance with Preventive and Restorative Health Care
 - PTSD/MTBI/Depression
 - Cardiovascular/
- Military Child Success: Tomorrow's Military

The Resilient Soldier Family

What “right” looks like:



The Resilient Soldier Family

What “right” looks like:

- **Resourced:**
 - Finances/Medical/Legal/Home/Schools
 - Unit, Community Connections
 - Help/Rest when Needed



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What “right” looks like:

- **Resourced:**
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- **Attached:**
 - Marriage
 - Stable attachment: Intimate: Turn to each other for help
 - Team Orientation: Can talk about problems
 - Long Term View
 - Friends and Extended Family



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 - Accepts Partial Connections
 - Reintegrate When Home



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 - Confidence
 - Sees positives as well as negatives
 - Faith in Self, God, Others
 - Hope for the Future
 - Willing to Serve as well as be served



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 - Willing to Serve as well as be served
- **Healthy:**
 - Adverse Childhood Events in perspective
 - Addictions/Secrets managed
 - Illnesses Managed: Gets Help when Needed



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“Relationships are the *laboratory* of life”
“Relationships are the *laboratory* of spiritual life”

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Some People turn to Faith in Tragedy:

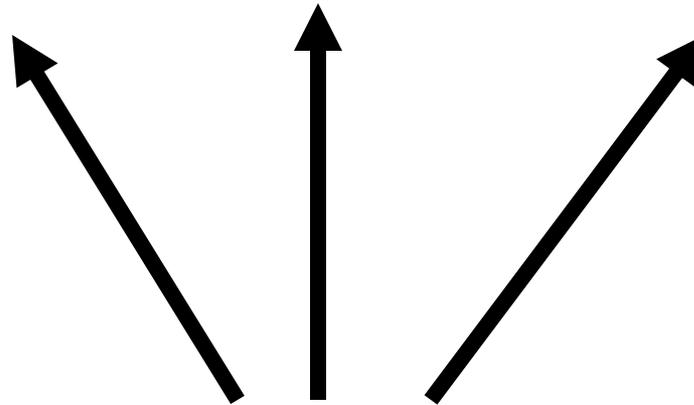


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Traditional View

Coping/Resilience

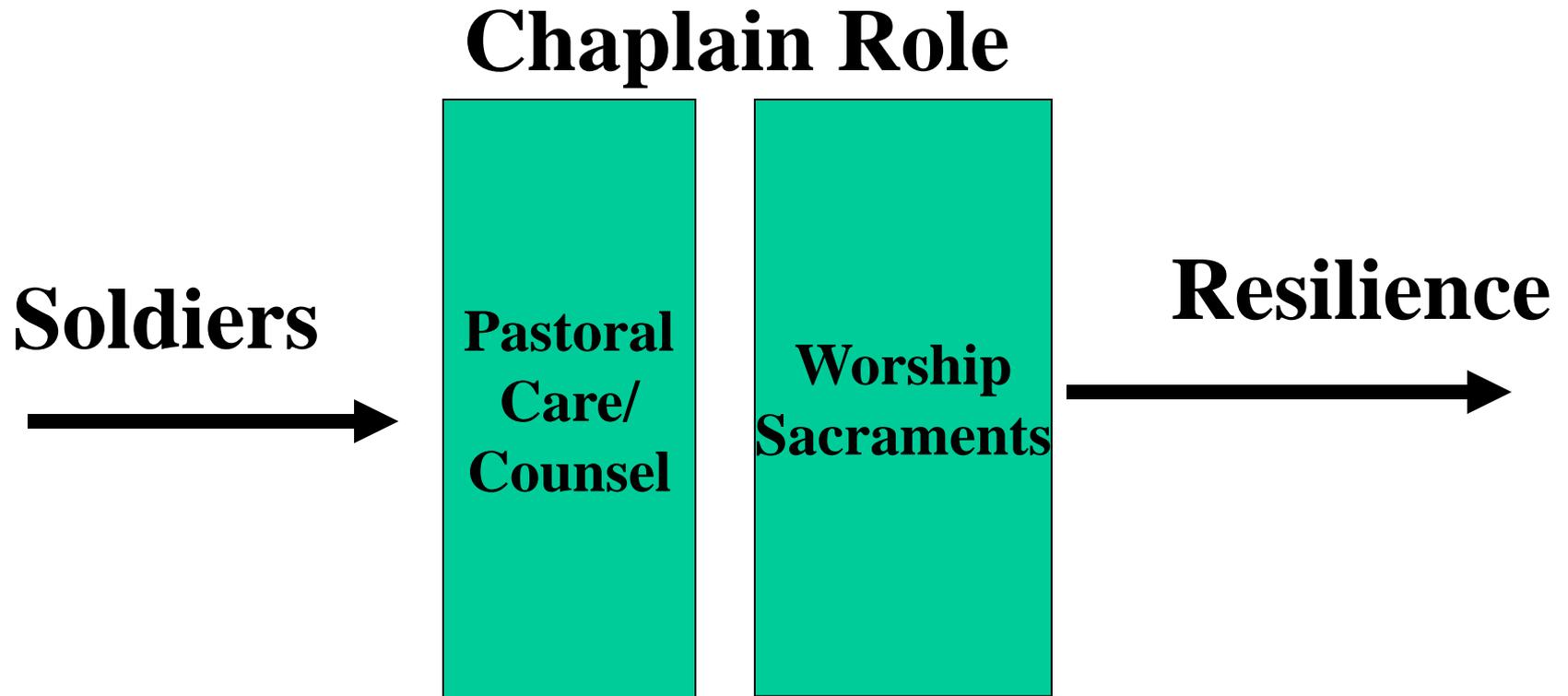


Faith

Ministry Professional

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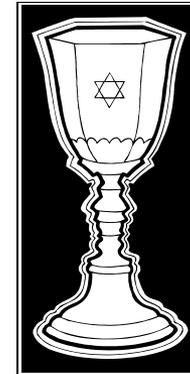
Another View Chaplains and Resilience



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Role of Worship/Sacraments creating connections

God ↔ Person



Army Chaplain Corps:
“Bringing God to Soldiers and Soldiers to God”

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Soldiers, Faith, and Resilience

How Does Faith = or yield Resilience?

ABCs of a Crisis Response
Attachment and Resilience

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Ruben Hill: ABC=X

$$(A) \times (B) \times (C) = X$$

Stressor:

Tragedy
Loss
Deployment
Tasks

Resources:

Community
Skills
Family
Assistance

Thoughts:

