

Uniformed Services Symposium

Establishing a Wellness Program for during Military Deployment Cycles: Improving Readiness by Focusing on Our People

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Disclaimer

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Pre-Test

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 - b. Deployment
 - c. Post-deployment
 - d. Permanent Change of Station
2. Stressors during a deployment include:
 - a. Marital disagreements
 - b. Mission focus
 - c. Children
 - d. All of the above
3. Mindfulness is:
 - a. Selfish
 - b. Self -reflective
 - c. Centering on the past
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Objectives

1. Explain the military's deployment cycle.
2. Recognize the stressors during deployment cycles.
3. Understand the importance of wellness programs in addressing causes of stress during military deployment cycles.
4. Provide mitigation and prevention tools through mindfulness and wellness programs.
5. Identify what PAs and leaders can do to help when seeing military members and their families during deployment cycles.

Agenda

1. Introduction
2. Disclaimer
3. Pre-Test
4. Agenda
5. Military Deployment cycle
6. Causes of stress during the deployment cycle
7. Mindfulness
8. Wellness
9. This is My Squad in Wellness Programs
9. Resources
10. Conclusion
11. Post-test

Background

People First

“**People** are the United States Army’s greatest strength and most important weapon system, and it is because of our people – our Soldiers, Families, Army Civilians, veteran Soldiers for Life, and retirees – that we were ready to respond to each of these crises. The idea that investing in **people** is an investment in all priorities, especially readiness, is why former Secretary of the Army Ryan McCarthy announced last October that ‘**people**’ would officially become the Army’s new number one priority. The Secretary and I constantly promote a philosophy of ‘**People First,**’ and we published the first **Army People Strategy** in October 2019.”



Reference:

https://www.army.mil/article/243026/people_first_insights_from_the_armys_chief_of_staff

Background

Military personnel encounter stress during all phases of the deployment cycle. Implementation of mindfulness and wellness may not be innate in military culture. PAs should be aware of what programs exist for military personnel in improving their well-being during the deployment cycle.

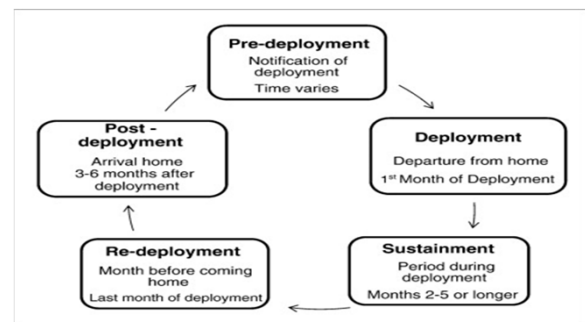
Background

- Operational deployment may negatively affect mental health
- Increased incidence of post-deployment PTSD and depression
- Combat exposure, not just deployment in general, had an adverse effect on mental health

Reference: Pietrzak, E. et al. (2012). Effects of deployment on mental health in modern military forces: A review of longitudinal studies. Accessed December 18, 2021. Retrieved from <https://jmvh.org/article/effects-of-deployment-on-mental-health-in-modern-military-forces-a-review-of-longitudinal-studies>

Military Deployment Cycle

- Pre-deployment - preparation for deployment
- Deployment - moved from the home installation to the designated location for operations
- Post-Deployment- returning home
- Reintegration- back to regular life and community



References: <https://usmilitary.com/here-are-the-phases-of-military-deployment/>

<https://www.jenonline.org/cms/attachment/2011487474/2033995975/gr1.jpg>

Stress

Thoughts

Thought process: narrow focus, poor concentration, poor memory, rapidly shifting from thought to thought or activity to activity until becoming too tired to deal with anything, and then becoming numb and avoidant.

Thought content: over focusing on problems, losing perspective, starting to identify with life as a series of problems, and inability to focus on other, more positive aspects of.

Emotional

Worried, depressed, frustrated, angry, irritable, sad, and then not able to feel much at all.

