Emotional Re-engagement after Deployments: Using Attachment Principles with Relationship Resources For Post-Deployment Relational Enhancement

A Thesis Project Submitted to
The Faculty of Liberty University School of Divinity
in Candidacy for the Degree of
Doctor of Ministry

by

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Spring Grove, IL
February 2018
Liberty University School of Divinity

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THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY THESIS PROJECT ABSTRACT

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Liberty University School of Divinity, 2017

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The understanding of attachment theory helps one to overcome personal and relational problems that are exacerbated by past traumas. This thesis project focused on how long durations of separations, especially in a military setting, may trigger symptoms from past traumas, which may impede relational secure attachments to friends and family. A survey was crafted and answered by over 100 adults, including military members, military dependents, and non-military civilians. The results were analyzed to discover how often people were separated from loved ones, the length that perhaps caused problems, and the feelings that developed. A literary review of books and scholastic articles on attachment and military separation provided insight and supporting documentation to the survey. The biblical narrative is evident throughout the project with Scripture passages being incorporated into the text. This project led to the development of a website that provides additional material on attachment, relationship aids, and adverse childhood experiences (ACE) assessment.

Thesis abstract length: 153 words
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Introduction

The United States of America is dependent on employing a strong military so that Americans can maintain their way of life and values. To preserve national policies and personal freedoms the military is dependent on strong families to have strong warriors to go, fight, and win wars. This project is designed to provide insight into attachment theory as it relates to military families to encourage the strong bonds of healthy relationships.

Statement of the Problem

Maintaining a healthy marriage and healthy relationships are difficult endeavors even with a solid support network. Loved ones serving or working in professional fields of uncertainty, such as the military, adds a new dynamic and additional challenges. Military life has enough challenges for the most mature man or woman: relocating every two to four years, long deployment separations, and the nearly constant fear of injury or death.¹ The Apostle Paul wrote in his first recorded letter to the Christians in Corinth, “I would like you to be free from concern. An unmarried man is concerned about the Lord’s affairs—how he can please the Lord. But a married man is concerned about the affairs of this world—how he can please his wife—and his interests are divided” (1 Corinthians 7:32-34 NIV). This division of interest is also applicable to military life. The military member needs to serve both country and family well.

The purpose of this thesis project is to explain how the use of attachment theory within relationships, especially within the U.S. military and specifically utilizing military chaplains, has a positive impact on keeping service members in healthy relationships. When service members are in healthy relationships with parents, friends, and/or spouses, they are free to focus on the mission at hand, defending the American way of life.

Attachment theory as defined by John Bowlby is “the propensity of human beings to make strong affectional bonds to particular others and of explaining the many forms of emotional distress and personality disturbance, including anxiety, anger, depression, and emotional detachment, to which unwilling separation and loss give rise.” Babies attach to their mothers out of a need for sustenance. Husbands, in the most primal sense, attach to their wives to procreate and advance the family legacy. Soldiers attach to their battle buddies out of a need for survival.

_Service member_ is defined as a military professional who is currently a part of either the active duty component or the military reserve. The term service member is used interchangeably with _military member_ and with the title of those serving in specific branches of the military, such as soldier (U.S. Army), airmen (U.S. Air Force), Marine (U.S. Marine Corps), or sailor (U.S. Navy.) This author is most familiar with the U.S. Navy sailor and the U.S. Marine.

_Military chaplain_ is defined as an ordained minister of a religious organization recognized by the U.S. government who is employed by the U.S. military for the purpose of being a non-combatant officer to help ensure the military member’s rights to exercise his or her religion. A chaplain is to have a minimum educational level of a Master’s of Divinity (or its equivalent from an accredited school), two years of full-time ministerial experience, and an ordination and endorsement from a recognized religious body.

_Narrative_ is defined as someone’s ability to tell his or her life story in a sequential order. The left side of the brain allows for the story to be linear and logical. The right side of the brain adds elements of social bonding, feelings, and interpretations. Narrative therapy is a meta-therapy where the use of a narrative can be combined with multiple disciplines of therapy.

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3. Department of Defense Instruction 1304.28.

including but not limited to: attachment theory, cognitive behavioral therapy, or mindfulness-based therapy.

Statement of Limitations

This thesis project was not designed to add new research to the validity of attachment therapy. A working assumption from the author was that attachment therapy constitutes a viable working model that does not need to be defended but shown how to be used in specific situations. Attachment theory is a meta-theory and can be combined with other counseling disciplines.

Another limitation of this thesis is that it is not a defense of the validity of the Bible or whether the Bible is sufficient to provide all counseling answers. This project is an integration of attachment theory into the counseling workload of military chaplains. For further research on nouthetic counseling, which uses the Bible as a handbook for counseling, one can read J. A. Adams’ book *Competent to Counsel*.\(^5\)

A third limitation is that this research did not address the biblical concept of divorce and whether it is ever permitted, or if remarriage is ever allowed after a divorce. That conversation is left to the reader and his or her specific situation. Although Moses and Jesus both addressed the institution of marriage and divorce, this thesis does not.

The fourth limitation that this thesis alludes to but does not directly address is evolution versus creation. Attachment theory tends to come from a scientific background that is grounded in evolutionary thought; however, this author disagrees with that scientific thought. A belief in the workings and understanding of attachment theory does not require a belief in macroevolution. Therefore, a defense of evolution or an argument against it is not warranted.

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Theoretical Basis

The author for this thesis project is an active duty chaplain serving in the U.S. Navy. His education from his master’s level courses did not prepare him for the diverse and high tempo counseling load that would become part of his normal workday. This lack of preparation forced the author to enter academia once again to learn new skills and to sharpen dull ones.

Attachment theory as a school of thought is not in its infancy. Innovative ways are being discovered to use it with proven methods of counseling or therapy. It is still being combined with other disciplines. One such example is attachment-focused family therapy as discussed by Daniel Hughes in his book of the same name. The combining of attachment theory with the discipline of family therapy is something new and exciting. This newness of thought needs to be combined with the orthodoxy that many classical seminaries are still teaching. Therefore, this project is extremely relevant as humanity moves toward the 22nd century.

This author has conducted pre-marital counseling without the influence of attachment theory. Knowing what he knows now, the author would be more intentional in providing assessment questionnaires for attachment. The average age of active duty service members is under 30 years old, with over half of active duty enlisted personnel under 25. This young age group is marrying and moving about with little direction and involvement from their parents. By providing other chaplains and family members with an overview and benefits of attachment theory, marriages can begin on healthier footing, and conflicts can be more consistently resolved instead of leading to divorce.

Statement of Methodology

This thesis project follows the flow of an introduction plus four chapters model of writing. The introduction offers a substantial but non-all-encompassing review of literature and Scripture that applies to attachment theory, the military, and relationships. A bibliography is
included at the end of the project. The review of literature includes books and scholastic articles. The journal articles provide the most up-to-date resources on attachment theory.

Chapter 1

Chapter 1 gives more introductory comments on the background of this author and how he came to be engrossed in the topic of attachment. This first chapter goes more in-depth into the reason having even a cursory understanding of attachment is important for others in the people-helping-people occupations (e.g., counselors, chaplains, pastors, teachers). Chapter 1 also describes how being a navy chaplain requires a certain skill set for which seminaries currently do not prepare their students.

Chapter 2

The second chapter of this thesis provides details about the construction of the survey used for the applied research, listing the criteria for who took the survey, and why the questions were chosen. Chapter 2 goes over the development of the questions and the questions themselves, highlighting why this project is needed in today’s military with the growing epidemic of fatherlessness in America.  

Chapter 3

Chapter 3 presents the results of the survey along with an explanation of why the results are significant. Chapter 3 examines the results line by line, providing the reader an insight into the lack of preparedness with which seminaries are sending pastors and chaplains into the ministerial field when it comes to providing counseling for attachment wounds to hurting parishioners.

6. For more insight into the growing epidemic of fatherlessness, the Digital Commons at Liberty University has a very useful dissertation by Stephen J. Madosky.
Chapter 4

The conclusion of the thesis is found in Chapter 4. Chapter 4 demonstrates how the applied research and the literature review all indicate ministry professionals are generally ill-prepared to deal with the mental and relational wounds of the congregants. This chapter also introduces the internet site that was established as training material to educate others on attachment theory and to provide an overview of material spelled out by Daniel Hughes in his book *Attachment-Focused Family Therapy.*

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Review of Literature

Books

Attachment-Focused Family Therapy

*Attachment-Focused Family Therapy* by Daniel Hughes is an excellent book on how to provide counseling to the entire family. Hughes provides step by step instruction in building rapport with the counselee and the family. The book focuses on the therapist creating an environment where the parent(s) of the troubled youth learn and attach to the therapist. Then the parent(s), under the watchful eye of the therapist, use those same skills with the child. Hughes uses the PACE model of counseling, which is an acronym for playfulness, acceptance, curiosity, and empathy. Playfulness is allowing for a relaxed atmosphere. It is acceptable to have a joke or to be jovial at certain times during the counseling session. Acceptance is when the therapist allows the counselee to have his or her own feelings about the topics. These feelings need to be explored and experienced. Curiosity is the counselor being inquisitive about the life and experiences of the counselee. This is more than professional questioning but demonstrates a

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desire to know the other person. Empathy is when the therapist is able to sit in the midst of the counselee’s pain and share that load.\textsuperscript{8}

The PACE model is the foundation for this thesis project. Playfulness can be done in a multitude of creative ways in the life of a military chaplain. This author is indebted to Hughes for writing about this profound topic in such a way that the material is easy to understand and apply. Acceptance, curiosity, and empathy all flow from forming good relationships with people. Relationships can be built sitting together and sharing a good laugh.

Biblical Counseling

\textit{Introduction to Biblical Counseling: A Basic Guide to the Principles and Practices of Counseling} by John F. MacArthur and Wayne Mack along with the faculty at the Master’s College penned a great resource for counseling students, which follows the history of biblical counseling and its progression over the years.\textsuperscript{9} This book helped to merge the idea of counseling and discipleship into one stream for this author. Within the walls of the church, pastors should boldly proclaim the Gospel from the pulpit and the office during counseling sessions. This proclamation is discipleship and helping people move closer to God.

Introduction to Pastoral Counseling

Loren Townsend wrote a book titled \textit{Introduction to Pastoral Counseling}, which helped this author to see that he does not want to be a counselor in the traditional sense. This author desires to be a disciple maker—someone who intentionally helps others move closer to God. Pastoral counseling through the years has been regulated and is in competition with secular counseling. This book fulfilled an unintended consequence by transforming the task of

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{8} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
counseling into discipleship. This book may not be quoted often in this thesis project, but the concepts have impacted the author.\textsuperscript{10}

Attachments

In 2002, Tim Clinton and Gary Sibcy wrote \textit{Attachments: Why You Love, Feel, and Act the Way You Do}. This book is one of the premier resources as a primer concerning attachment theory. Both authors are evangelical Christians and do not stray into the secular realm of evolutional neuroscience. The book is both easy to read and informative, it takes the reader through the concepts of attachment and how those concepts are applied in relationships. This is a must-read along with \textit{God Attachments: Why You Believe, Act, and Feel about God}\textsuperscript{11} for any Christian who desires to learn about attachment theory.\textsuperscript{12}

God Attachment

Tim Clinton proceeded from writing \textit{Attachments} to writing \textit{God Attachment} with Joshua Straub.\textsuperscript{13} This book takes the ideas of personal relationships and the things that hinder people from relating to one another in a healthy way and applies them to an individual’s relationship with God. This book provides more thought-provoking ideas than \textit{Attachments}, as well as offering more resolution from the attachment injury instead of merely stating the problem.

This book is highly recommended for any Christian who wants to continue to research attachment theory. It is also great for pastors who are busy making disciples, as it will help them to understand better their people and why past traumas prevent or hinder people from loving God more.

\textsuperscript{10} Loren Townsend, \textit{Introduction to Biblical Counseling} (Nashville: Abingdon, 2009).

\textsuperscript{11} Tim Clinton and Joshua Straub, \textit{God Attachment: Why You Believe, Act, and Feel about God} (New York: Howard, 2010).

\textsuperscript{12} Tim Clinton and Gary Sibcy, \textit{Attachments: Why You Love, Feel, and Act the Way You Do} (Brentwood: Thomas Nelson, 2002).

\textsuperscript{13} Tim Clinton and Joshua Straub, \textit{God Attachment: Why You Believe, Act, and Feel about God} (New York: Howard, 2010).
Anatomy of the Soul

Tim Clinton, author of *Attachments*, personally recommended *Anatomy of the Soul* to this author. Curt Thompson is a brilliant writer, counselor, and researcher. He writes with the confidence of an experienced counselor and the passion and care of a pastor. This book has been recommended numerous times by this author and was well received after others finished reading the book. If there is one book on attachment that should be recommended, this is the book.

*Anatomy of the Soul* takes the reader on a journey of what is neuroscience. It also provides a detailed analysis of attachment, followed by recommendations on how to repair attachment breaks. Next to Hughes’ text, this book is the foundation of this thesis project.

Soul of Shame

*Attachment-Focused Family Therapy* includes an excellent chapter about dealing with shame. In fact, chapter seven, “Managing Shame,” is worth the cost of the entire book. Curt Thompson went on to write the *Soul of Shame: Retelling the Stories We Believe about Ourselves* after he finished writing and speaking on the *Anatomy of the Soul*. This book was published by Intervarsity Press. That alone should inform the reader that it is going to have a strong Christian theme throughout the writing. Once again, Thompson does not disappoint his Christian audience and approaches his topic more like a pastor than a secular counselor. However, his credentials make him a respected expert in his counseling field.

Shame is a product of sin. At the end of the second chapter of Genesis, Adam and Eve are naked, and they are not ashamed. After sin enters the perfect creation, Adam and Eve see each other naked and hide from God and each other. Shame enters the world and disrupts the attachment bonds of people between each other and God.

Attached

Within attachment is the neuroscience aspect that Curt Thompson brings to light. In the book, *Attached: The New Science of Adult Attachment and How It Can Help You Find—and Keep—Love,* 16 Amir Levin and Rachel Heller bring to light why the brain acts the way it does in relationships. The information is extremely useful to counselors who are helping people work through relationship issues. The age-old question, “Why does he/she treat me like this?” can often be explained via some form of attachment theory. Levine and Heller answer that very question.

With the military tempo of coming home and going away on deployment and training exercises, it is important to be able to show couples, scientifically, what is going on in relationships and how to address the challenges. *Attached* is recommended for a fun, easy read that introduces people to the technical side of love without being overly technical, showing where attachment is not just personal but also a part of survival.

Avoidant

Jeb Kinnison authored a book called *Avoidant: How to Love (or Leave) a Dismissive Partner.* 17 Kinnison is not a counselor like Tim Clinton or Curt Thompson but is a computer scientist who studied at MIT. His ability to track trends and work with neural networks has enabled him to see love in a different light. He uses his unique way of thinking to study relationships from an attachment perspective. Kinnison wrote another book that is not a part of this study titled *Bad Boyfriends: Using Attachment Theory to Avoid Mr. (or Ms.) Wrong and Make You a Better Partner.* His self-study has made him an expert in this field.