Faith
Hope
Meaning

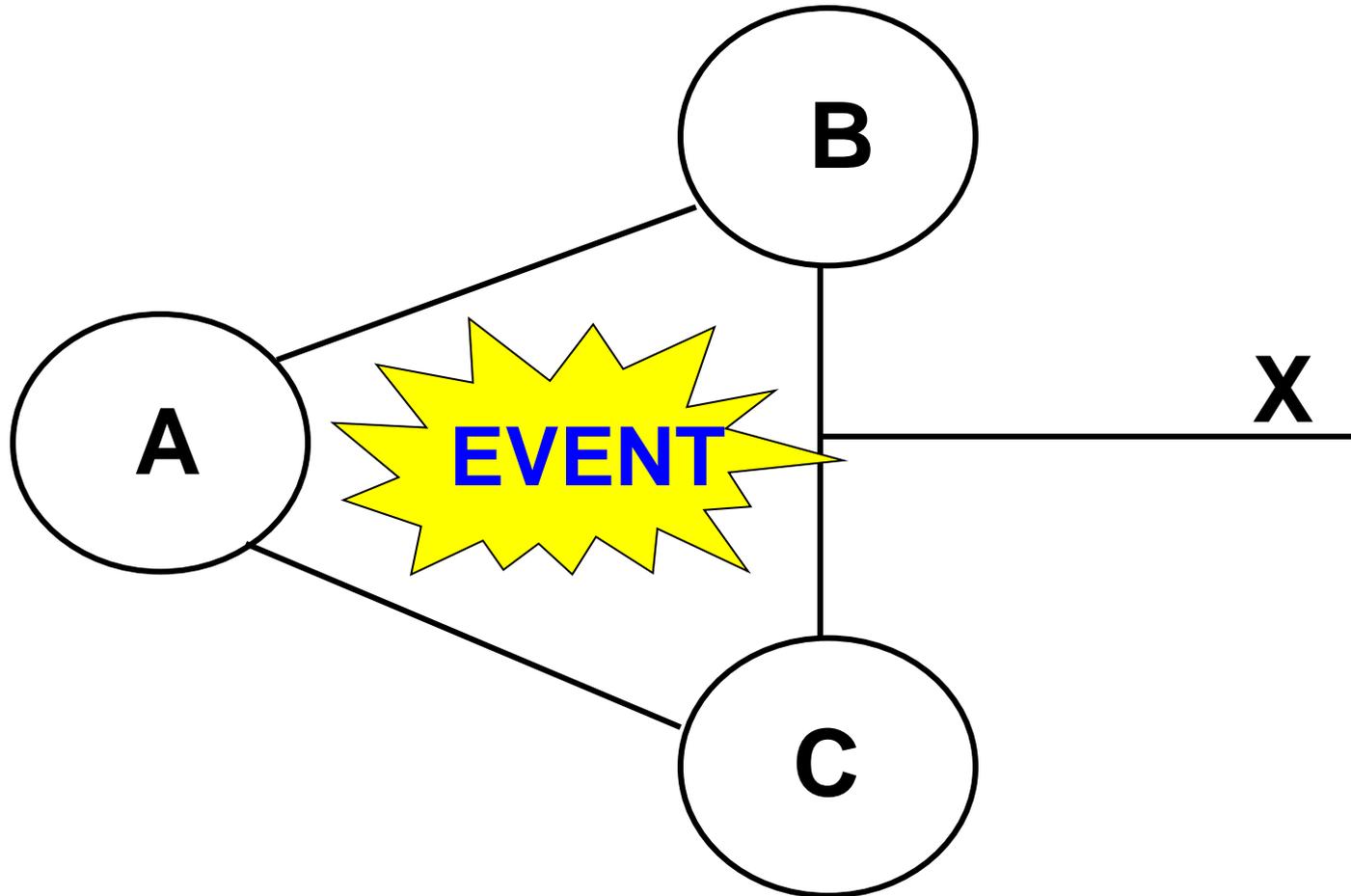
Coping:

Increasing

Chaplain Supportive Activities:

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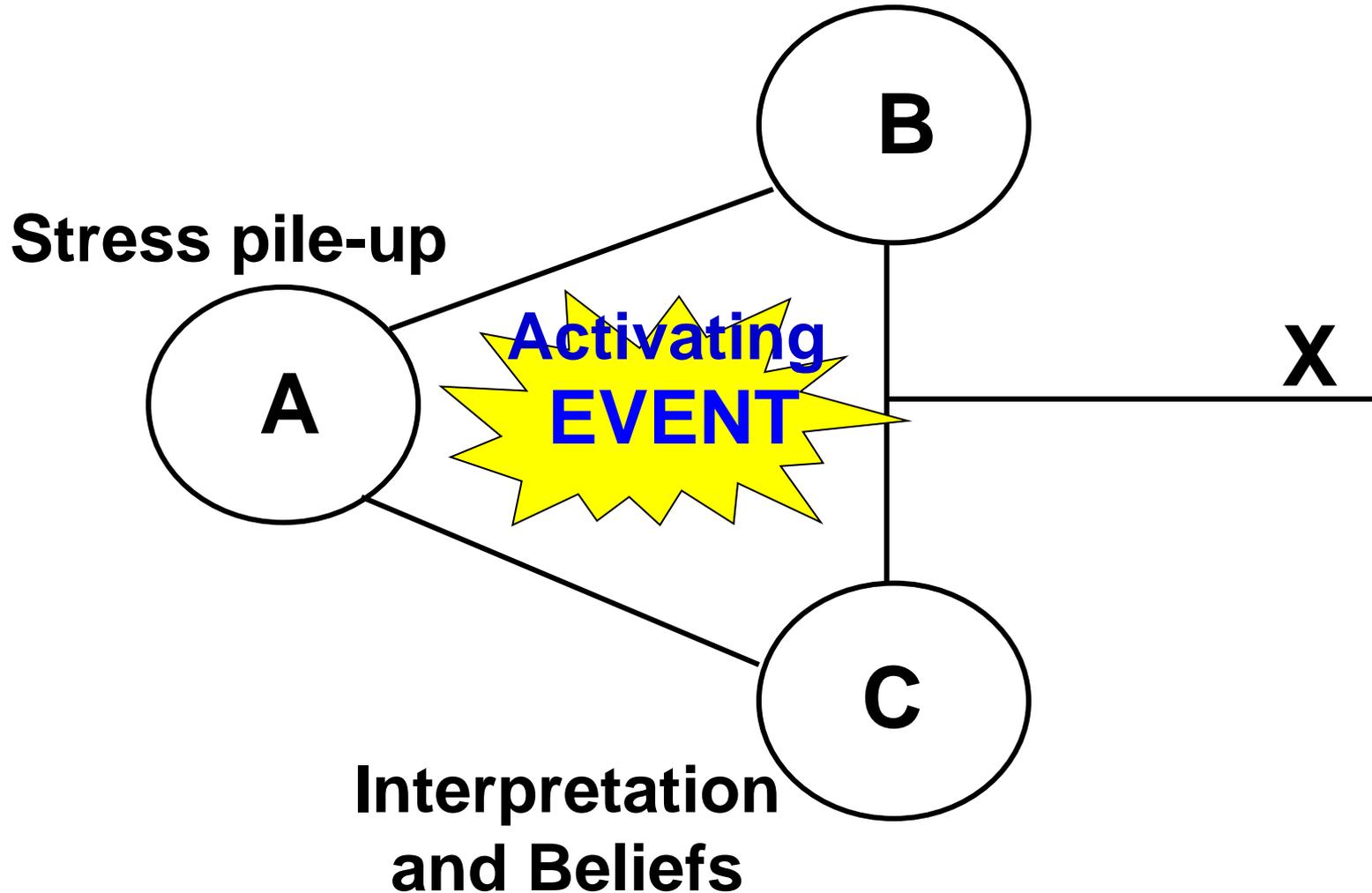
ABC-X Model of Crisis Response