Physical

Discomfort in the stomach, chest, muscles, or head; eyes tired and strained; poor sleep and tired most of the time (or sleeping too much, but not feeling rested); frequently sick; changes in appetite; low sexual interest or responsiveness.

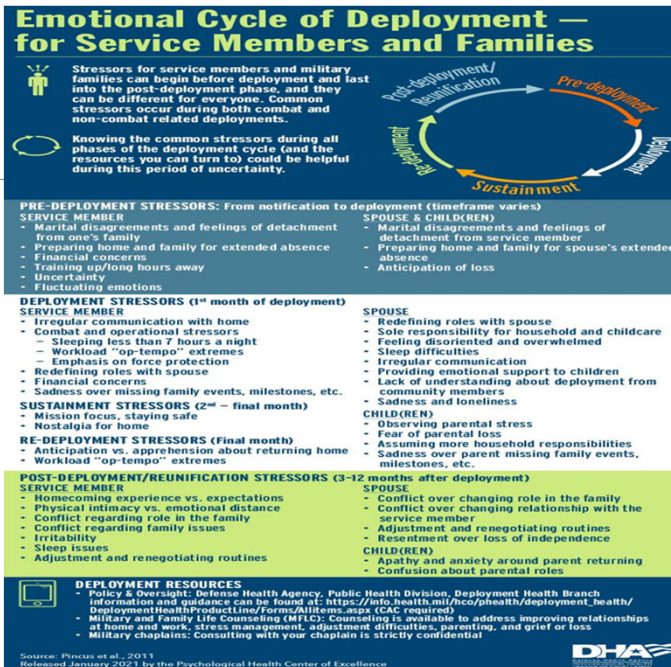
Behavioral

Less motivation and less interest in things that used to be interesting; unable to "get going."

Social

Less interested in social activity, more withdrawn (or sometimes clingy), more apt to snap at other smore self-absorbed, and less able to be empathetic.

Stress:<https://www.military.com/deployment/managing-stress-during-a-deployment.html>



Reference: <https://health.mil/News/Gallery/Infographics/2021/04/02/PHCOE-COSC-Deployment-Infograph-1111>

Deployment Cycle Stressors

Pre-deployment Phase	Deployment Phase	Post-deployment/Reintegration Phase
Getting affairs in order	Difficult living conditions	Reintegrating into family
Preparing family for deployment	Witnessing the death of others	Renegotiating routines
Denial and anticipation of loss	Loss of a unit member or friend	Loss of independence
	Killing someone	
	Injury	

Reference: <https://health.mil/Military-Health-Topics/Centers-of-Excellence/Psychological-Health-Center-of-Excellence/Psychological-Health-Readiness/Combat-and-Operational-Stress-Control/COSC-and-the-Deployment-Cycle#:~:text=Military%20families%20also%20experience%20a%20variety%20of%20stressors,lack%20of%20regular%20communication%20with%20a%20deployed%20parent>

Deployment Cycle Concerns

- Alcohol
- Depression
- TBI
- Burnout
- Compassion Fatigue
- PTSD

Reference: <https://health.mil/Military-Health-Topics/Centers-of-Excellence/Psychological-Health-Center-of-Excellence/Psychological-Health-Readiness/Combat-and-Operational-Stress-Control/COSC-and-the-Deployment-Cycle#:~:text=Military%20families%20also%20experience%20a%20variety%20of%20stressors,lack%20of%20regular%20communication%20with%20a%20deployed%20parent>

Alcohol

- Social setting
- Celebrating victories
- Alone to mask trauma

According to army officials, 85 percent of the soldiers seeking outpatient substance abuse treatment did so for alcohol.

Reference: Alcohol Rehab Guide <https://www.alcoholrehabguide.org/resources/active-duty-military-personnel-alcoholism>

Depression

- Feeling hopeless, sad, or “empty” most of the time
- Losing interest or pleasure in activities that you used to enjoy
- Lacking energy or feeling very tired
- Thinking about death or suicide
- Having ongoing physical problems— such as headaches, stomach problems, and pain—that don’t get better even when they have been treated

Reference:
https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/corporate_pubs/2008/RAND_CP534-2008-03.pdf

TBI

Traumatic brain injury can cause problems long after the injury actually happens.