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Wired for Love

Stan Tatkin authored a useful book dealing with attachment and the idea of a couple bubble titled *Wired for Love: How Understanding Your Partner’s Brain and Attachment Style Can Help You Defuse Conflict and Build a Secure Relationship.* The couple bubble is a concept similar to the idea of boundaries as written by Henry Cloud. The couple bubble is where two people try to stay united in love. This is where common rules and aspirations come together. Tim Clinton and Joshua Straub describe this in their attachment model in *God Attachment*. This is an excellent book describing how people operate from a self-preservation mindset. This self-preservation mindset is basic brain functioning. Humankind was designed for so much more than mere survival. When higher levels of thinking are employed, even greater depths of love can be recognized and felt.

**Journals**

Narrative and Attachment

Kathryn Waters, Sue Holttum, and Ines Perrin published a significant journal article for *Psychology and Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, and Practices* titled, “Narrative and Attachment in the Process of Recovery from Substance Abuse.” This article follows the recovery of seven adults dealing with the misuse of controlled substances. The theory of the article is that psychotherapy combined with medical treatment for addiction is the most effective pattern for recovery. The authors followed the seven adults while they underwent narrative therapy. Narrative therapy is when the counselee tells the story of his or her life in a systematic,

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sequential pattern to find triggers for behavior. The results of the study revealed that medical treatment in addition to narrative therapy is profoundly effective in the treatment of substance misuse. This concept of narrating or storytelling along with the counselor or chaplain demonstrating curiosity about the life of the counselee and is crucial to attachment therapy.

Family Therapy in Suicidal Adolescents

Within the military lifestyle are sudden unpredictable changes and planned predictable changes, but there are always changes. These changes cause a disruption in the life of the whole family. The suicide rate among veterans is staggeringly high, and it is a growing problem within the active duty military though that number is declining to equal the rate of the civilian population. Suicide is a difficult topic for most people to discuss. Maya S. Shpigel, Gary M. Diamond, and Guy S. Diamond demonstrate in an article they wrote for *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy* titled, “Changes in Parenting Behaviors, Attachment, Depressive Symptoms, and Suicidal Ideation in Attachment-Based Family Therapy for Depressive and Suicidal Adolescents,” with proper family therapy, suicidal ideations can be reduced.

A reduction of at-risk youths with the propensity for suicide is the goal of counseling. The military is especially at risk. The members are trained to kill and often have access to lethal weapons. Their families seem to take that same attitude as members of the military community. With the use of attachment-based family therapy for only 12-16 weeks, there were significant reductions in manic symptoms. When parents are taught to hear their children, to feel their pain, and not to inflict additional pain, then dramatic changes can be made. This thesis provides solid evidence of the validity of attachment theory and how it can be used in multiple ways.

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Art Therapy

Annette Shore wrote an article used during this thesis project titled “Art Therapy, Attachment, and the Divided Brain.” This article details an encounter with a young boy who had a traumatic break in a relationship. The real use of this article is in the details it provides about the right and left hemispheres of the brain. The left side of the brain is generally where the logical, linear thinking exists while the right side typically dominates creative thinking. When thinking gets stuck, it is typically in the logical left hemisphere. This stuck thought may need creativity to allow the mind to process it and move it along to storage. When using art—in this article, clay sculpture—the therapist was able to allow a child to play, to create, and to think concretely and abstractly. The therapist was able to allow a child to enter a world of play to deal with a world of hurt. The art and sculpture allowed the boy to depersonalize the trauma, tell the story (narrative), and to process it under the watchful eye of the counselor.

Mindfulness-based Narrative

As psychotherapy and medical therapy should be used in conjunction for healing and in dealing with addictions, they can also be used to ease the pressures in cancer patients. B. Rodriguez Vega, C. Bayon Perez, A. PalaoTarrero, and A. Fernandez Liria put together an outstandingly researched journal article for Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy titled “Mindfulness-based Narrative Therapy for Depression in Cancer Patients.” Mindfulness-based narrative therapy has been used to reduce the levels of depression in those who are being treated for cancer. Mindfulness is the ability to be present and to think about what is going on and what one is feeling at a given moment. In the article, narrative-based therapy was combined with

mindfulness. Mindfulness is gaining popularity in other areas such as running. A quick internet search generated results about mindful-chi running. This author is less concerned about chi but more concerned with how to be curious when dealing with those whom he is counseling. Being mindful for a therapist is being able to analyze one’s own feelings as well as the ability to probe and ask questions about how the other person is coping and feeling about a certain topic.

Attachment to God

In 2007, Maureen Miner penned an article on God and Attachment titled “Back to the Basics in Attachment to God: Revisiting Theory in Light of Theology,” in *Journal of Psychology and Theology*. Miner writes, “Attachment theory is a powerful account of the formation of the relational bonds that provide for physical survival and psychological security throughout the lifespan. It integrates findings from ethology and from biological, psychodynamic, and cognitive-affective theories in psychology.” Attachment draws from so many different fields of experience. God is a loving parent, and Jesus tells his listeners at the Sermon on the Mount that God knows how to give good gifts like any parent who knows how to give good gifts to their children (Matthew 7). Yet, when the attachment between children and parents is broken, that brokenness can bleed over into the attachment between a spiritual child and God. Along with *God Attachment* by Clinton, this article speaks to the usefulness to the Christian community at large of knowing more about attachment theory.


26. Ibid., 112.
I Will Be Your God, and You Will Be My People

Joshua Knapp and Matthew Y. Emerson wrote a journal article updated from Miner called “I Will Be Your God, and You Will Be My People.”27 The authors use Scripture to show how God and humankind are attached as they follow the four themes of Scripture: creation, fall, redemption, and new creation. This article also uses Tim Clinton and Joshua Straub as resources.28 In this thesis project, the theme of new creation is used extensively, and this article is to be thank for that. In Second Corinthians, the Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthian Church that man is a new creation in Christ. This is exciting news that with the power of the Holy Spirit, humankind does not need to be bound to past mistakes and errant thinking. This article gives biblical proof of the ability of man to change under the power and direction of God.

Military Relationships

With the author of this thesis project being an active duty navy chaplain, it is appropriate to have an article or two detailing with military life and relationships. One such article is by Gunnur Karakurt, Abigale Tolhurst Christiansen, Shelley M. MacDermid Wadsworth, and Howard M. Weiss simply titled, “Romantic Relationships Following Wartime Deployment.”29 Though the article deals with reservists from the U.S. Army Reserves, the truths apply to active duty service members, even though there are definite differences and limitations between active duty and the military reserve. Military spouses are often neglected when it comes to the stress of military deployments. Karakurt and his team speak specifically to the spouses and show how

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27. Joshua J. Knapp and Matthew Y. Emerson, “I will be Your God and You will be My People,” Pastoral Psychology 62, no. 6 (2012): 827-41.
28. Ibid., 829.
spouses of military service members who are deployed suffer from depression, sleep disorders, and other negative manic symptoms. 30

Both the military member and the spouse must learn new routines. The spouse who stays at home often becomes more self-sufficient out of necessity, and this self-sufficiency could be a trigger for the military member to feel unneeded and neglected. During the war effort, every person is important; back home—not so. The article is a great resource for this project, because it speaks to the use of attachment specifically with a military population. They write, “Both family stress theory and attachment theory are important sensitizing frameworks for understanding reservists’ experiences with deployment and reunion.” 31

Insecure Attachment as Predictor

Due to the high number of depressive symptoms found in homes of deployed service members, Yi Jinyao, Zhu Xiogzhao, Randy P. Auerbach, Casey K. Gardiner, Cai Lin, Wang Yuping, and Yao Shuqiao wrote a useful article for Depression and Anxiety, titled “Insecure Attachment as a Predictor of Depressive and Anxious Symptomology.” 32 They claim that the attachment framework provides a language concerning why someone may be at a higher risk of depression. This is vital information for military members before deployment. If someone is operating out of an injured, insecure attachment mindset, then there may be an elevated risk for self-destructive behaviors. Such behaviors are a distraction to the military member, and the depressed person simply feels crazy. With the use of the Adult Attachment Interview, a trained counselor could score someone to see if he or she is at a substantial risk simply because of the way he or she was reared. This operation out of self-preservation begins to remove the personal

30. Ibid., 1428.
31. Ibid., 1431.
element from the situation and not everything then is a personal attack. That is essential
information in answering the question of why they are operating in such a destructive way.

Attachment Following Combat Trauma

Danny Horesh, Anat Cohen-Zrihen, Tsachi Ein Dor, and Zahava Solomon published an
article in Clinical Social Work Journal titled “Stressful Life Events across the Life Span and
Insecure Attachment Following Combat Trauma.” Where Jinyao and her team focused on
reservists and family members, Horesh and his team examined the connection between stressful
life events and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Typically, more securely attached people
find it easier to ask for help than those who are insecure. The insecurity can be a barrier for
people getting the help they need. When there is a lack of initiative to get help, it is more
probable for there to be a posttraumatic stress event. Horesh went on to write, “Children
exposed to stressful life events often become adults whose internal models cause them to
perceive their environment as insufficient or defective.” The article is a perfect complement to
this thesis project because it speaks to the fact that those service members who had an insecure
attachment exhibited higher levels of PTSD.

Mitigating Intergenerational Trauma

With military service resulting in some of life’s most traumatic events, it is critical for
care providers to understand attachment and how to negate insecure attachment’s effects.
Insecure attachments are passed along from generation to generation until someone gets help and
becomes healthier. Jai Friend published an article in the Australian and New Zealand Journal of

33. Danny Horesh et al., “Stressful Life Events Across the Life Span and Insecure Attachment Following
34. Ibid., 376.
35. Ibid., 381.
36. Ibid., 380.
Family Therapy titled “Mitigating Intergenerational Trauma within the Parent-Child Relationship.” This article follows the therapy of a nine-year-old boy who suffered from a detachment with his mother. As the counselor investigated the family tree, it was disclosed that the mother also suffered from a severe trauma as a child. This pattern seemed to repeat itself. The detachment is what this dysfunctional family found as normal. It is critical for caregivers to be curious about not only the immediate problem but also about family history.

Scripture

Genesis 1

In the beginning, God created everything out of nothing. Genesis One is a profound reminder that Christians do not worship a pantheon of gods but the one true God. God as creator created man to be in union with him. Man was the one part of creation that God said was very good (Genesis 1:31). God created humankind in his likeness.

Genesis 2

In the second chapter of Genesis, it is recorded that God created man and then woman from man because it was not good for man to be alone (2:18). Man was built to be in union with God and humankind, especially woman. Because of this order of creation, man is to leave his father and mother and be united to his wife so that there can be a new singular union. It is implied that man will be attached to his father and mother until it is time to become attached to woman (2:24).

Genesis 2–Felt No Shame

Genesis chapter 2 verse 25 reads, “And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed” (English Standard Version). There was no shame when there was no sin.

Man and woman were together in harmony and knew not the lust of other things. This passage from Genesis is the basis of Curt Thompson’s *Soul of Shame* and Daniel Hughes’s chapter seven on shame.

Isaiah 45

God is the pathway to the salvation of His people. He is the creator and deliverer. Isaiah prophesized about a time when God will restore Israel to a state of being without shame. Christians teach that this is the second coming or the Kingdom of God. “But Israel is saved by the Lord with everlasting salvation; you shall not be put to shame or confounded to all eternity. For thus says the Lord, who created the heavens (he is God!), who formed the earth and made it (he established it; he did not create it empty, he formed it to be inhabited!): “I am the Lord, and there is no other” (Isaiah 45:17-18 English Standard Version).

Isaiah 61

From the time that man and woman sinned and saw each other’s nakedness, they then knew shame. They sewed together leaves to hide their most intimate parts. God will clothe humankind with the robe of righteousness that is found through Jesus Christ. No longer will man know shame or a temporary covering. Shame seeks to separate man from God. God, through Jesus, reunites his people to himself.

Matthew 3

At the baptism of Jesus, there is the profound moment when Jesus is present in the water, the voice of God is heard from the heavens, and then the Holy Spirit descends as a dove from above into view of Jesus. This is a moment of the Trinity being present. God is relational, and it was by his choice that he decided to dwell with man.
Matthew 7

In Matthew 7, Jesus sermonized the profound truths of the Gospel. Here, Jesus told his listeners that if they know how to give gifts to their children and they are evil, then how much more can God, who is perpetually good, give good gifts to his children who ask him. This relationship of asking for gifts from God as if he is Abba Father is momentous.

Matthew 28

Matthew 28 is the home of what is known as the Great Commission found in Scripture. Matthew 28 states that people are to go out and make disciples. These disciples are to be baptized into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19 English Standard Version). Again, this is a showing of the Trinity that seems to be so elusive in Scripture. God is present in the resurrection of Jesus, and the disciples of Jesus are to proclaim that good news.

Luke 15

Every man outside of a relationship with God is lost. Luke 15 speaks of God searching for the lost and celebrating the found. In all of attachment, people want to be known and to feel known. When people find things of limited value such as a coin, sheep, or even good help, it all pales in comparison to the joy God has when one of his lost children returns home. This blessed reunion can heal the trauma from separation.

John 3

Matthew speaks of God being a good father. In John 3, God gives up his one and only Son as a sacrifice so that his adopted children can be in a right relationship with him. This adoption is a profound metaphor for being a member of God’s family. Humankind is no longer a friend or slave of God but a child of God. Romans 8 tells the reader that nothing can separate humankind from the love of God.
John 14

In John 14:2, Jesus told his listeners that in his Father’s house there are many rooms. Those rooms are set aside for believers to come and dwell for all eternity with God. This is the hope of humankind, that death will not have victory over humankind, but that people will be in sweet eternal reunion with God. Jesus is going ahead of humans to prepare for their arrival into heaven. In John 14:6, Jesus said that I am the way, the truth, and the life. If Jesus is defining himself as the truth, then the listeners and readers can trust that he is not misleading them. If Jesus said that he would return for his people, then his people should wait expectantly.

Romans 12

Paul taught that through the renewal of the mind of man that God is glorified. This world is not the home for man, and man is not to emulate the secular world. Humankind is to be a reflection of the light of God. God is light. By the use of their combined gifts, humankind can be the physical hands and feet of God to a dying world.

1 Corinthians 12

People need people. It is a basic need of humans to be in community. Paul described this as being one body with many parts. Humans are connected to each other in the same way that the foot is connected to the nose even though they are in different sections of the same body. The foot cannot say to the hand that I do not need you. The whole body must work in conjunction with each other to be whole or perfect. This is a great analogy for the church. The people of the church are to operate as one body with Christ as the head.

1 Corinthians 13

Because God is love (1 John 4) and God made man in his image (Genesis 2), then man should love as God does. After Paul taught his readers how to be one body but made up of different parts, he taught that one body how to love each other. First Corinthians 13 is a popular
passage at weddings; however, it is not only an amazing chapter on how to love romantically but also universally. First Corinthians 13a teaches the listeners how to love like God. By loving other people, people love and serve God.