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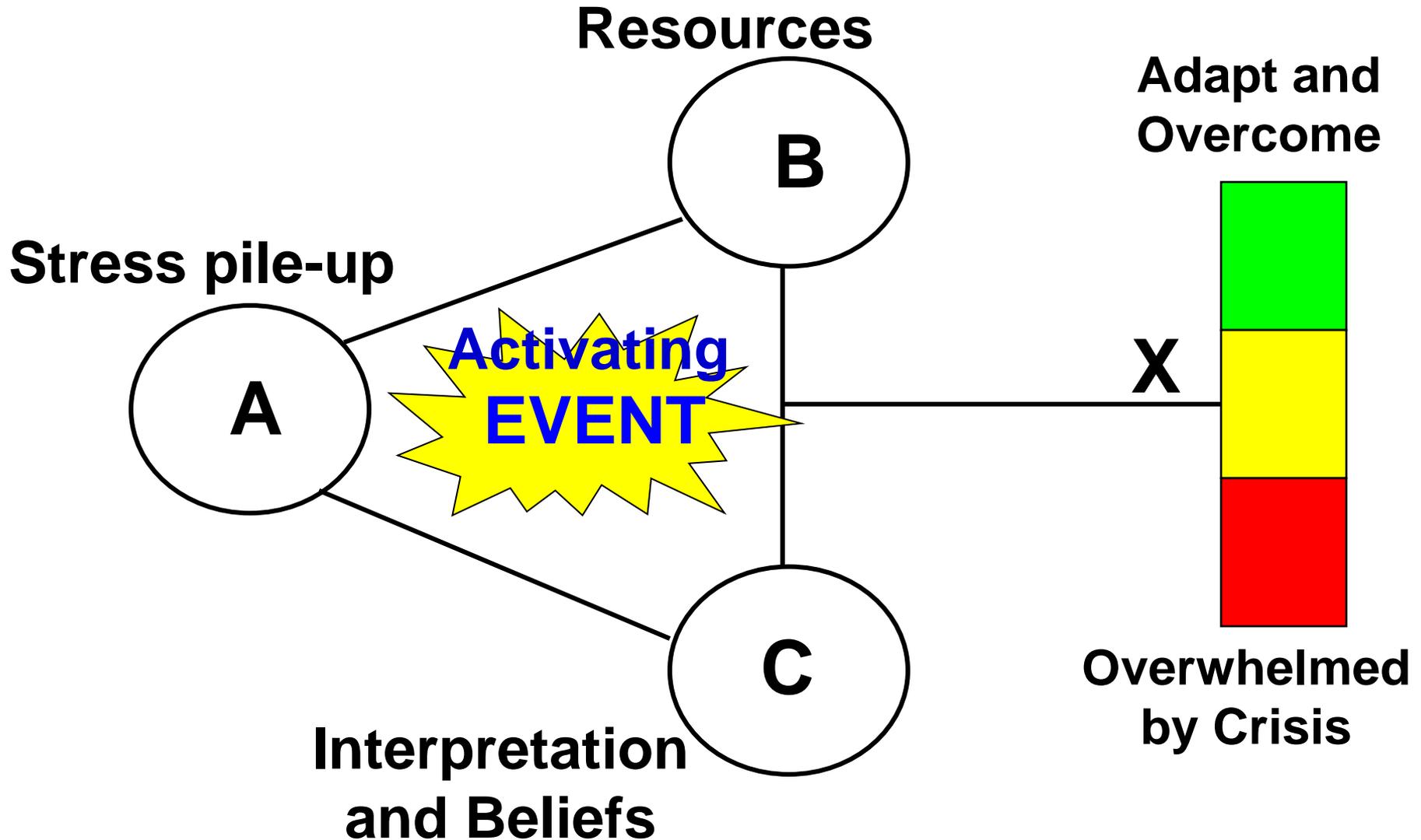
ABC-X Model of Crisis Response