Symptoms can include:

- Constant headaches
- Confusion
- Lightheadedness or dizziness
- Changes in mood or behavior
- Trouble remembering or concentrating
- Repeated nausea or vomiting
- Problems with seeing or hearing

Reference: https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/corporate_pubs/2008/RAND_CP534-2008-03.pdf

Burnout

- “Cumulative process marked by emotional exhaustion and withdrawal associated with increased workload and institutional stress, NOT trauma-related”
- Stages of Burnout have been identified as:
 - Enthusiasm
 - Stagnation
 - Frustration
 - apathy

Reference: <https://www.stress.org/military/for-practitionersleaders/compassion-fatigue>

Risk Factors

- Overdeveloped sense of responsibility
- Poorly-defined boundaries
- Relating
- Lacking sleep
- Not taking breaks



Photo by [Meriç Dağlı](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Compassion Fatigue

- People whose professions lead to prolonged exposure to other people's trauma can be vulnerable to compassion fatigue, also known as secondary or vicarious trauma
- They can experience acute symptoms that put their physical and mental health at risk, making them wary of giving and caring

Reference: <https://www.stress.org/military/for-practitionersleaders/compassion-fatigue>

Signs and symptoms of Stress, Burnout and Compassion Fatigue

Physical Signs

- Physical exhaustion
- Insomnia or hypersomnia
- Headaches and migraines
- Increased susceptibility to illness
- Somatization and hypochondria
- Gastrointestinal complaints
- Hypertension

Behavioral Signs and Symptoms

- Increased use of alcohol, drugs, food or other addictions
- Absenteeism, Chronic lateness
- Anger and irritability, blaming
- High self-expression and exaggerated sense of responsibility
- Less ability to feel joy
- Workaholism
- Forgetfulness

Long Term Effects

- Chronic health conditions
- Attrition from profession
- Problems in personal relationships
- Compromised care for patients
- Suicidality

PTSD

- Intrusive thoughts
- Nightmares
- Flashbacks of past traumatic events
- Avoidance of reminders of trauma
- Hypervigilance
- Sleep disturbance

all of which lead to considerable social, occupational, and interpersonal dysfunction

References: https://www.ptsd.va.gov/understand/common/common_veterans.asp

<https://www.uptodate.com/contents/posttraumatic-stress-disorder-in-adults-epidemiology-pathophysiology-clinical-manifestations-course-assessment-and-diagnosis>

Combined Problems

- It is possible to have a combination of two or more problems.
- It is important for patients and providers to know of concomitant problems.
- The treatment for having combined problems may be different from when there is only one problem.

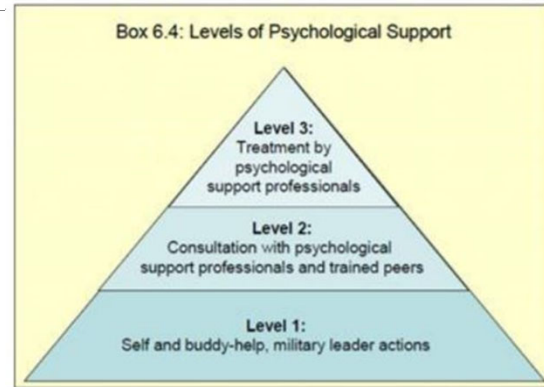
Stress Management During Deployment

- Know the symptoms
- Keep a routine
- Stay healthy
- Take breaks
- Build trust in the unit
- Keep your sense of humor
- Address your spiritual needs
- Ask for help

Reference: Military OneSource <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/military-life-cycle/deployment/during-deployment/stress-management-during-deployment/>