1 John 3

God is a good father, and people are his children. Every good father knows how to love his children and to discipline them simultaneously. There are consequences for sin and the decisions that humans make. These decisions may disrupt an earthly attachment from God, but they cannot separate humans from the love of God. God is a good abba.

1 John 4

God is love. Attachment is about learning how to love oneself and how to love others. This profound chapter of the love of God is also used at weddings, but it is also a metaphor of how God loves the church. The church is a beautiful bride walking down the aisle to the eternal supper with God. This love of God for humanity is to be emulated in humankind to each other, as well as humans to God.

Titus 2

Humankind is to take care of its own. Older men should look after younger men. In the same sense, older women should teach younger women how to become older women. A woman can never teach a boy how to become a man. The church is to be in a community where knowledge is passed down from one generation to the next. These relationships cannot be neglected.

Summary to Introduction

Though not all the books and journal articles listed above are quoted at length, each one shaped the thinking of this author. Chapter 1 focuses on the military, especially marriages within the military. It gives an overview to the principals of attachment and what secure and insecure
attachments resemble. Chapter 2 explicates the questionnaire and the reasoning behind each question. Chapter 3 analyzes the responses to the questions. Chapter 4 is the conclusion and brings all of the material in this thesis together using the counseling methods of Daniel Hughes.
Chapter 1

Describing Military Marriages and Attachment Theory

Attachment theory is a concept that is psychobiological which addresses the emotional wounds of children and the effects on their behavior as adults. Chapter 1 examines attachment within military families, particularly marriages that exist within the framework of the military; discusses the deployment cycles and how attachments, secure and insecure, play a direct role in the health of marriages during the different cycles; and analyzes different research on attachment theory, providing examples of how couples in the military can obtain or maintain a secure relationship.

Regardless of the type of military unit, there is typically an embedded chaplain assigned to the unit or one attached to the base and/or base chapel that the unit can utilize. Chaplains are found deployed on navy carriers, in foxholes dug by Marines, and maintaining chapels built by the army in war zones. Having a chaplain embedded in the unit not only gives the service member an advocate to help practice his or her particular faith but also a confidential sounding board for issues. Chaplains are often asked to officiate the marriages of these service members alongside whom they serve within the unit. Chaplains also serve family members of the unit or base, not just the service members. Therefore, the military chaplain is an ideal candidate to have a firm grasp of attachment theory to provide holistic counsel.

Military Marriages

As of September 30, 2015, there were 1,313,940 men and women serving as active duty U.S. service members in the armed forces. The breakdown within the four major branches is as follows: U.S. Army—491,365 soldiers; U.S. Navy—327,801 sailors; U.S. Marine Corps—183,417 Marines; and U.S. Air Force—311,357 airmen. This number does not include the

39,822 service members in the U.S. Coast Guard or the reserve component of the U.S. Armed Forces. Of those 1.3 million service members, 52.6% (691,132 service members) are married; 41.7% have never married; and 5.5% are divorced.39

King David of the Bible was a warrior and poet. He knew what it was like to engage in military expeditions. In one of his most famous psalms, he wrote, “even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death.”40 Often, it is not death that is feared but it is the shadow, the unknown, the darkened mystical figure that relentlessly stalks. A single man or woman with no one dependent on them except their battle buddies can storm a hill and recapture land in enemy territory. They volunteered to go to war with no spouse in their sea bag and no children in their pack-out box, willing to lay down their life for their kin and country. Typically, a married man or woman and or father or mother must pause the valiant charge as war looms to wonder who is going to fulfill his or her duty to rear their children and provide for and protect the family unit if death calls.

Service members are getting married relatively young—18 and 19 years old—and though their brains are still developing and they are not even old enough to purchase beer in the United States, they are trained to fire a rifle and kill the enemy. They go from living at home, where the majority of the decisions are made for them, to joining the military where the majority of decisions are still made for them. Some marry right after boot camp so that their girlfriends or boyfriends can graduate to spouse status and receive benefits such as college tuition, moving expenses, access to base facilities, and health insurance. Others marry right before a deployment so that if anything happens to them on the high seas, their new spouse is properly notified, and if death occurs, then life insurance is paid out to the bride or groom. This marriage of convenience

40. Psalms 23:4, NIV.
is not exactly marrying for love. Tomo Umemura found that it can take up to two years for a person to switch his or her attachment from their parents to their new spouse or intimate partner.\textsuperscript{41}

No matter the reason, many young military couples stay married. The divorce rate may have an uptick during intense military deployment cycles, but it is nowhere near 100\%.\textsuperscript{42} There are articles that paint military families as chronically dysfunctional. LaGrone wrote one such famous article titled, “The Military Family Syndrome” in 1978.\textsuperscript{43} Members of the media have also played a part in portraying the stereotype of a gunnery sergeant yelling at his troops and then using the same language and force with their spouse and children. A classic Hollywood example is the movie \textit{The Great Santini}, starring Robert Duvall. Duvall portrays a decorated fighter pilot who is unable to soften his edge when he returns home. These artistic portrayals happen in real life, but they also neglect the often unreported, unsexy norm of warfighters talking about changing diapers, buying used cars, and repairing the plumbing of a water heater.

Lyndon A. Riviere and Julie C. Merrill indicated in their article, “The Impact of Combat Deployment on Military Families,” that those non-military, non-deployed spouses who show signs of depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) before their loved ones deploys exhibit struggles which exasperate their current negative conditions during the deployment. However, healthy and securely attached spouses are able not only able to survive the deployment but thrive.\textsuperscript{44}


\textsuperscript{42} Riviere and Merrill, 127.

\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., 126.

\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., 127.
When a service member deploys, depending on work and school schedule, the family is often able to travel and see friends and family without the worry of the military forcing family plans to be changed. If the military member is the sole source of income, there is often a slight financial benefit to deployments. The member does not pay for additional food, gas for the vehicle, and entertainment expenses. Therefore, the family saves that money, in addition to qualifying for hazardous duty pay, family separation allowances, and possible tax-free earnings from being outside of the continental United States.

The spouse at home during the deployment can take that time and nervous energy to learn new skills or start exercise regimes. These new skills help to foster a spirit of resilience. Physical exercise has shown to be a useful way to relieve pent-up stress. Getting through the deployment and all that comes with maintaining the home front teaches personal growth skills. A spirit of accomplishment can be fostered, which will bleed over into attempts at new projects. Some will succeed, some will fail, but all should be a healthy distraction and time well spent during that arduous chapter in their family’s life. Many military members have had to deploy multiple times. Their spouses learn new skills and learn how to be lifelong learners, which will help them get through the next difficult task.\(^4^5\) With all the stress that military families face—deployments, heightened risk of injury or death, erratic schedules, and missing life milestones—they are at a higher risk than most of their civilian counterparts for an acute stressor or major crisis.\(^4^6\)

Joyce A. Baptist and her team of writers postulated that there are three critical components to a successful military marriage: communication, emotional and marital intimacy, and managing change.\(^4^7\) During a military deployment, communication back home can be a

\(^{45}\) Ibid., 131.


\(^{47}\) Ibid., 205.
significant source of stress. Long gone are the days of writing letters by hand and waiting by the mailbox. Today’s technologically-savvy generation uses social media, pictures, texts, and emojis to communicate. Long conversations can be held without verbally saying a word. Modern society has become dependent on cell phones for instant communication. It is difficult to adjust to another country where the same communication infrastructure does not exist.

One married sailor with a relatively healthy marriage and who was deployed to an active war zone chose not to call home on a regular basis to avoid making a pattern and enhancing his operational security. In addition, he feared that if he missed making one phone call, his wife’s anxiety would be heightened, and she might expect the worst. His lack of communication was purposeful to avoid communicating the wrong message.

Although it may sound sentimental or glib, open communication is the key to secure attachment. During a deployment, service members are not allowed to share information with people at home on what they are doing and where they are located in the world. Operational security must be observed to protect the service members and national assets. So, what is the service member to discuss with his or her family? Some focus on food, living conditions, or the annoyance of their tent mates, but those conversations lack depth. Ramon Hinojosa states in his article that the “nothing new to say” is a barrier to communication and does not constitute open communication. This barrier can be interpreted by a lonely spouse that the service member is in danger, unfaithful, or has lost the love they once shared. Insecurities flare over poor communication. These insecurities may also lead to a lack of intimacy.

Marital and emotional intimacy is tied to intentional open communication. That intimacy must be shored up and secure before the military member departs for the deployment. An excellent book that is deemed a classic by this author is *The Five Love Languages: How to Express Heartfelt Commitment to Your Mate* by Gary Chapman.\(^49\) Even in less than optimal conditions, emotions can be shared over written communiqué. Much of the beauty of the written word has been lost in the social world of digital zeros and ones, texts and emojis. Letter writing requires thought and supplies, care in penmanship, and precision in language. For the macho military man or woman, being seen writing home may invite unwanted hazing or mocking. However, those words when received by a lover will be cherished. Romantic movies are written about lost love letters sent from the war front being found by future generations. Juxtapose that with today’s communication apps allowing for messages to be deleted after five seconds. During long separations, even to war zones where physical intimacy is not possible, the emotional connectedness can still be maintained with forethought and intentionality.

Baptist lists managing change as being critical to a good marriage.\(^50\) Non-military couples may move often, but they do not expect to move every three years. This frequent relocation can cause a disruption in the children’s education and in the support network of the family. Friends are always changing. Safe spaces such as places of worship, libraries, and community centers are continually being left behind, and new safe places must be sought—this search can be exhausting. This causes a great instability in what is supposed to be a stable environment, thus, sometimes fostering a feeling of isolation. Military members and their families have exciting opportunities to move to foreign countries: England, Germany, South Korea, or Japan. However, that adventure requires saying goodbye to extended family members.


\(^{50}\) Baptist et al., 205.
Grandchildren grow up only knowing their grandparents through birthday cards and Christmas gifts. A move to a foreign country or even to a neighboring county often requires the non-military spouse to put his or her career on hold or to be non-employable. There is no guarantee that a service member will retire or be promoted in the military. Asking a spouse not to work or further their career can place the young couple in financial jeopardy with no future certainties.\(^5^1\)

**Attachment**

With all the uncertainty of military life, it is a wonder that any marriage involving a military member lasts “for better or for worse” and “until death do us part.” This is especially true with heightened difficulty when one’s spouse has endured an early childhood trauma. Maria Zaccagnino and her peers published an article stating, “Childhood maltreatment can have profound and wide-ranging effects on later functioning, including anxiety, depression, PTSD, dissociation, somatization, antisocial personality disorder, and drug and alcohol abuse.”\(^5^2\) They also write, “Children who are classified as insecure are typically at higher risk than secure children for less optimal outcomes and resources for their cognitive, psychological and social development.”\(^5^3\) Spouses who have a loved one deployed and who also grew up with insecure attachments potentially face an onslaught of problems. Insecurity hampers adults from building a support network or trusting the already fragile network around them. The fear of rejection and the avoidance of any type of emotional involvement only amplifies the feeling of loneliness.

In a published paper, Danny Horesh defined Bowlby’s attachment theory this way:

“Humans are born with an innate psychobiological system that motivates them to seek out and

\(^{51}\) Riviere and Merrill, 137.


\(^{53}\) Ibid., 171.
bond with others.” Exposure to the preadolescence stressors without adequate soothing from a caregiver can actually change the way the brain processes information. Studies have shown how developing an insecure attachment at an early age can impact the quality of life up to 20 years later with changes in “neural circuitry of emotion regulation.” Tim Clinton and Gary Sibcy expound upon this thought by asking two couplets of questions: “Am I worthy of being loved? Am I competent to get the love I need?” and “Are others reliable and trustworthy? Are others accessible and willing to respond to me when I need them to be?” When this bond is severed or marred as a child, and the answer to any of those questions is negative, then there is a greater risk of returning to the negativity as an adult who exhibits symptoms of an insecure attachment.

Insecure attachment is described in one of three ways: ambivalent—positive view of others with a negative view of self; avoidant—positive view of self with a negative view of others; and disorganized—negative view of self and others.

Mary Ainsworth was one of the first to further Bowlby’s ideas on attachment with her “strange situation” experiment. She placed a toddler with his or her mother and a stranger in a room. The mother would suddenly leave the child in the room, which caused severe distress for the child. The study focused on how the mother and child responded when mom re-entered the room.


57. Ibid., 26.

58. Ibid., 25.
Secure Attachment

Danny Horesh describe what a secure attachment looks like: “Secure attachment strengthens one’s coping skills, sense of worth and self-efficacy, as well as reduces anxiety and increases capacities of adaption to stress. Securely attached individuals also tend to adjust more easily to loss than those with insecure orientation.”59 Christina Moutsiana and her team expound upon the definition: “The security of attachment bond between an infant and their primary caregiver is considered to be the fundamental aspect of the early caregiving environment, forming the foundation for subsequent socio-emotional development.”60 People with a secure attachment feel confident that those around them love them and they are worthy to be loved. According to Tim Clinton and Gary Sibcy’s paradigm, secure attachment is a positive view of self and others.61

In the Mary Ainsworth study, toddlers who showed signs of secure attachment were noticeably upset that their mother suddenly left the room (as all the children were); however, when their mother returned, the securely attached children immediately went to their mother for comfort. The mothers and children were both visibly happy to see one another, and the children allowed their mother to pick them up and comfort them.62 Therefore, each of those children knew at an early age that they were worth being cared for and that their mom had the capability and desire to take care of them. This knowledge is a self-reliance and self-soothing technique. Plus, the child knew that their mom would make everything better, so they allowed their mother to comfort them in the midst of their distress without hiding their pain. The child knew they were

59. Horesh et al., 375.
60. Moutsiana et al., 999.
61. Clinton and Sibcy, 24.
62. Ibid., 26.
loved and worth being loved. Danny Horesh comments that secure people, when threatened with a stressor, know to seek help from others and to trust them to help.\textsuperscript{63} Christina Moutsiana wrote, “Secure attachments, relative to insecure ones, appear to confer a range of developmental advantages, such as better peer relationships, fewer behavioral problems, and lower rates of affective disorder.”\textsuperscript{64}

In their book \textit{God Attachment}, Tim Clinton and Joshua Straub list several characteristics of people with secure attachments:\textsuperscript{65}

- are not afraid of emotions, their own or anyone else’s
- are willing to seek and accept comfort from other people
- know that relationships can be safe and that knowledge gives them the courage to engage in love and intimacy
- take responsibility for themselves
- find the courage to act when action is needed

\textbf{Insecure-ambivalent Attachment}

Within the realm of insecure-ambivalent attachment, the insecure person believes that he or she is not worthy of love or to be cared for but knows that others have the ability to take care of them. Tim Clinton lists several characteristics of the ambivalent response to the Mary Ainsworth study: the children cried louder than those labeled secure, threw torrid tantrums, and were not only upset but angry. When mom returned to comfort the child, the child went to mom but continued to make a scene and get worked up. The child allowed the parent to pick him or

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{63} Horesh et al., 376.
\item \textsuperscript{64} Moutsiana et al., 999.
\item \textsuperscript{65} Timothy E. Clinton and Joshua Straub, \textit{God Attachment: Why You Believe, Act, and Feel the Way You Do About God}, 1st Howard Books hardcover ed. (New York: Howard Books, 2010), 70.
\end{itemize}
her up but displayed punishing behavior by hitting or throwing toys. When the mother would set the child down, that exasperated the situation, and the child did not want to be left alone or put down. The child simply did not trust what mother would do next.  