Resources



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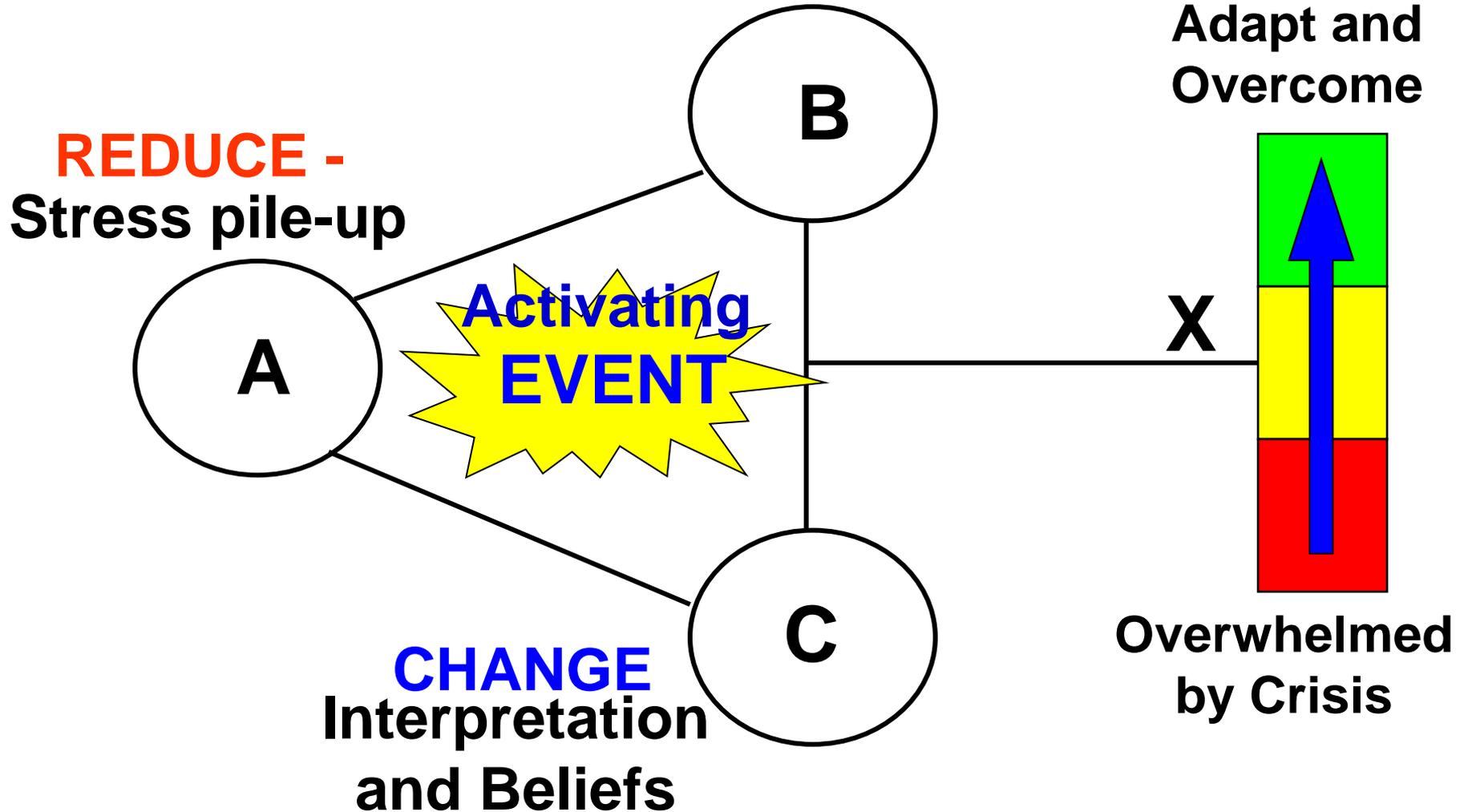
ABC-X Model of Crisis Response