Treatment: Self Help Options

- Take care of yourself
- Create a Family Plan
- Pay attention to your feelings
- Utilize available resources
 - Unit Chaplain
 - Military OneSource
 - Military and Family Life Counselors
 - Combat Stress Control Teams
 - TRICARE
 - Military Crisis Hotline



PTSD

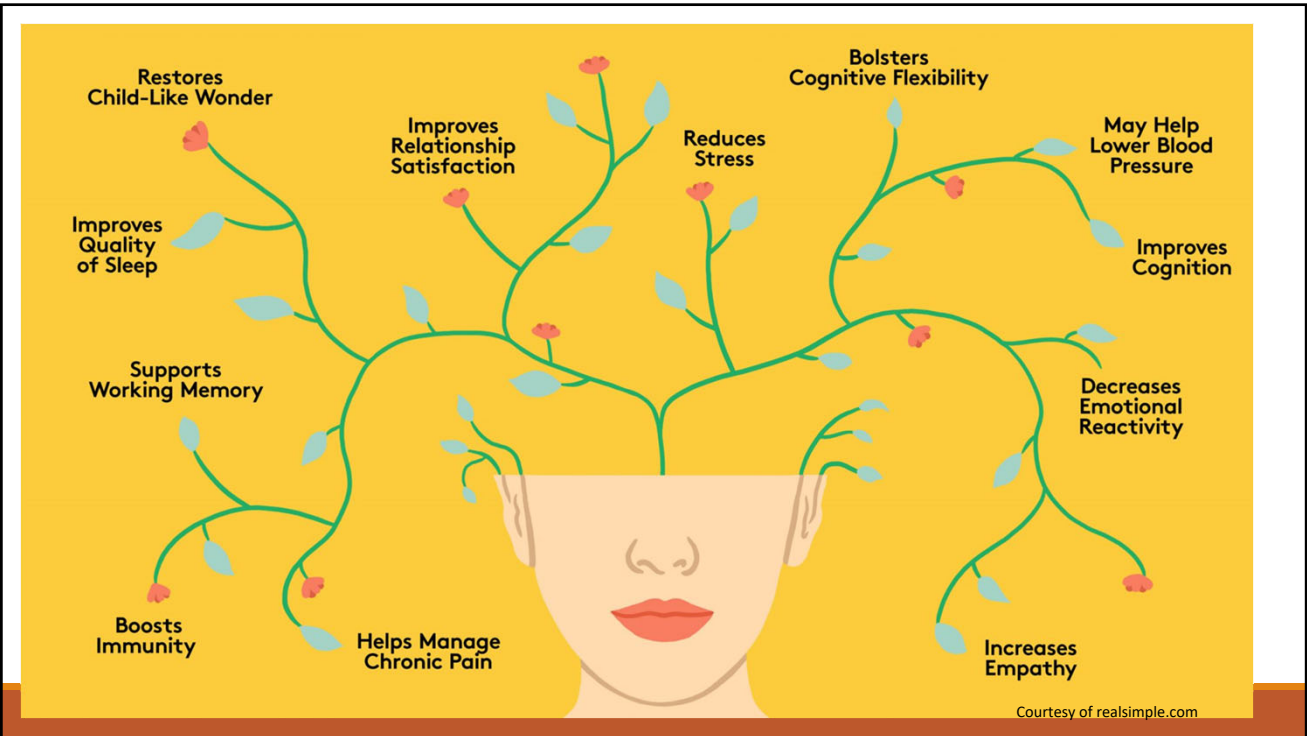
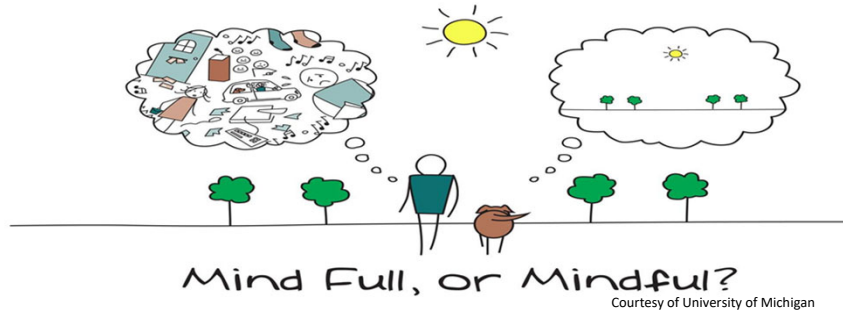
PTSD: "PTSD (posttraumatic stress disorder) is a mental health problem that some people develop after experiencing or witnessing a life-threatening event, like combat, a natural disaster, a car accident, or sexual assault."