Danny Horesh comments that this confusion by the child was caused by an inconsistent response from the caregiver. The child had learned at an early age that the mother was not always reliable to provide relief for their distress. The mother’s inconsistent response in a time of need conditioned the child to go from a whimper to a wail. Eventually, the child responded to every negative situation with angry outbursts because their young mind believed this was the only way to get their mother’s attention and relief from the distress.

Ambivalent or anxiously attached children grow up to be adults who fear rejection but depend on relationships to give personal value. They personally feel they have no worth, and they have no self-soothing techniques, so they require those skills from others. When their partner requires attention, ambivalent or anxiously attached people emotionally distance themselves because they do not feel adequate to meet another’s needs. They assume that if they cannot meet their partner’s needs they will be rejected. Stan Tatkin describes this as a wave.

Tim Clinton and Joshua Straub list some traits found in those who veer toward ambivalent attachment:

- long for intimacy but live in constant, nagging fear of rejection
- are too needy, desperately looking for others to make them feel safe and secure
- trust too easily and unwisely, overlooking signs that others have not earned their trust

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66. Clinton and Sibcy, 27.
67. Horesh et al., 376.
69. Clinton and Straub, 71.
• are fragile and vulnerable to any perceived criticism, interpreting it as severe rejection
• hope that authority figures will finally come through and fix their problems
• experience a deep, controlling fear that they are not competent to make it on their own

Avoidant Attachment

If ambivalent attachment is the fear of rejection and the anger developed from the uncertainty of a caregiver who may or may not provide relief from their pain, then avoidant attachment is when one learns that others cannot help in the taking care of them, so they learn to distrust everyone except themselves. Ambivalence asks the question, “Why am I not good enough for you to be there for me every time?” Avoidance asks, “Why aren’t you competent enough to take care of me? I will do it myself.”

In the “strange situation,” mothers who suddenly left their children that eventually displayed avoidant tendencies had children who did not make a theatrical fuss like the ambivalent. These children continued to play and showed no outward signs of emotion. Even when the mother returned, the children continued to play, gave the cold shoulder, or moved away or turned away from their returning caregiver.70

This lack of response almost seems like the ideal, that a mother can leave her child and the child does not fear for his or her safety; however, in actuality, the children were boiling with emotions on the inside but refused to exhibit them. Avoidant children learn at a very early age to distrust those who are supposed to provide for them and grow up to be adults who place little interest or stock in relationships and emotions. They strive and reward themselves for remaining independent, almost aloof from others.71

70. Clinton and Sibcy, 28.
71. Horesh et al., 376.
From *God Attachment*, Tim Clinton and Joshua Straub identified traits of avoidant attachment in people who:72

- avoid intimacy because they do not see the need for it
- are confident in their abilities and are self-reliant
- commonly experience low levels of anxiety in relationships, even when others are very needy and demanding
- are very analytical about those in authority and seldom trust others
- withdraw from those who express emotional needs
- have, in effect, business relationships with others, even close family members, with clear expectations of what each person will do to make a relationship work

**Disorganized Attachment**

In *God Attachment*, Tim Clinton writes, “Children who grow up in chaotic and destructive home environments become relationally disorganized. They often can’t figure out whom to trust, where to find safety, and how to gain confidence in their abilities.”73 These children do not love themselves or believe that others love them. The people who are to care for them are the very ones who hurt them. This contradiction can cause the “deer in the headlights” look because the child simply has no idea what is going on.

Children from abusive (mental, physical, emotional, and/or sexual) homes tend to fall into this category of disorganized attachment. In the “strange situation,” these children showed a glimpse of secure attachment, withdrew like a wave, and then seemed not to care and remained avoidant. They did not know what the appropriate emotional response was.74

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72. Clinton and Straub, 73.
73. Ibid., 74.
74. Clinton and Sibcy, 28.
In *God Attachment*, Time Clinton calls this style of insecure attachment fearful instead of disorganized. He lists several diagnoses to which this type of attachment could lead: trauma and dissociative disorder, bipolar disorders, psychosis, and borderline and schizotypal personality disorders. On page 74 of *God Attachment*, Tim Clinton went on to list characteristics of people with disorganized attachment:

- feel unloved and unwanted, unworthy of anyone’s affection
- long for real relationships, but are terrified of being close
- lack confidence in their abilities to make life work
- are fragile, easily shattered, and vulnerable to any perceived offense
- believe they need to trust those in authority, but just cannot
- isolate themselves, but sometimes launch out into relationships, seeking the connection they have always wanted; their neediness, though, almost always drives people away

### Personalities

Is every person who is standoffish suffering from an insecure-avoidant injury? It is certainly plausible that some introverted people have certain personality traits that make being in large crowds an undesirable situation. It is critical to consider personality traits as part of the human makeup. This section is a brief overview of temperament and personality and how they develop from childhood into adulthood.

“Life happens.” Numerous life experiences are bound to happen to any child from bosom to grave. Those experiences affect and mold worldviews and basic brain development. Attachment theory is a psychobiological framework of how one’s brain and thought patterns

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75. Clinton and Straub, 73.
affect the way he or she relates to others. Childhood temperaments develop into adult personalities.  

Most parents with multiple children will attest that their children all behave differently with a familial commonality. Some toddlers are gentle while a sibling is destructive; some would be described as outgoing while others retreat to solitude. This initial inclination of how children behave is termed temperament. Temperament is divided into five factors, which become the common tool: the five-factor model. The five factors are extraversion versus introversion, agreeableness versus antagonism, neuroticism versus emotional stability, conscientiousness versus negligence, and openness versus closedness. As the child develops and matures, external factors such as rules and laws, peer groups, and social structures influence which temperament is appropriate and strengthened.

Robert McCrae and his team wrote: “Personality is biologically based, but it is well established that perceptual and learning experiences can reshape the developing brain, and recent studies suggest that traumatic stress may contribute to atrophy in the hippocampus.” In his book, Wired for Love, Stan Tatkin says that the hippocampus is responsible for engaging anti-stress hormones and short- or long-term memory. Temperaments evolve into adult personalities with all the good and bad that life offers. If the hippocampus retards and is unable to send out

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78. McCrae et al., 174.

79. De Pauw and Mervielde, 314.

80. McCrae et al., 175.

81. Tatkin, 34.
anti-stress hormones at appropriate times, then one’s personality may continue to track toward closedness as a personality to encourage self-preservation.

Not only does life have a direct effect on the hardwired personality, but temperaments are also being proven to be heritable. This knowledge is helpful to know if a moral injury has occurred and why such a change in personality that does not have compelling evidence on the family genome is being displayed.

An internet search using Google or Bing will bring up millions of links allowing one to take a test to determine his or her personality. Some of these tests are based on Myers-Briggs or Carl Jung.

Mels Carbonell explicates the Dominance-Influence-Steadiness-Conscientiousness (DiSC) model describing personality and divides it into two categories: what is expected of me and what I really am. With case studies and graphs, it is easy to see how answering a few questions can narrow what someone’s personality really is. This consistency shows how personality is hardwired, developed from infancy with impact from both external and heredity factors.  

Attachment Difficulties in Military

At the core of attachment are these three things: belonging, acceptance, and intimacy. It is estimated that between the years 2001-2014 there have been 2.7 million American troops deployed to Iraq and/or Afghanistan. U.S. service members enlist and commission expecting to

82. McCrae et al., 176.
83. Mels Carbonell, How to Solve the People Puzzle: Understanding personality Patterns (Blue Ridge: Uniquely You Resources), 2008.
be part of a something larger than themselves. Esprit de corps is critical to mission accomplishment. It is not a stretch of the imagination to see how easy it is for military members to marry their corps instead of their spouse.

As military members train and deploy together, they truly share blood, sweat, and tears. This bonding (attachment) is a major component in what makes a rifle team lethal. As they share in the fear of death together, they develop an intimacy that cannot be matched. For Marines, it begins as they pin on the eagle, globe, and anchor for the first time. In the U.S. Army when they are called soldier instead of recruit; a void of belonging is filled with unhindered motivation. There is no black or white, hillbilly or Yankee in the military. There is “one team, one fight.” A unified acceptance that gangs and fraternities cannot offer, nor, sadly, can some families.

Fathers have a tremendous impact on the atmosphere of the home. Husbands are instructed in the Christians’ sacred text to treat their wives with respect as the weaker partner and as co-heirs. A husband’s strength is not only muscular but in attitude and fortitude. With attachment theory examining childhood reactions to stressors and how that affects adulthood, a father’s preadolescent experiences have a direct effect on his own children’s well-being. According to Carolyn Dayton’s research, 44% of the troops deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom were parents, and 37% of their children were under the age of six.

When a father is deployed, his young children are left to experience life and stressful situations without their parental anchor. Anna Kouvo and her team found “the fathers’ more

86. 1 Peter 3:7.
88. Dayton et al., 510.
favorable childhood relationships are associated with how secure the preadolescent perceives the relationship with the father. In addition, fathers’ childhood experiences positively relate to the preadolescent’s security to the mother." 89 Young children do not have the language skills to explain their flurry of emotions. Typically, they love mom and dad, ice cream, and kittens. One word—love—to describe three different things with three levels of affection and types of usage. Children need to be free to explore emotions without fear of being punished for an emotional outburst. That freedom though, requires someone mature to channel them toward what would be deemed an appropriate emotion. 90

Carolyn Dayton uses the phrase “significant minority” to describe the substantial number of service members who return from deployments and war zones with significant psychosocial problems. These problems express themselves in traits common with PTSD. If it is optimal for children to learn resiliency from their fathers, what does a child do when his or her father comes back with a shrunken hippocampus and different personality? Healthy resilience is taught by modeling the appropriate behavior during difficult times. When a father returns from the frontline with PTSD or a traumatic brain injury (TBI)—upwards of 17% will—it could have collateral damage on a child’s attachment. 91 A child’s mind does not have the faculties to understand the traumas of war. They just know daddy is different and daddy yells; therefore, daddy does not love me anymore, or I am not good enough for daddy. Danny Horesh writes that mental health professionals must consider changes in attachment and personalities in people following traumatic experiences. 92

89. Kouvo, Voeten, and Silvén, 533.
90. Dayton et al., 515.
91. Ibid., 511.
92. Horesh et al., 382.
Military members are not the only ones to suffer attachment injuries. Their spouses also emotionally detach and try to maintain the status quo in what may be a chaotic time. The stress of being left at home with the children, bills, an empty bed, and a vacant place at the dinner table may exacerbate an insecure attachment. Insecure attachments have been linked to physical maladies such as depression or chronic fatigue syndrome.\(^93\) If a husband deploys and the wife is left at home to tend to the typical business of the household and take care of the children, and she slips into a mild depression or chronic fatigue, the children will be left with a dual instability: dad is gone, and mom is sick and cannot take care of us. They conclude that they must learn to do life themselves, because parents (authority figures) are unreliable. Again, the children silently become collateral damage of war and separation through no fault of their own. These children, if they choose to have children later in life, are being shaped to continue this insecure pattern due to the man-made trauma of war. Children who form insecure attachments, especially in the realm of insecure-anxious attachments, will be at risk for “elevated levels of depressive symptoms.”\(^94\)

Being left alone is not the only attachment injury that military members and spouses face. In intimate couples, there is also an upswing in intimate partner violence (IPV) when the insecurity—avoidance, ambivalence, or disorganized—is inflamed.\(^95\) The fear of being abandoned may cause a person returning from a kinetic war zone to act out physically to try to control an out-of-control situation or emotion. Megan Oka and her team go on to conclude: “Attachment, IPV, and relational aggression are interrelated in important ways. Most importantly, self-perceptions of attachment have a bigger impact on one’s propensity for violence than partner perceptions of the self’s attachment. Additionally, the relationship between

\(^93\) Oka et al., 412.  
\(^94\) Yi Jinyao et al., “Insecure Attachment as a Predictor of Depressive and Anxious Symptomology,” Depression & Anxiety (1091-4269) 29, no. 9 (2012): 793.  
\(^95\) Oka et al., 412.
attachment and partner’s physical aggression is mediated by the presence of relational aggression.  

For couples that experience attachment wounds from deployments that manifest as physical, emotional, or relational aggression, there becomes a dual injury and a downward spiral of negativity. The brain begins to form a habit of self-preservation responses to protect itself from harm and can be easily ignited at the slightest hint of future rejection or abandonment.

It can take up to two years for newlyweds to detach from caregivers and attach to each other. Military men and women often marry young with short engagements. It has also been shown that detaching from peers to an intimate partner can take up to three years. In a three-year period, it is quite probable that an infantry Marine will deploy twice. If the mind of the Marine is attached to battle buddies and not their spouse, it is no wonder they lose that loving feeling for those at home. Conversely, the partner at home has had to expand their own support network and attach to a new group of friends. When the military member returns home, will they be able to penetrate that new circle of trust? Will the soldier handle going from being a critical cog in surviving a gunfight to an inconvenience and additional housework chore without the full support of his or her partner?

Perhaps dad or mom returns from a deployment and the children begin to act out. The parents have endured the long separation and finally made it home only to be punished by their toddler. Despite the abrasive image of a Marine stereotype, those with children just want to go home and cuddle with something that represents innocence. When that innocence rejects them, a guilt reaction may cause the parent to withdraw from the child. The parent must be sensitive but...

96. Ibid., 426.

also needs to show a new level of consistency. The guilt of leaving may bring back memories of one’s own abandonment (divorce or death of a parent or caregiver) as a child, and one may experience strong emotions that had been suppressed. Typically, anger is the first or primary emotion displayed. In an article written by Julie Anne Laser and Paul M. Stephens it states, “Families often need to learn that the multitude of strong emotions that they are feeling, which may be manifesting themselves in erupting anger, are often masking feelings of pain, fear, and loss.”98 The returning parent is not angry at the child but is reinjuring an old wound and taking it out on their child. Therefore, it is critical for the appropriate reintegration of the military member into the family routine when returning home.99 Julie Anne Laser goes on to suggest that affective education is helpful to learn between primary and secondary emotions.100

If the child does act out and the parent soothes the child, the parent may not also be able to soothe an intimate partner’s injury from war. If the parent tries, the child and intimate may force that caregiver to choose a side. This will compound the frustration of that caregiver, for they cannot parent both a needy toddler and a needy sailor. Carolyn Dayton write, “A prominent theme throughout these narratives was a father’s sense that he could rely on his parenting partner to help him adjust to his parenting role.”101 Some intimate spouses do not trust the parenting skills of the returning warrior, so they subconsciously sabotage the reintegration.