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ABC-X Model of Crisis Response

ADD + Resources



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Conclusions from ABC=X:

Soldiers and Families do better when:

- A: Reduce Stresses
 - Not always possible
- B: Provide Resources
 - Knowledge/Skills
 - Tools/Equipment
 - People
- C: Support Healthy Thinking about Challenges
 - *Hope and Trust and Courage*
 - *Knowledge* of situation and options; increase contingency planning
 - *Meaning* in the struggle, absence of struggle is not the goal

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“Resilience” Assumptions:

- There is NO *brief* program that truly protects against risk factors – risk factors are part of the life journey
- Major improvement takes cultural change, life cycle training, and significant resources
- Lasting change occurs in these significant spiritual events and in healthy human connections (not by passive learning).

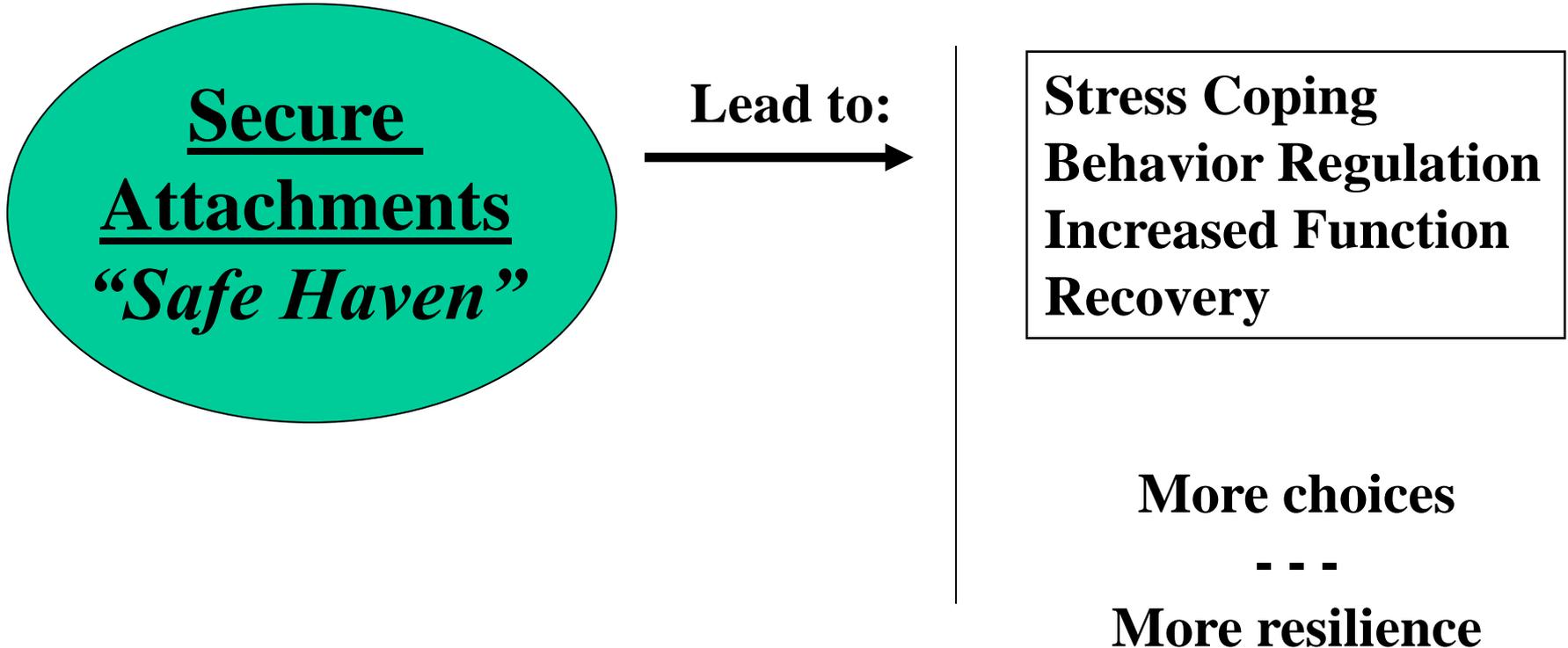
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Other Topics