The trauma-focused psychotherapies with the strongest evidence are:

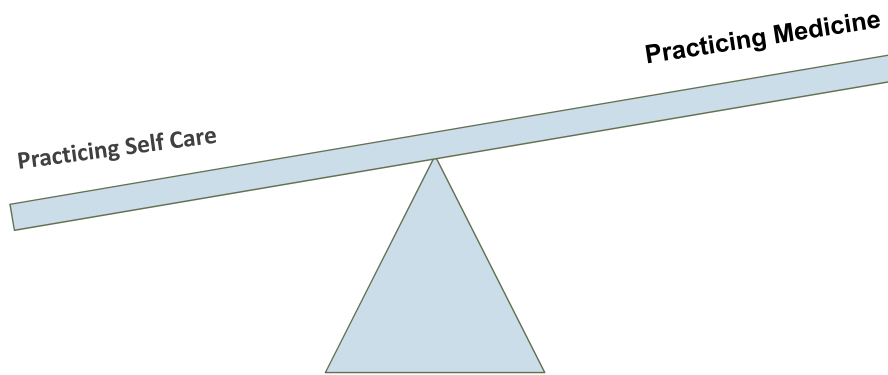
- **Prolonged Exposure (PE)**
Teaches you how to gain control by facing your negative feelings. It involves talking about your trauma with a provider and doing some of the things you have avoided since the trauma.
- **Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT)**
Teaches you to reframe negative thoughts about the trauma. It involves talking with your provider about your negative thoughts and doing short writing assignments.
- **Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR)**
Helps you process and make sense of your trauma. It involves calling the trauma to mind while paying attention to a back-and-forth movement or sound (like a finger waving side to side, a light, or a tone).

Mindfulness

Mindfulness is the simple act of recognizing what's going on inside of ourselves and what's going on around us, in the present moment and without judgement. Mindfulness is a tool that helps one manage thoughts and emotions, notice more of what's happening in a situation, and give oneself the ability to immerse oneself in the present moment as it unfolds.



Sustainable self care: a practice



You need both, and it's rarely balanced perfectly

Sustainable Self-Care: Take Inventory

- The ProQOL (Professional Quality of Life Scale: Compassion Satisfaction and Compassion Fatigue). Pocatello, ID: [ProQOL.org](http://www.proqol.org). Retrieved Jan 2022 from www.proqol.org
- Journaling
- RAIN:
 - Recognize
 - Accept
 - Investigate
 - Note



Photo by [Joshua Hoehne](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Self-Care

Mental	Relationships	Physical	Hobbies	Techniques
Mindfulness/mindset	Family	"Performance Triad"	Learn something new	Routine/Calendar
Meditation	Connecting with others	Relaxation techniques	Time outdoors	Breaks
Teamwork/praise	Support Networks	Hydration	Sports	Vary Work
Switching	Friends		Make something	Setting Boundaries

Wellness

- Wellness is the act of practicing healthy habits on a daily basis to attain better physical and mental health outcomes, so that instead of just surviving, you're *thriving*.
- To understand the significance of wellness, it's important to understand how it's linked to health. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), health is defined as being "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity."
- Several key areas of your lifestyle are considered dimensions of overall Wellness. They include: social connectedness, exercise, nutrition, sleep and mindfulness. Each one has an impact on your physical and mental health. By making simple and healthy choices on a daily basis, you will be well on your way towards reducing stress, having positive social interactions and achieving optimal wellness.