Deployment Cycles

Not only do deployed military members face challenges, but the workup schedule to get to that deployed state can be as frustrating if not more so than the actual deployment. The army

99. Dayton et al., 514.
100. Laser and Stephens, 30.
101. Dayton et al., 514.
has divided the deployment cycle into seven phases: train-up/preparation, mobilization, deployment, employment, redeployment, post-deployment, and reconstitution.\textsuperscript{102} When military members deploy, they are gone for six to thirteen months. This longevity may seem like a lifetime, but it allows both the service member and the family remaining behind to get into a new routine and take on new roles. During the workup period, airmen and Marines are stationed and operating from their home headquarters, but they also go out to train away from home base; use and then stow their gear; and may be gone for several nights a week. Sailors go to sea for weeks and months at a time to work on proficiencies and then return to homeport before even deploying for the “seven-month cruise.” This bouncing in and out disrupts routines (e.g., morning coffee, exercise, bedtime.). Children are repeatedly saying goodbye to their mom or dad, not knowing if they will be back soon or not-so-soon.

This stress can be destructive to a couple. Exhaustion builds and tensions mount. Old arguments may resurface because one partner demands resolution before departure. Emotional and sexual intimacy may become fleeting due to not sleeping in the same bed or feeling too exhausted to stay awake. A lack of libido may be interpreted as not caring, wrecking emotional stability.\textsuperscript{103}

Julie Anne Laser’s work divides the deployment cycle into pre-deployment, deployment, and post-deployment.\textsuperscript{104} In pre-deployment, she says that the ideas of roles need to be explored and unresolved issues need to be resolved. This resolution may require therapy so that it does not blow up out of proportion. Intimate partners need to establish boundaries to protect one another


\textsuperscript{103} Laser and Stephens, 28.

\textsuperscript{104} Ibid.
from infidelity. There should be an explicit understanding that infidelity is bad, and fidelity is the expectation.

During deployments, it is important for families to keep a presence, though not physical, of the deployed spouse. That can be done by celebrating birthdays and major holidays. Deployment dolls are a great gift for children to carry mom or dad around with them. It should be expected that children act out of character during the initial stages of deployment. Rules of the house need to be followed, but the remain-behind spouse needs to discipline carefully with consistency and understanding. By the middle of the deployment, everyone should be in a new routine. A hopeful expectation is that communication has been established between the deployed service member and those at home and a new routine is followed. At the end of the deployment, expectations need to be revisited when the service member comes home.

The homecoming time is critical. If the service member expects a parade and is picked up by a taxi instead, it may generate an emotional wound. If the service member wants only a small gathering at the pickup but is greeted by the entire extended family, friends, and neighbors, he or she may become overwhelmed and retreat. Managing expectations, roles, and routines for the homecoming and reunion cannot be stressed enough. As the couple and family reunite, they celebrate each other’s successes. This celebration of milestone rewards the arduous duty of protecting one’s country and families. Celebrating small successes can help to keep the atmosphere light and provide a time for self-care.

Attaching / Reattaching

In 2007, a Department of Defense (DoD) Mental Health Advisory Team found that 27% of the sampled deployed U.S. Army soldiers in Iraq experienced some kind of marital problems while being deployed. The results increased in percentage points as the deployments grew
An interesting follow-on study would be to see what percentage of those with marital problems suffer from an insecure attachment prior to deploying. If communication, intimacy, and managing change are the secrets to a healthy marriage in the military, then how does attachment factor into that triad? People who are securely attached are able to give and receive emotional stimuli.

Insecure attachments will find one of the three or all of them difficult. Consider someone with an insecure-avoidant attachment. If he or she is also an extrovert, then talking will not be a problem, but the conversations will be shallow and practically stream of consciousness. Avoidant people avoid intimacy and emotionally charged situations. They may appear stoic during change but inside their mind is whirling with dangerous unknowns, hyperarousal, and trying to guess how people will disappoint them. If the insecurely attached person is an introvert, then communication will be happily absent from his perspective. A deployment may even be an exciting opportunity for an insecure-avoidant type. They get to remove themselves from an emotionally charged relationship and take a break. The problem is that the little security that was established will most likely be shattered if not properly maintained.

Insecure-ambivalent attachment produces a character that gets emotionally charged before the deployment, makes grand plans, but terror strikes and insecure-ambivalent people are unable to follow-through with the plan. They communicate but the communication focuses on problems and possibly past issues. They are probably not able to manage changes well because they do not feel adequate to manage their own lives let alone take care of others. Their lack of intimacy may be interpreted as selfishness during a pre-deployment phase because their fears will be ignited.

A secure couple should be able to share their fears and excitements without the anxiety of being rejected. Security gives the couple confidence to go and explore the world, even when not together because as long as it is dependent on them, they have a future. They can communicate their fears and innermost thoughts. This intimacy does not scare them. They are able to be sexually intimate, without being overbearing but genuinely giving and receiving love. They know how to talk to each other about boring daily activities without the fear of intruding on the other person’s time.

Those serving in the military must develop healthy ways to solve problems and decompress. Decompression brings someone from a pressurized situation back to a normal state. It is a slow and methodical process. Personal resiliency is a catchphrase and talking point during military safety stand downs and suicide prevention briefs. Resiliency is only learned under pressure. It should no longer be assumed that people have developed coping skills and problem-solving skills. Merolla states that people should shift from focusing on the problem to focusing on “coping, hardiness, resiliency, and positive change.”

A. J. Merolla offers two lists on developing resiliency: the first is intrapersonal and the second is partner-focused. For intrapersonal maintenance he recommends:

- sensory experiences
- positive thinking and fond thinking
- focus on self
- prayer
- reflect on perceived advantages

106. Ibid., 6.
107. Ibid.
108. Ibid., 12.
• journaling
• imagined interaction
• future thinking
• visiting special locations

The second list for partner-focused resiliency includes:
• communication mode reference and preference
• debriefing talk
• topic avoidance
• affection and intimacy
• creating and keeping communication routines
• future planning
• openness
• reassuring safety
• positivity
• faith talk

If there is an insecure attachment in one of the intimate partners, the spouse or the couple may need marital or relational counseling after deployment. It is incumbent upon the military leadership to create an environment where it is acceptable to get mental health help. If the soldiers see the senior leadership returning to work immediately after a deployment without taking extended time off to be with family, then the junior enlisted may also forgo family time to be with the unit. The senior leadership can help refocus the soldier’s unit attachment to the family thereby enabling the couple attachment by granting and encouraging long leave (vacation) periods.
When a service member returns home, it is critical for both partners to be able to share their life stories about what happened over the last several months. These stories need to be told in a safe and secure environment where there is no jealousy or judgment. Telling the stories may be the first time that either person was given permission to feel any emotion at all. This may be an emotionally charged time with tears, but the result will be worth it. Military members will want to enter into a new relaxed routine but may become frustrated with waking up at the slightest new sound or missing the noise of sirens. Patience will produce satisfactory results. The frustration will be similar to a toddler who is too sleepy to fall asleep and becomes cranky. The phase will pass. The sooner a new routine is developed with food, exercise, and sleep, the better for all.

During a deployment, the absence is only temporary. It is vital that caregivers can provide adequate meaning to a small child on why his or her parent is going to be gone for a long time. Chih-Long Yen writes, “Human beings desire stability, but life is constantly changing; thus, the function of meaning is to help create stability in the midst of constant flux.”¹⁰⁹ Not only does this apply to children but adults as well. When a greater purpose is being served during the deployment—to be obedient to God, to help free people, to stop innocent people from dying—it brings a sense of pride. Life is meant to be lived as a community. People with insecure attachments may find it difficult to apply meaning to events or become close to others. This isolation hinders what Yen states, “An important implication of the present findings is that people cannot attain meaning in life alone.”¹¹⁰ Insecure people focus on self and self-preservation. Secure people have the ability to have empathy, which gives added purpose, as an

¹¹⁰. Ibid., 407.
empathetic ear is what is most needed, someone who is willing to get to know someone else without trying to fix him or her.

Summary

Insecure attachment issues cause an unhealthy self-preservation mindset. This pattern of thinking can sabotage relationships. If the insecurity is severe enough, it may need to be dealt with professionally before other relationships can become secure.

The Bible speaks of the sins of the father being passed down to the third and fourth generation, and this can be true with parenting. Children learn to parent by watching and emulating their parents. Comedy punch lines are thrown around like, “You sound just like your father!” Although that may be good for a laugh, degrading words make a strong impression on young ears.

Military members attach to a unit and often leave the spouse behind. Their identity is found in the home port and not the home address. It has been said that 51% of the American families are now blended in some way. This blending can cause one to assume that somewhere, a family has been divided and a child left in the wake. Marines preach *semper fidelis* (Latin; always faithful), but that does not always apply to home. Some service members come from such dysfunctional homes that they have no idea how to parent properly. Many times, the problem is not a will deficit but a skill deficit; asking for help on how to parent is deemed a weakness and frowned upon by peers. A natural resource for help is the unit’s chaplain. There is a stigma about seeking help, and there is a stigma that the chaplain only exists for “Sunday morning services.” The chaplain has confidential and privileged communication. What is said to the chaplain in a moment of confession, regardless of the religious faith, must stay with the chaplain and not be shared. Chaplains understand the stress of the deployment and understand those subtle inside
jokes. Chaplains also tend to be older and can provide a mature perspective from a different stage of life. An older wiser chaplain can be a calming force to a young military family.

Attachments require time to form. The American microwave society does not always allow for time to take its course. It takes time to heal a broken thinking pattern. It takes time to heal a broken heart. A secure couple is able to see past their problems into a time in the future where the distractions fall away and the couple rests upon the beach with the sound of waves crashing at their feet as the sun bakes a smile on their faces, a picture of peace.
Chapter 2

Developing the Survey

The applied research for this project was a 24-question survey (Appendix A) hosted on the internet website Survey Monkey (www.surveymonkey.com). The survey participants responded anonymously. The participants were recruited via personal relationships to the author, social media, and friends-of-friends. No person was paid for his or her responses, and no pressure was applied to respond or not. A basic script was authored to consistently ask for participation. That script was distributed via social network sites, email, or personal contact. This chapter focuses on the creation of the survey and the purpose of the questions asked.

Creation of Survey

The survey was created with anonymity in mind. It is assumed that if the participant filled out any portion of the questionnaire, then he or she was giving a positive response to consent to participate. It was also assumed that if someone did not consent, he or she would not have filled out the survey. It is unknown how many participants did not consent and therefore did not fill out the survey. It is also unknown what percentage of people who were asked to respond completed the survey.

Questions 1 through 5

1. What is your gender?
   a. Male
   b. Female

2. What is your age?
   a. 18-29
   b. 30-39
   c. 40-49
   d. 50-59
   e. 60-69
   f. 70 or older
3. Which race/ethnicity best describes you? (Please choose only one.)
   a. American Indian or Alaskan Native
   b. Asian / Pacific Islander
   c. Black or African American
   d. Hispanic
   e. White / Caucasian
   f. Multiple Ethnicity / Other (please specify)

4. Which of the following best describes your current relationship status?
   a. Married
   b. Widowed
   c. Divorced
   d. Separated
   e. In a domestic partnership or civil union
   f. Single, but cohabitating with a significant other
   g. Single, never married

5. What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?
   a. Less than high school degree
   b. High school degree or equivalent (e.g., GED)
   c. Some college, but no degree
   d. Associate’s degree
   e. Bachelor’s degree
   f. Graduate degree

   The first five questions are basic demographics: gender, age range, ethnicity, marital status, and highest educational level completed. The randomness of the participants and their demographics ensured that it was not possible to identify the participants in the results and fulfilled the desire for the responses to remain anonymous. The questionnaire was not designed to have a certain number of male or female responses. Neither was age nor ethnicity a targeted population.

Questions 6 through 8

6. How would you categorize your military affiliation?
   a. Active Duty/Reserve Component
   b. Retiree
   c. Spouse
   d. Dependent
   e. None
7. Which military branch were you predominately affiliated with?
   a. Army
   b. Navy
   c. Air Force
   d. Marine Corps
   e. None

8. Other than a military exercise or deployment how many consecutive days (24hr+) have you been physically separated from your spouse or significant other?
   a. 0-3 days
   b. 4-7 days
   c. 1-4 weeks
   d. 1-3 months
   e. 4-9 months

Questions 6 through 8 specifically deal with military affiliation. This survey was designed to be used by both civilian (non-military) and military service members and/or their dependents. However, if the responder was of the civilian class, he or she was able to skip questions 8 through 19. One of the topics of Chapter 3 discusses how many deemed themselves civilians and skipped the middle portion of the survey.

This author is a U.S. Navy sailor. It is expected that the majority of those who classified themselves as service members were also members of the U.S. Navy. This reflects the social networks with which this author is associated. Sufficient responses were reviewed from the other service branches. Having responses from the U.S. Army, U.S. Air Force, and the U.S. Marine Corps helped to provide clarification on whether separation and attachment issues are more prevalent in the navy, the civilian population, other branches of the military, or if most face some type of extended separation in their relationships regardless of their military affiliation.

Questions 9 and 10

9. How many military deployments have you endured as a service member or dependent?
   a. 0
   b. 1
   c. 2
   d. 3
   e. 4
   f. 5+
10. How many estimated months of separation have you endured as a service member or dependent from a spouse or significant other?
   a. 1-6 months
   b. 6-9 months
   c. 9-15 months
   d. 15-24 months
   e. 24 months +

Questions 9 and 10 ask specifically about the number of deployments and the corresponding length of physical separation that significant others have endured because of deployments or military training exercises. These questions were geared specifically to service members and dependents. It is important to note that it is not uncommon for one deployment in the U.S. Army to be twelve months in duration. A deployment on a navy carrier was traditionally six months long, ballooning to eleven months, and is now being reset to an expected seven months. A U.S. Marine Corps deployment is generally six months in length but to a live-fire warzone.

As mentioned earlier in this thesis, a deployment is only one phase of the life of a unit. Speaking specifically about the U.S. Navy, a deployment cycle is pre-deployment, deployment, and post-deployment. In the pre-deployment phase, the ship may be gone several months in a row for three weeks at a time. This is colloquially called in-and-out; the ship is in-and-out from homeport multiple times in a row. This in-and-out operation prepares the sailors and their families for the seven-month deployment. The deployment phase lasts approximately seven months. The post-deployment phase consists of a sustainment and maintenance phase. During the sustainment phase, the sailor may be in homeport but must be available to deploy again on a 72-hour notice. The ships will need to maintain their operational currencies and go out to sea as often as in the pre-deployment phase. The maintenance phase allows the sailor not to go to sea, but the ship will inevitably require much work to be done to it to prepare it for the next
deployment cycle. With this explanation, it should be evident that one seven-month deployment may require fifteen months of separation.