- Individual, Family, Community
- Greater reliance on God is not equivalent to greater powerlessness (Pargament & Park, 1995)
- Increased sense of control by God yields increased sense of personal control (Kahoe, 1974; DeVellis, DeVellis, & Spilsbury, 1988; Jackson & Coursey, 1988)
- Partnership *with* God (“God empowers me”) or deference *to* God (“I can trust God”)
- Clergy should not be viewed as low-end behavioral health providers

Attachment and Resilience

J. Bowlby: Attachment Theory



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Conclusions From Attachment Theory

People do Better:

When they are immersed in solid/rich/supportive relationships

- Families
- Community
- Units (“Band of Brothers / of Sisters!”)

A Place to Recover
***Safe Haven* from the Storms**

Someone who’s
“Got your back”

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Conclusions From Attachment Theory

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Attachment Space, Safe Haven = “A Person”



**A Place to Recover
Safe Haven from the Storms**

**Someone who’s
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The Importance of Attachment

*“ . . . It has become clear that
to be resilient in the face of trauma,
people need not just friends and a sense of community,
but close attachment bonds.”*

- Sue Johnson

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Faith, Neurobiology, Resilience

Chronic Limbic Arousal

Fight, Flight, Freeze
Emotional Cutoff
Poor Future Planning
Reduced Immune Resistance
Health Breaks

Limbic Soothing

Neo-cortical Logic controls
Connection with others
Decision Making
Plans for future
Delayed Gratification
Immune Resistance

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A Place to Recover
Safe Haven from the Storms

Connection to God
Connections to Others

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Spiritual Resilience Factors

- **Connected**
 - Comrades
 - Spouse and family
 - Faith community
- **Skilled**
 - Skills Training – self-soothing, moderating
 - Pastoral Care / Counseling
- **Meaningful/Spiritually Rich Lifestyle**
 - Self-aware and self-regulated
 - Theologically integrated
 - Spiritual disciplines

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Spiritual Resilience Factors

(What Promotes Chaplain/Provider Resilience)

- **Connected**
 - Comrades
 - Spouse and family
 - Faith community
- **Skilled**
 - Sacraments
 - Pastoral Care/Counseling
- **Meaningful/Spiritually Rich Lifestyle**
 - Self-aware and self-regulated
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 - Spiritual disciplines

*“We have to eat
our own dog food.”*

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Another Picture: The Chaplain / Provider at Risk

“The provider is a consumable – a human delivery system,”