Incorporating TIMS (This is My Squad) in Establishing a Wellness Program

- Take a holistic approach with the Soldier being the center of the program
 - Soldier
 - Leader
 - Buddy
 - Family



Reference: <https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Journals/NCO-Journal/Archives/2020/September/This-is-My-Squad/>

What Leaders Can Do in Establishing a Wellness Program

- Know your Soldiers and their family needs
- Know the demands of the mission and how it affects your Soldiers
- Build a cohesive team, assess unit morale
- Training Preparation: Build psychological fitness
- Know and manage expectations and demands, balance work and time off
- Know resources
- Know when to refer
- Ensure your own psychological fitness
- Family Readiness

Box 5.5: Five Stages of Emotional Cycle of a Military Separation

1. Pre-deployment
2. Deployment
3. Initial Deployment
4. Stabilization
5. Anticipation of return

Reference: NATO (October, 2019). A PSYCHOLOGICAL GUIDE FOR LEADERS ACROSS THE DEPLOYMENT CYCLE. Accessed December 18, 2021. Retrieved from https://www.coemed.org/files/stanags/03_AMEDP/AMedP-8.10_EDA_V1_E_2565.pdf

What PAs Can Do in Establishing a Wellness Program

1. Ask if the patient is in the military or a veteran
2. Take a good history to include social history, stressors, employment, sexual history, ETOH, tobacco, substance abuse
3. Know what the stages of the deployment cycle is and if the patient is getting ready to deploy, deployed, or returning from deployment
4. Know resources to give patients and their families

Provide resources from the garrison level, for example, this one from Hawaii:

[https://hawaii.armymwr.com/application/files/8416/2268/5781/U.S. Army Garrison Hawaii Deployment Cycle Resource Guide.pdf?fbclid=IwAR2jkngvGmQ-JKn5paejrXQ_TVezzDi9k5_Qxf7RfGgVV1CuFJ6tFhcyCJ4](https://hawaii.armymwr.com/application/files/8416/2268/5781/U.S._Army_Garrison_Hawaii_Deployment_Cycle_Resource_Guide.pdf?fbclid=IwAR2jkngvGmQ-JKn5paejrXQ_TVezzDi9k5_Qxf7RfGgVV1CuFJ6tFhcyCJ4)

Resources: PTSD and TBI

The Veterans Affairs (VA) National Center for PTSD

<http://www.ncptsd.va.gov/ncmain/ncdocs/manuals/GuideforMilitary.pdf>

Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center

1-800-870-9244

<http://www.dvbic.org/>

National Center for Injury Prevention and Control information on TBI

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/tbi/tbibook.pdf>

Department of Veterans Affairs

<http://www.va.gov/enviroagents/docs/TBI-handout-patients.pdf>

Resources: Depression

Department of Defense

<https://www.gmo.amedd.army.mil/depress/Web%20Depression%20Brochure.doc>

Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences depression fact sheet

<http://www.usuhs.mil/psy/CourageToCarePatientFamilyDepressionFactSheet.pdf>

National Institute of Mental Health information on depression

<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/depression/nimhdepression.pdf>

Families for Depression Awareness

<http://familyaware.org/admk/wellnessguide.pdf>

Resources: Substance Abuse

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

1-800-662-HELP

<http://getfit.samhsa.gov/Drugs/>

<http://getfit.samhsa.gov/Alcohol/>

Military OneSource

1-800-342-9647

<https://www.militaryonesource.com>

Department of Veterans Affairs, Veteran Recovery

<http://www.veteranrecovery.med.va.gov/>

Conclusion

It is important for military providers to know the military deployment cycles, the stressors, and the signs and symptoms depending on the cycle in order to help them cope. The providers also need to know resources to support them during the deployment cycles.

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Questions/Contact Information

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