Questions 11 and 12

11. Describe the temporary impact the deployment had on your significant relationships.
   a. Positive
   b. Negative
   c. Indifferent

12. Describe the permanent impact the deployments had on your significant relationships.
   a. Positive
   b. Negative
   c. Indifferent

Questions 11 and 12 explore the relational impacts that military separations can have on relationships. The author of this thesis allowed the respondents to decide for themselves how “temporary” is defined. Between the two questions, anything short of permanent could be defined as temporary. Therefore, there is no timeline given to define temporary, whether it is just a few days, weeks, months, or years. For a sailor who is gone 15 months on a ship deployment, perhaps a temporary change means finally returning home, or perhaps it is until an enlisted sailor moves from the sea-going assignment, which is usually 36 to 48 months.

Permanent is also open for discussion. Is a change after six months permanent? Is the permanence defined after a change of duty stations? It seems that a change that has lasted longer than one year may be considered permanent. Again, this author allowed the responders to define that in their own way.

The positive, negative, and indifferent categories are also open to interpretation. It is the desire of this author to allow the respondents to own their emotions and definitions of what is a positive or negative change. Perhaps the respondents is in such a perfect state of marital bliss before the separation that distance cannot fog his or her love-struck eyes, and so the respondents
says that the separation caused indifference or no change. The ambiguity of the answers is to allow the responder to take ownership of his or her feelings and interpretation.

Questions 13 Through 18

13. As a service member or dependent, were you offered a reintegration relationship class?
   a. Yes
   b. No

14. If yes, which organization offered the class?
   a. Unknown or None
   b. Fleet and Family Support Center or service equivalent
   c. Ombudsman
   d. Family Readiness Officer (FRO)
   e. Chaplain
   f. Deployment Resiliency Counselor

15. Were the tenets of Attachment Theory (secure and insecure attachments) discussed during the class?
   a. Yes
   b. No

16. Were popular relationship enhancement programs referenced such as but not limited to: The Five Love Languages; His Needs, Her Needs; Boundaries in Marriage; or Love and Respect?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Do not remember
   d. Not Applicable

17. If reintegration relationship course was offered, did you attend?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Not Applicable

18. If you attended the relationship reintegration class, did you find it informative or helpful?
   a. Extremely helpful
   b. Somewhat helpful
   c. Not informative or helpful
   d. Extremely not informative or helpful

Questions 13 through 18 focuses on the support being offered to the service members and their families in assisting them with separation issues. A working assumption is that most service members spend some time away from their significant others: spouse, family, and friends.
For question 13, a reintegration class was defined as a class to prepare the service member and/or dependent for the return to homeport (redeployment) for the service member or homecoming for the dependent. A reintegration class should cover topics such as changes in routines, expectations, communication, and roles. The homecoming from deployment is a critical time in a relationship. Emotions run high and exhaustion is at its peak. This can cause the wrong thing to be said or heard. Reintegration classes for couples should speak specifically to issues such as sexual intimacy, how to care for children, and proper boundaries with extended family members and friends.

It is important to know which support entity provided the training (if any). This information will help to know the context and what material may be covered. Though each supporting agency will cover many of the same topics, they will each come at them with different perspectives. The chaplain will and should have different training than the Family Readiness Officer (FRO). Each service member will hear something different from the providers according to their own bias and attention span. Question 14 speaks directly to this area of context.

Question 15 speaks directly to the idea of attachment theory. Because there is so much material already in circulation, it is critical for this author to know if this research is breaking new ground with integrating attachment theory or if this project is needlessly reinventing a theoretic unneeded wheel. Having direct experience of both receiving and teaching reintegration classes, it is this author’s opinion that even if attachment theories were discussed, the respondents to the questionnaire would have difficulty remembering the class specifically and any material from the class.

Typically, the family members of the deployed personnel are so anxious about the return that their excitement and trepidation will sometimes give them ears that cannot hear. The home
warriors may fear that their service member will return so changed that they will not recognize how they themselves have changed. That need to return things to the way they were often overrode the ability to begin new things with new concepts like attachment theory. It is more likely that the sailor or spouse will remember popular relationship books.

Because it is more likely that popular relationship books will be remembered, question 16 speaks specifically to that concept. Books such as *The Five Love Languages* by Gary Chapman;\(^{111}\) *His Needs, Her Needs* by Willard F. Harley;\(^{112}\) *Boundaries in Marriage* by Henry Cloud;\(^{113}\) or *Love and Respect* by Emerson Eggerich.\(^{114}\) These are all popular books or curricula within the Christian publishing world. These books have all proven to be valuable tools to enhance relationships in their own right.

The best material can be developed and offered, but it is incumbent upon each person to show up and learn. Question 17 wants to know if the respondents made an effort to attend the class that was offered (assuming it was offered). Spouses often cannot attend classes for reintegration due to their busy schedules and a lack of childcare. The spouse may have moved away from the base and closer to immediate family or other support networks. When the spouse moves back to the family’s home away from the homeport, he or she is then unable to attend the events that create a community with the other spouses. Moving home may be easier for some to care for the children, but a downside includes the inability to take advantage of many of the services offered to military families.

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111. Chapman.
Question 18 seeks to know the personal impact of the class that was taught and attended. This question allows for each person who chose to respond to the survey to answer from his or her own point of view. The military member will have a vastly different experience than the dependent. The presentation and material will be different. The Fleet and Family Resource Center, which provides counseling support to the U.S. Navy will have a team of presenters providing reintegration training specific to the spouse at home and then go to the ships and tailor their training to the service members upon the responses from the spouses and loved ones. If the respondents find that these classes were always of high quality, then perhaps no new training is required. A working assumption is that new training is required; not because the old training is poor, but because there is always room for more material that teaches how to have healthier relationships. This question ends the middle portion of the survey that was directed to military members and/or their dependents.

Questions 19 to 22

19. If your separation was not due to a military assignment, did you find it difficult to emotionally reconnect with your significant other or spouse?
   a. Difficult
   b. Somewhat difficult
   c. No change
   d. Somewhat decreased
   e. Decreased
   f. Not applicable

20. Did the separation (military or not) perhaps cause any of the following? (Check all that apply.)
   a. Anxiety
   b. Anger
   c. Abandonment
   d. Abuse
   e. Other (please specify)
21. Which feeling of distance did the separation cause or inflame?
   a. Emotionally distant  
   b. Physically distant  
   c. Romantically distant  
   d. Spiritually distant  
   e. None of the above

22. How long did the feelings of separation last?
   a. None  
   b. 1 week  
   c. 1 month  
   d. 3 months  
   e. 1 year

Questions 19 through 22 explore the idea that separation may cause unwanted feelings of anxiety or reopen old attachment wounds. Question 19 invites the civilians who are answering the survey back into the conversation. This question has a five-point scale on whether it was difficult to reconnect emotionally after the separation. Chapter 3 will unpack the answers to these questions.

Question 20 allows the respondents the option to freely write about what issues were caused due to the deployment or separation. Some of the additional responses are listed in Chapter 3. This question allows for future reintegration classes to specifically target areas that people find difficult when reconnecting so that the material is more applicable to the audience. This question also does not expect the respondents to have only one answer. It is looking for a combination of issues but does not allow the responder to give more weight to one challenge over another (e.g., 80% one and 20% another).

Anxiety is defined as that persistent worry that becomes enslaving. It moves past intuition into an obsessive apprehension that something is wrong. It is possible for anxiousness to manifest in physical responses that are called panic attacks. Often these attacks have a shortness of breath and feeling of pervasive muscular tenseness.
Anger is a raw and primal emotion. Someone with an attachment injury who has a fearful or disorganized attachment will often respond to new situations with anger. Often, such an individual is unsure of how to respond with a more appropriate emotion, because he or she is angry at things that happened when they were much younger.

This expression of anger is often how the media portrays soldiers when they return home from war. This caricature fills the spouse or significant other at home with unneeded worry. It is safe to assume that most people do not want to fight. Typically, spouses at home want a fairy tale homecoming with their knight in shining armor returning home after he or she slayed the dragon. They do not want an angry dragon returning home. With good reason, people should be educated on returning warriors and the prevalence of posttraumatic stress (not disorder).

Abandonment, that unhealthy feeling of being left alone, is common with attachment injuries. The children act out in their own way because they were suddenly abandoned and made to feel unsafe. When someone experiences this as a child, and it is unresolved, and then a loved one goes away for a period, it is possible for those feelings to come rushing back.

Abuse may be physical, emotional, or sexual. One or all may be present. This is often referred to as Intimate Partner Violence (IPV). As noted in Chapter 1, IPV has an uptick in instances when one or both partners have an attachment wound. Each one of these “A” traits: anxiety, anger, abandonment, and abuse may cause distance, which question 21 addresses.

Question 21 focuses on the idea that a negative experience in physical separation may cause distance in the relationship: emotional, physical, romantic, or spiritual. The respondent is allowed to select all that apply to his or her unique situation.

The emotional distance may be that one or both of the partners are genuinely pleased to be reunited but unable to show it. They withhold their affection and positive platitudes for fear of

115. Oka et al., 414.
being hurt again or fear of the hurt continuing. Emotional distance may also be found in stonewalling communication.

Physical distance is typically when the service member comes home but does not want to be home. Perhaps the returning warrior is unable to handle the energy and routine of the children. Perhaps the sailor wants to return to sea where there is a predictable schedule, and nothing is asked of him or her except work. Distance could be caused by the spouse at home not canceling any standing engagements after the airmen comes home so that he or she always has a place to escape to if the homecoming is not as foreseen.

Sexual intimacy is important to spouses as they return together from separations. Sexual intimacy requires a healthy emotional, physical, and spiritual life. This area is often difficult to discuss and the young (immature) sailor often still chuckles as it is being presented. This area of vulnerability does not tend to make for polite conversation, so it is often ignored. A lack of sexual intimacy may be sex without feelings or no sex at all. Perhaps a wounded partner will withhold sex and affection to manipulate the relationship to get what he or she wants.

Spiritual distance may show itself in the change of religious rituals. Perhaps the couple prayed together at the dinner table, and this has come to a halt after the reunion. Church is about community, and when a loved one is not there, church can then be a lonely place even when surrounded by familiar people. Therefore, church attendance becomes neglected. When Sunday service is no longer in the routine, it is difficult to add it to the new calendar. This unwillingness to go will send a clear signal that things have changed. 1 Peter 3:7 reads, “Husbands, in the same way, be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life so that nothing will hinder your prayers” (NIV). When a husband is spiritually distant with his wife and not treating her as a co-heir, then
his own spirituality will be squelched, and he will be unable to operate as the appropriate head of the home.

These feelings of distance will last different durations for each impacted person. Question 22 seeks out the most common length of time. Chapter 3 explores and lists which one was selected the most down to the least.

**Question 23**

23. What method(s) helped to alleviate the negative feelings (click all that apply)?
   a. Education  
   b. Counseling  
   c. Religious practices  
   d. Time  
   e. Meals together  
   f. Romantic escapades

This question allows for the respondent to select more than one answer. Chapter 3 combines and analyzes the answers to determine which practice seemed to promote healing. Education is referring to reintegration briefs that were discussed early in the survey. Other forms of education could be their own personal studies in relationships and the litany of self-help books offered on the subject.

The couple may have already had family counseling lined up to take place during the post-deployment phase. Couple’s counseling does not imply that the marriage is unhealthy. In fact, it is one way for healthy couples who have endured a “traumatic” or different event apart from each other to process it with a non-biased third party. Couples who have been separated for months though may also face unresolved issues that festered and require counseling to bring healing. To name a few resources, this counseling could be received for free from a chaplain, Military One Source, or Fleet and Family Resource Center.

Rituals can be a stabilizing force in the lives of people. Religion often has rituals involved with it that can bring peace in the midst of a storm. Couples returning to their place of
worship together have a chance to reconnect with their faith in each other and the divine. Religious practices may require confession and forgiveness with hope for better things to come. Religious practices should involve the community to support the young family as they return together. This could be a place to find free childcare or counseling if needed.

Time is a valuable commodity. When couples have been apart for an extended period, it is often an unspoken expectation that when they reunite they will spend all their time together. This may be overwhelming to one or all the parties. However, time is what is needed to bring healing. Partners should be encouraged to just give the reconnection time instead of jumping to the conclusion that their significant other has fallen out-of-love with them or they have “changed.”

After months of eating alone or with “the guys,” reuniting at the dinner table may prove difficult. A common way to train an animal is to use food as training treats. When couples use food and the family table as a place to train each other, then they can start to become one again. Another reason having meals together may be difficult is because of the jet lag. After three weeks the body breaks old routines. It will take three weeks for the stomach to realize that 0800 at home is time for breakfast, not supper like on the ship halfway across the globe.

Romantic escapades are more than sexual intimacy. Romance may be the kind words or the washing of the dishes. One may be put in the right sexual mood because the other brought flowers or gently brushed against the other’s shoulders. One of the abuses is sexual abuse, which may include sex without romance. Inna Schneiderman and others have published an article discussing how oxytocin is released in the brains of monogamous mammalian couples during
coitus. The oxytocin helps the couples to bond to one another and to feel euphoric when they are together.  

Question 24

24. It has been said, “Absence makes the heart grow fonder.” Do you find this to be true?
   a. Yes
   b. No

Question 24 is a fun question using the popular and cliché quote of “absence makes the heart grow fonder” that is found often in memes and movies. Again, this author allowed the reader to interpret this question from his or her own perspective. If the answer is yes, then why do all couples not take a sabbatical away from each other? If the question is no, then why would anyone in the military or a job that requires traveling try to be married or in a long-term relationship? Chapter 3 will explicate this more along with all the answers to this brief survey.

Summary

This thesis project is intended to help marriages and relationships in the military to stay or become strong. This survey was designed for both military and civilian alike but not every question equally applied to their unique situation. The survey was random and open invitations were made for any who wished to respond. Respondents who had no military affiliation were able to bypass specific questions. The results of this survey will benefit from civilians not answering questions that are geared towards military members. Chapter 3 gives the results and analysis to each question.

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Chapter 3

Detailing the Results

This chapter analyzes the results of the survey. Each section includes a table with the responses, and the number of respondents is evident via the tables. Those who identify as lacking affiliation with the military skipped some questions while others skipped questions for unknown reasons.

Q1: What Is Your Gender?

Table 3.1. Q1: What is your gender?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>29.57%</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>70.43%</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first five questions for the survey are all basic demographic questions. Question 1 deals with the idea of gender. This is male and female; born male and identify as male, born female and identify as female. This distinction may seem inconsequential; yet, the military at the time of this writing has allowed transgender to openly serve in the ranks. Of the 115 responses, 70% were females. If this survey were to target only military members or veterans and their dependents, then male respondents would need to be more similar to what is actually serving in the military. As of 2015, 83% if the military force was male and 17% was female. However, this survey did not ask for military members only; therefore, this ratio of 70/30 female to male is sufficient.