CH (COL) Dave Moran, Command Chaplain, US Army Europe

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Another Picture: The Chaplain / Provider at Risk

“The provider is a consumable – a human delivery system,”

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- Isolated/Disconnected
- Marginal Pastoral Care / Counseling Skills
- Minimal Theological Integration of pain, loss, fear
- Spiritually Dry or Wounded
- Conflicted or Distant Marriage Relationship
- Unsure of Legitimacy of Call/Mission
- Unresolved Issues:
 - Secrets
 - Shame
 - Hurts
- Addictions? Destructive Self-soothing
- Unrealistic Expectations

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Picture: The Resilient Caregiver

- Skilled in Care-giving Competencies
- Realistic Expectations
 - Pre-Trauma Inoculation
- Connected to “Band of Brothers / Sisters”
- Connected to Spouse and Primary others
- Meaning: Sense of Call to **this** Work / Task
- Connected to God: Faith in Practice
- Confident:
 - At Peace with Present, Future, and Past
- Personal Health
 - No Destructive Self-Medication / Activities
 - Healthy Habits / Good Physical Conditioning

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Conclusion

*“Pastoral resilience, like health, is not an accident.
It is the reliable result of a conscious process.*

*Perhaps the place to take Soldier & Family resilience
is to model the process of building resilience
in our own Chaplains.*

*If we take the development of resilience seriously,
it will show in the health of our Corps.*

*And a healthy, resilient Chaplain Corps
will foster a more healthy, resilient Army.”*

CH (COL) Glen Bloomstrom, Director of Ministry Initiatives, 2004 - 2007
Office of the Chief Of Chaplains, Washington, DC

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Resources

- Defense Centers Of Excellence (DCoE),
“Self-guided Spiritual Assessment, Workshop, Library” -
<http://www.afterdeployment.org/topics-spirituality>
- US Army Chief Of Chaplains,
“Ministering To Families Affected By Deployment” -
<http://www.chapnet.army.mil/pdf/resources.pdf>
- Military OneSource - <http://www.militaryonesource.mil>
- Virtual Family Readiness Group (vFRG) - www.armyfrg.org

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Military OneSource



A 24/7 Resource for Military Members, Spouses & Families

1-800-342-9647



View site in: [English](#) | [Español](#)

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- Career
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- Deployment
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- Guard/Reserve
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- Moving
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- Wounded Warrior

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Self Assessment Tools

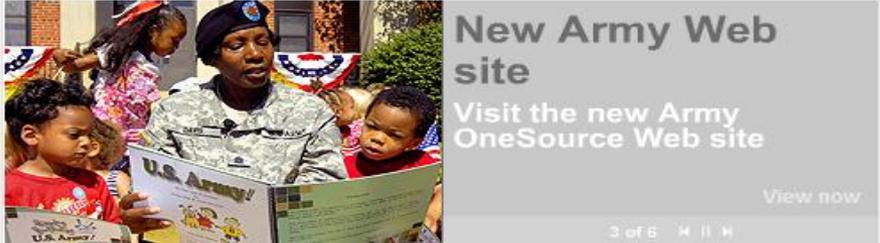
- [Do You Give It Your Best?](#)
- [Do You Have Debt Problems?](#)
- [Is a Traumatic Event Causing You Stress?](#)
- [What's Your Communication Style?](#)

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Military Installations

Choose Branch:

Choose Installation:



New Army Web site

Visit the new Army OneSource Web site

[View now](#)

Army One Source



Working together, Military OneSource and the United States Army Family Covenant provide support to Soldiers and their families throughout the world. Visit the new [Army OneSource site](#) to see the Army support programs.

When Stormy Weather Hits Home



Hazardous weather, like recent ice storms in the northeast, can leave home-owners scrambling to make insurance claims. Be prepared. Print this article to keep with your insurance papers.

- [How to File for Property Damage with Your Insurance Company](#)

January 6 and 13, 2009 Webinar for Service Providers



Join psychologist Dr. Sonja Lyubomirsky for "A Scientific Approach to Happiness and Resilience," a 2-part webinar describing her groundbreaking approach to increasing happiness and resilience. Especially for service providers working with the military community. [Learn more and register.](#)

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Taking Charge of Your Money CD

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