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Q2: Age

Table 3.2. Q2: What is your age?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-29</td>
<td>15.65%</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>37.39%</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>33.04%</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>6.96%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>5.22%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70 or older</td>
<td>1.74%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Those who answered the survey do not equally represent the active duty armed services. Again, this project focuses on military personnel, but it was not limited to the military. Within the military, 72% of the population is under 30 years of age.\(^{118}\) This author, at the time of this writing, falls into the third category of 40-49. A safe assumption is that this survey reflects more of the author’s peers than the general public or military population. This survey did have representation from each age bracket, and the majority respondents of the survey does represent the majority of the ages in the military.

Q3: Race/Ethnicity

Table 3.3. Q3: Which race/ethnicity best describes you? (Please choose only one.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Indian or Alaskan native</td>
<td>2.61%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific islander</td>
<td>1.74%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>12.17%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>5.22%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White/Caucasian</td>
<td>75.65%</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple ethnicity/other (please specify)</td>
<td>2.61%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Because this project was designed by a military member, the military population is the primary focus though not the sole purpose. In the military, 31% of the service members in 2015

\(^{118}\) Ibid., iv.
identified as a racial minority. To quote the study by the DoD, racial minority is defined as, “Black or African American, Asian, American Indian or Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, Multi-racial, or Other/Unknown.” Therefore, 69% of the military force identifies as white/Caucasian. That is consistent with those who responded to this survey where 75% identified as white/Caucasian.

**Q4: Current Relationship Status**

Table 3.4. Q4: Which of the following best describes your current relationship status?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>78.26%</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>1.74%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated</td>
<td>2.61%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In a domestic partnership or civil union</td>
<td>1.74%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single, but cohabiting with a significant other</td>
<td>6.96%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single, never married</td>
<td>8.70%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The largest category by far in marital status for those who responded to the survey was married. Seventy-eight percent of those who responded identified as married. Within the military at large, 54.5% are married with 5% divorced in 2015. Having such a substantial number in the married category also reflects the current status of this author at the time of this writing. Having a considerable number in the married category also allows for more respondents who have had to face separation from loved ones. This met the needs of this project.

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119. Ibid., iii.  
120. Ibid., iv.  
121. Ibid., 52.
Q5: Educational Level

Table 3.5. Q5: What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than high school degree</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school degree or equivalent (e.g., GED)</td>
<td>9.65%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college, but no degree</td>
<td>23.68%</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate’s degree</td>
<td>12.28%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>27.19%</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate degree</td>
<td>27.19%</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 5 ends the basic demographic section. With all the respondents being over the age of 18,\(^{122}\) it makes sense that a small number should be expected to have less than a high school diploma. In this survey, zero of the respondents were still in high school. This is a good thing because it was not expected for high school students to spend extended periods away from those whom they deem as their significant other. Over half of those surveyed have a college bachelor’s degree or an advanced degree at the graduate level. For full disclosure, this author would fall into the latter category of graduate degree. It may be surmised that those with a college degree of some sort would be involved in the professional world where travel and continuing education would be expected. In 2015, only 7.6% of the enlisted service members had a bachelor’s degree. In the officers’ ranks, 83.8% had at least a bachelor’s degree.\(^{123}\) Warrant officers are not required to have a bachelor’s degree.

\(^{122}\) See table 3.2

\(^{123}\) “Dod Personnel, Workforce Reports & Publications.”
Q6: Consecutive Days of Separation

Table 3.6. Q6: Other than a military exercise or deployment how many consecutive days (24hr+) have you been physically separated from your spouse or significant other?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-3 days</td>
<td>18.42%</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-7 days</td>
<td>21.05%</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-4 weeks</td>
<td>25.44%</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-3 months</td>
<td>14.04%</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-9 months</td>
<td>21.05%</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 6 was geared toward all the respondents and not just military members. Of those who answered the survey, 82% have experienced some time of separation from their significant others. This result was surprising to this author. However, after one thinks about all the different careers that require extended travel (e.g., truck drivers, salesmen, evangelists, missionaries, performers, and those needing continuing education), it is easy to see why people become separated for a brief period from one another.

1 Corinthians 7:5 reads, “Do not deprive each other except perhaps by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control” (NIV). Genesis 2:18 reads, “The Lord God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him’” (NIV). People do not tend to marry just so that they can be apart. It is important for a healthy relationship for couples to be united.
Q7: Military Affiliation

Table 3.7. Q7: How would you categorize your military affiliation?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Active duty/reserve component</td>
<td>42.11%</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retiree</td>
<td>5.26%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse</td>
<td>25.44%</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependent</td>
<td>3.51%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None (you may skip to question 20)</td>
<td>23.68%</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 7 allows the respondent to skip to question 20 if there is no military affiliation.

For those who responded, almost 24% fell into that category. As a U.S. Navy chaplain, this author has a shrinking connection to the civilian population. The majority of those who did respond are active duty or reserve component members. This met the end-goal of this project to design a product that military members can use while they endure physical separation from their spouse or significant other to enhance their relationships by knowing more about attachment theory and themselves.

Q8: Military Branch

Table 3.8. Q8: Which military branch were you affiliated with predominately?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Army</td>
<td>11.24%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navy</td>
<td>69.66%</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air Force</td>
<td>6.74%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marine Corps</td>
<td>11.24%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>1.12%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If the author’s sphere of influence is shrinking to be predominately military, then it should be no surprise that the majority of those who answered the call for the survey were also associated with the U.S. Navy, just like this author. It was deemed a success in the survey that there was representation from each of the Title 10 branches. U.S. Navy chaplains serve with U.S. Marines, the U.S. Coast Guard (Title 14), and the U.S. Merchant Marines.
Q9: Number of Deployments

Table 3.9. Q9: How many military deployments have you endured as a service member or dependent?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>7.87%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>15.73%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>29.21%</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>15.73%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.74%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5+</td>
<td>24.72%</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

September 11, 2001, changed the U.S. military. That is the day that terrorists flew planes into the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and a plane ended up in a field in Pennsylvania.

From that time on, military members have been deployed to kinetic warzones on land, air, and sea fighting the war on terror. This author has been deployed three times in ten years. It was a surprise that 25% of the participants in the study have endured five or more deployments in their career. Forty-four of the 89 (49%) who answered this question have deployed three or more times. That type of military tempo is unsustainable to an all-volunteer force.

Deployments, as mentioned in earlier chapters, cause significant strain on relationships. This is especially true if an attachment wound already exists. With this number of deployments, it is critical that a project is designed and implemented that can help relationships stay strong or become stronger.
Q10: Months of Separation

Table 3.10. Q10: How many estimated months of separation have you endured as a service member or dependent from a spouse or significant other?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-6 months</td>
<td>6.82%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-9 months</td>
<td>11.36%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-15 months</td>
<td>18.18%</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-24 months</td>
<td>14.77%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 months +</td>
<td>48.86%</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With question 9 illustrating a large number of those surveyed face multiple deployments, it was no surprise that nearly 82% of those who answered question 10 have been separated because of deployments or training exercises for almost one year or more; however, it was astounding that almost half of those who answered have spent more than two full years apart from their loved ones. Within those two or more years, those days absent represent babies’ births, children’s milestones and accomplishments, birthdays, anniversaries, major holidays, and deaths of loved ones.

Q11: Temporary Impact

Table 3.11. Q11: Describe the temporary impact the deployment had on your significant relationships.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>13.64%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indifferent</td>
<td>36.36%</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the 88 people who answered this question on the survey, half said that the deployment(s) had a temporarily negative impact on their relationships. Fifty percent is a substantial number that cannot be ignored. As a presenter of materials to prepare sailors and Marines for deployment, this author would feel confident in informing the crowd that half—if not most—of them can expect that their relationships will suffer as a cost of the separation. What
is not known is the health of the relationship when the negativity happened. That would be an excellent question for a follow-up survey. If a traumatic experience that happened when one was a child can be reinjured as an adult, then perhaps a traumatic experience in a young relationship will be reignited when the trauma of separation happens for a deployment.

Fewer than 14% of those who responded said that the deployment had a positive effect on their relationship. As a follow-up survey, it would be interesting to hear from those in this category concerning what they define as temporarily positive. Perhaps the euphoric feeling of the homecoming washed away the pain of being apart. When loved ones at home take on new projects while their companion is away, a temporary positive change could be a newly acquired skill, health improvement such as weight loss, or improved financial situation.

Without knowing the health of the relationship at the moment of deployment or military training exercise, it is difficult to interpret the responses in the indifferent category, which is 2.5 times larger than the positive but not as large as the negative. Therefore, a safe conclusion from this question would be that if the relationship is going to experience a temporary change, then the result is going to be negative. Knowing that the relationship is going to face a negative temporary change should spur one to protect it from that effect. It should also give the couple or family unit hope to know that the negativity is probably only temporary, and they just need to weather this new storm.

Another reason indifference may be so much higher than positive is the emotional detachment that transpires when one is away. This detachment is a coping mechanism to protect their feelings from the pain of being apart from their loved ones. As recorded in the Bible, the two will become one. The two did not become one so that in the future they could become two again. There is an expectation that they will be together “until death do us part.” This emotional

---

124. Gen 2:24
detachment does not allow for negativity to creep in, but it can also prevent positive feelings from forming as well.

Q12: Permanent Impact

Table 3.12. Q12: Describe the permanent impact the deployments had on your significant relationships.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>35.23%</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>26.14%</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indifferent</td>
<td>38.64%</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>38.64%</strong></td>
<td><strong>88</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Questions 11 and 12 are critical to helping people’s relationships after a deployment. Where the largest category in temporary change was negative, for the permanent impact that largest category is indifferent. Nineteen of the participants labeled both the temporary and permanent changes in their relationships as indifferent. Of those nineteen, three of them had never deployed; therefore, the question did not exactly pertain to them.

The good news is that 74% of those who answered this question said that there was either no change or a positive change for the long term. This is exciting because it helps to remove the stigma that marriages cannot handle deployments. On the contrary, a healthy marriage has the chance to thrive during a deployment. In Paul’s letter to the Romans, Paul states, “Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope.”¹²⁵ When people learn that they can do difficult things—suffer—then it prepares them to do more difficult things in the future. This is longsuffering or perseverance creating character and character shoring up hope.

This finding that there are more positive permanent changes than negative following a time of separation and a large contingency with no change or indifference should also inspire

¹²⁵. Rom 5:3-4, NIV
caregivers to provide couples counseling to make relationships as strong as possible before the separated timeframe. A deployment does not kill the relationship, but it may exacerbate the negative attributes of said relationships. Therefore, to have positive, healthy changes following a deployment, one must have a healthy understanding of the relationship before the deployment.

Q13: Reintegration Class Offered

Table 3.13. Q13: As a service member or dependent were you offered a reintegration relationship class?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>42.05%</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>57.95%</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 13 illustrates the assumption that the military does not do a decent job of preparing service members to re-engage relationships after a deployment. This author has deployed twice on a naval aircraft carrier and once to a land-based warzone and knows firsthand of reintegration classes being offered to the commands. Even though they were offered to the command, it does not mean that the junior military members were afforded the opportunity to attend. If the leadership does not value the training, then time will not be made to make the offered classes accessible to all.

One of the driving questions for this survey was if there is a need for more reintegration material. The fact that 57% of the respondents stated that classes were not even offered makes the case that more material is required and proves the need for this project, the publication of the thesis, and websites to follow.
Q14: Facilitator of Class

Table 3.14. Q14: If yes, which organization offered the class?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unknown or none</td>
<td>47.83%</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fleet and family support center or service equivalent</td>
<td>23.19%</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ombudsperson</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family readiness officer (FRO)</td>
<td>8.70%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chaplain</td>
<td>18.84%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deployment resiliency counselor</td>
<td>1.45%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>69</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This list in question 14 only represents the general support agencies where help may be sought. It was not surprising that the ombudsman had zero. This also did not consider unit level training. Adding an option to choose unit level training (no outside agency utilized) would be good for future surveys. Chaplains are embedded with the units. This author interpreted these data that the chaplain is being underrepresented in the offering of reintegration classes. Often, the reintegration class is taught by a team of people; therefore, the participant may not be 100% clear on who owns the material. The largest category is the unknown or none.

The chaplain category is third of six. Similar to the evidence shown in the responses to question 13, many service members are not receiving any training, and this is a real opportunity for the chaplain community to take ownership and offer classes.

Q15: Attachment Theory Presented

Table 3.15. Q15: Were the tenets of attachment theory (secure and insecure attachments) discussed during the class?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>21.54%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>78.46%</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 15 asks specifically about attachment theory and whether it was taught during the course. It was surprising to this author that 21% said yes. This is a good thing. As with
questions 13 and 14, chaplains have a real opportunity to fill this need using their religious perspective along with attachment theory. Many wounds from the past need forgiveness and healing. Forgiveness is a principle that the chaplains absolutely should be teaching. The author of the Gospel of Matthew records Jesus teaching his disciples that if they do not forgive others, then their Father God will not forgive them.¹²⁶

Some chaplains have a hesitancy to venture into the realm of psychology. Understanding attachment theory and other meta-theories found in psychology would provide chaplains with broader language to help their flock navigate their own life stories. Attachment theory is not at odds with Scripture. Scripture speaks of the sins of the father being passed down to the third and fourth generations.¹²⁷ Attachment theory helps break those cycles.

Q16: Relationship Enhancement Programs

Table 3.16. Q16: Were popular relationship enhancement programs referenced such as but not limited to: *The Five Love Languages; His Needs, Her Needs; Boundaries in Marriage; or Love and Respect*?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>28.92%</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>8.43%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not remember</td>
<td>10.84%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>51.81%</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Those who attended the reintegration classes offered by this author would have been taught the principals in the books *Boundaries in Marriage* and *The Five Love Languages*. Forty-three respondents said that this question was not applicable to them. Thirty-eight of the 43 who responded “not applicable” also indicated that a reintegration class was not offered. Those are consistent responses adding to the validity of the report. A product that is available for

¹²⁶ Matt 6:15
¹²⁷ Exod 20:5, Num 14:18, Deut 5:9
distribution on the internet would provide a place where families could return to the information when they forgot what they have learned. An internet-based training would also allow for couples to learn independently. A spouse with young children would not need to find childcare to participate if they had home access to the internet.

Q17: Attendance

Table 3.17. Q17: If reintegration relationship course was offered did you attend?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>23.86%</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>18.18%</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>57.95%</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>57.95%</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 17 does not differentiate between forced attendance and willful attendance. In a future survey, this idea will be explored more. It speaks to the attitudes of the learners and if they are in receive mode for information. This author has witnessed more than one person who has had the attitude while deployed that there is nothing that going home will not fix. Twenty-one who responded that they attended is not a large split with the 16 who did not go. Not only do classes need to be offered, but the participants must also be educated on why they need the classes. Offering attachment theory is a new concept to most people, and that newness may inspire them to want to learn and apply something different.
Q18: Was the Class Helpful

Table 3.18. Q18: If you attended the relationship reintegration class did you find it informative or helpful?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely helpful</td>
<td>4.65%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat helpful</td>
<td>16.28%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not informative or helpful</td>
<td>4.65%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely uninformative or unhelpful</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>74.42%</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The bright side to responses in question 19 is that no one said it was extremely uninformative or unhelpful. They may have responded with a blasé attitude and be found in the largest category of “not applicable.” For the majority of those who responded, either the class was not offered, therefore they could not attend and not find it helpful, or they chose not to attend the class. Most of those who attended the class found the material to be at least somewhat helpful. They may not be able to remember the authors of the books or which curriculum was taught, but they gleaned something from it to enhance their relationships.

Q19: Difficulty to Reconnecting

Table 3.19. Q19: If your separation was not due to a military assignment, did you find it difficult to emotionally reconnect with your significant other or spouse?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very difficult</td>
<td>3.37%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat difficult</td>
<td>17.98%</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No change</td>
<td>15.73%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat easy</td>
<td>12.36%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very easy</td>
<td>7.87%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>42.70%</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ability to reconnect was almost evenly split between difficult and easy. Nineteen respondents said it was very difficult or somewhat difficult compared to 18 who said it was somewhat easy or very easy. Every relationship is different; one of the things that could help all
the participants is for there to be an open forum where people feel free to share what worked for them or what was disastrous for them.

Nearly equal numbers found reintegration for non-military separation easy and difficult; this should allow caregivers to be deliberate and to perform to make reintegration better for everyone. This finding supports the assumption that there is a need for more reintegration classes, classes designed for the military member and for the dependent.

Q20: Separation Causality

Table 3.20. Q20: Did the separation (military or not) perhaps cause any of the following? (Check all that apply.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>75.00%</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anger</td>
<td>36.96%</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abandonment</td>
<td>21.74%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abuse</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>29.35%</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 20 allowed the participants to write in their own responses to the question and choose from any of the four listed. Appendix B lists all the written responses except for the seven that were N/A or none. With the 92 respondents, zero said that the separation caused abuse.

This lack of abuse is significant because there seems to be a stereotype of a warrior returning from war and beating their spouse or children. This caricature is unfair, and these findings do not support that stereotype. Abuse does happen in relationships, whether it is physical, mental, or sexual. As the military continues to educate about domestic violence, it should also give adequate time to relationship enhancement and coping skills.

The largest category is anxiety. That constant worry whether a loved one is safe can be debilitating. This type of worry can interrupt sleep schedules, healthy eating patterns, and workout regimes. Isolation from peers and going out can also result from this anxiety because
members at home may want to stay by the phone and reliable internet connection in case someone calls or tries to video chat.

Though the Bible is the revealed Word of God, it does not always provide comfort in every circumstance. Bible verses that look great on bumper stickers are often difficult to apply in life’s difficult situations. Jesus told his disciples that they were not to worry about their bodies or what they will eat, drink, or wear. The writer of the Gospel of Luke told his readers, “Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life?” In Paul’s letter to the Philippian church, Paul wrote, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

Telling someone to stop worrying, even when armed with the eternal truth, is not exactly helpful. Anxiety often trumps the true answer, and insecurities prevent people from finding the truth in the Truth. This author is not being flippant with Scripture. Those who are stuck in the muck and mire of worry do not always want to go to church to find answers when they are unsure if their loved one will come home alive from war.

Anger is a primal emotion. It can cause people to act out in destructive ways; yet, when harnessed properly, anger can fuel reformation. When an attachment wound is present from an early adverse childhood experience, spouses often unleash that anger at each other instead of at the deserving participants in the transgression. Sometimes, the transgression happened at such a young age that there is no memory of the event, but that event shaped the thinking patterns to shift toward self-preservation at all costs.

128. Heb 4:12
129. Matt 6:25
130. Luke 12:24
131. Phil 4:6-7
With all the birthdays and holidays that are spent apart from each other during a deployment, it is no wonder that couples feel like they have been abandoned. Perhaps the deployed service member always took care of the checkbook and now the checking is in complete disarray because the one with the proper skill is not there to take care of it. That skill being gone is a reminder that the loved one is not home. This fuels the feeling of “when I needed you the most you were gone—again.” It is easy to imagine that this feeling would be prevalent if a spouse at home loses a loved one or another tragic event happens, and the deployed service member is not home to offer comfort.

Some of the written-in responses were “loneliness”, “depression”, and “resentment.” One surveyed person said that the deployment caused the children to be unsure of the father’s role when he returned home. One can imagine that many service members who were reared in a single-parent home and then leave for a deployment may have children feeling like they have been abandoned and have only one parent. A wound of abandonment is being passed down from the parents to the next generation, even when they think they are providing a better family environment.

132. Appendix B
Q21: Separation Feelings

Table 3.21. Q21: Which feeling of distance did the separation cause or inflame?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotionally distant</td>
<td>60.18%</td>
<td>68</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physically distant</td>
<td>51.33%</td>
<td>58</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romantically distant</td>
<td>42.48%</td>
<td>48</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritually distant</td>
<td>23.89%</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the above</td>
<td>23.01%</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>113</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 21 allows for multiple responses. It is not surprising that emotional and physical distance was felt by over half of the respondents. An emotional disconnection seamlessly can lead to a feeling of being romantically distant. It is within the realm of reason that this romantic distance caused by being apart for an extended period leads to the “I love you; I am just not in love with you,” syndrome. This is especially true when the brain and heart protect themselves from more pain by not allowing a natural reconnection to occur because the brain and heart know that as long as their loved one is a Marine, then there is a chance that the Marine will leave them again to go to war with their buddies.

Knowing that the number one response was emotional distance, a popular and easy to read book such as *The Five Love Languages*133 would really help marriages to stay fresh or to at least not stagnate. These data provide extra support to the presentations to help service members and significant others to be careful with their feelings. Feelings can lie. A majority of those surveyed believed that there was a negative setback in the relationship, but it was only temporary. The distance being felt is only a current phenomenon, and it does not mean the relationship will always feel like it does at just that moment.

---

133. Chapman.
With the knowledge of emotional, physical, and romantic distance being the most popular responses, couples can formulate a plan on how to reignite each one of those areas. Having regular sex, even if not in the mood but willing, will help to fire off oxytocin in the brain, which will help to fuel a positive emotional response and physical reaction. This is why a sexual affair is so devastating to a relationship at any time but especially during a deployment. The oxytocin is fired off with the wrong partner and not saved for the betrothed.

Q22: Duration of Feelings of Separation

Table 3.22. Q22: How long did the feelings of separation last?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>23.21%</td>
<td></td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 week</td>
<td>18.75%</td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 month</td>
<td>23.21%</td>
<td></td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 months</td>
<td>17.86%</td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>17.86%</td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>16.96%</td>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 22 helps to confirm that the distance and negative changes are only temporary. Eighty-three percent of the respondents indicated that their separation feelings lasted less than one year. That may feel like a long year, but again, it is important to remember that feelings lie. It is reassuring that the smallest sampling was one year or more.

Suffering forces people to anchor themselves to something solid during a storm of life. For believers in Jesus, he is the anchor. He is the hope of restoration and redemption. This hope does not disappoint. It is an important educational point to remind the military member and the family that often these feelings of negativity will be present because they have all just


135. Heb 6:19
endured a stressful event. However, those feelings are temporary, and the pain will pass. They must learn to be patient.

One of the causes of impatience is this desire for things to return to the way they were. Response 18 in Appendix B states that it is difficult to return to “normal” life. What some fail to realize is that there has to become a new normal. A Tuesday cannot be a Monday. Those are two separate events though only separated by a click on the clock. People seem to idolize how things used to be without realizing how bad things sometimes were or failing to see how good things can be in the days to come. They only remember a limited portion, which helps them to verify their own preconceived ideas.

Q23: Negative Feeling Alleviation

Table 3.23. Q23: What method(s) helped to alleviate the negative feelings (click all that apply)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>8.91%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counseling</td>
<td>11.88%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious practices</td>
<td>36.63%</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>83.17%</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meals together</td>
<td>43.56%</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romantic moments</td>
<td>54.46%</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the 101 who answered question 23, 83% specified that time was a factor in negating negative feelings. In this case, the adage “time heals all wounds” may be partially true. This again supports the notion that the negative changes are temporary, not permanent. Divorce to a marriage is permanent and not necessary if people can learn to be longsuffering.

Education classes and couples counseling were last on the list. These events invite other participants into the couple’s intimate lives at a time when the couple may be seeking to keep outside agencies at a distance. According to these responses, time, food, and sex were the most crucial factors to re-engaging a relationship.
When training animals, food is a reward to shape correct behavior. Humans and animals were both created on the sixth day. When couples are dating, one of the most common dates is to go out to eat together. For military members, normalcy can be found eating an MRE (meal ready-to-eat) on the hood of a Humvee with one’s battle buddies. Families or couples slowing down to have a meal together allows for conversation and to look into each other’s eyes. Another benefit of eating together is that it helps to reset the stomach’s clock to a new time zone.

Romance is far more than sex. Healthy sex is monogamous with an emotional and spiritual connection. Romance begins with a simple hello, cup of coffee, or t-shirt washed or the only thing worn. Romance is when one person simply wants to know and value his or her partner. It is difficult to know someone when there are thousands of miles of separation in the way.

Religious practices often amount to time spent together. Returning from a deployment and trying to reignite the relationship is not the time to practice the spiritual discipline of isolation. Church attendance and praying together can be romantic and thoughtful. Religious practices provide ritual and stability even when establishing new routines. Church should be a safe place for a couple to go.

Q24: Absence Makes the Heart Grow Fonder

Table 3.24, Q24: It has been said, “Absence makes the heart grow fonder.” Do you find this to be true?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>58.77%</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>41.23%</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This last question is for fun. It was this author’s original assumption that the response to this question would be overwhelmingly “no.” It was a surprise that 58% of the people who responded believed that yes, absence does help the heart to grow fonder.
This author is a sailor who has returned from deployments and knows firsthand that there is something magical about the homecoming. Tears are shed, hugs are tight, and kisses are long. This euphoric feeling of passion and happiness can almost be addictive. For there to be a homecoming, there must be a departure. During the time of the deployment, each member of the couple or family unit gets a chance to improve for their own self and the other. He or she gets to explore new things and adventures in the hopes of sharing those memories with the other person.

The data support the negative changes that come with a deployment are temporary, but the positive changes can be permanent. Service members can leave their homes to protect the shores of the country they love, and the fires at home can continue to burn until they are engulfed with the passion of the homecoming.

Summary

Change is expected. When a couple is temporarily separated for a deployment or work engagement, the results vary and are unique to each situation. As shown from the responses, many couples face a time of separation, and they must learn how to reconnect. When an attachment wound exists, it is more difficult to reattach, but it is crucial to do so.

An expectation of the relational separation is that the experience will have a temporary negative impact. When one knows and expects the post-honeymoon phase of the separation to be negative, then that temporary time does not have to be taken personally. Temporary, as in time duration, is situational to each unique separation. Couples need to celebrate each small victory after a time apart as to not focus on the negative.

For some, distance does cause the heart to grow fonder. When apart, people learn how they take one another for granted and can correct selfish patterns. When couples spend a time apart they get to experience the rush of reunification. This homecoming brings a rush of emotion and often love is publicly displayed.
Chapter 4

Drawing out Conclusions

The U.S. military is involved in conflicts battling the rising tide of terrorist extremism. ABC News reported that since 2001 over 2,000,000 service members have been deployed overseas.¹³⁶ Many of these members have been deployed multiple times.¹³⁷ Not only are the military members deployed, but the friends and families left state-side must learn to adjust to a new way of life. Problems erupt when common practices are disrupted, and new routines must be learned.¹³⁸

When service members and their significant others have a secure attachment bond, they have an innate ability to withstand the stress of deployment. Karin Jordan lists several characteristics of couples with a secure attachment:

- Securely attached couples have a mutual dependency and interdependency.
- From the combat service veteran’s perspective, seeing the horrors of war can bring into question basic assumptions about self, others, the world, and spiritual/religious values/beliefs.
- If they, others, and/or the world are not as they believed, then the basic assumptions about their worthiness for love and their ability to love can be brought into question.
- A secure relationship, however, can serve as a positive resource for both the combat service veteran and the spouse/partner.
- The balance between mutual dependence and trust that the other can function independently can serve to buffer the doubts and fears that challenge the relationship.¹³⁹


¹³⁷. Chapter 3; question 9 provides data for this statement.


¹³⁹. Ibid., 267.
One of the problems faced by service members is after connecting with the unit with whom they have trained and served, and they have not only trusted their battle buddies with their lives, but they have had an integral role in the work and relationship, they return home to no clear role, and no longer feeling needed. The spouse or significant other has learned to conduct life without the service member. Wives of husbands who were deployed to Afghanistan reported alarming numbers of mental disorders. The list of disorders includes: anxiety (25%); depression (18%); sleep disorders (21%); and acute stress (23%). This chapter deals specifically with attachment-focused family therapy techniques used in a military setting. The primary textbook used for this section was Daniel A. Hughes’ *Attachment-Focused Family Therapy*. The goal of any married couple should be to connect as one and be as happy as possible. Amir Levine writes, “Our partner regulates our blood pressure, our heart rate, our breathing, and the levels of hormones in our blood.” This truly reflects how the two become one as designed from day six of creation. Significant others become a positive coping mechanism for each other during stressful situations. When that partner is separated from the other, it becomes more difficult to self-regulate. Applying Hughes principles on attachment-focused family therapy helps to make individuals, couples, and families healthier.


Attachment-Focused Family Therapy

**Intersubjectivity**

The goal of family counseling with an emphasis on attachment therapy is to get the parents to attach or connect with the therapist. The counselor then teaches the skills of attachment and intersubjectivity to the parents so that the parents can then attach to their children. Daniel Hughes states,

Those moments when the parent and child are in synch: When they are affectively and cognitively present to each other; when the vitality of their affective states are matched; their cognitive focus is on the same event or object; and their intentions are congruent. As will be indicated through this book, when two individuals are engaged intersubjectively their affect is being coregulated, and they are cocreating the meaning of the objects or events that they are attending to.  

Through secure attachment, parents and children coregulate the meaning of traumatic events and move forward in new ways. Within attachment, Hughes highlights five themes: safety and exploration, sequence of breaks and repairs, coregulation of affect, cocreation of meaning, and development of a coherent self.

**Intersubjectivity in the Military**

In much the same way as a parent to a child, a chaplain can help a service member to create meaning out of traumatic events. Military members are engaged in the profession of arms. It is truly a job of life or death. Death to the enemy to spare the life of another. Because chaplains tend to enter the military above the average age of an enlisted service member, the chaplain takes on a parental role with his or her flock.

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144. Hughes, 14.
145. Ibid., 15.
146. Ibid., 22.
147. Ibid., 26.
148. Ibid., 28.
149. Ibid., 34.
A chaplain in the American armed services is a non-combatant. However, chaplains have an effect on the warrior who is a combatant. The chaplain can stabilize a unit, especially after the unit suffers a death to one of the members. With a memorial service or just a word at the right time, a chaplain can bring a pause to grief and mourning so that the rest of the rifle squad can go out and fight.

When someone dies, someone else is going to ask the question, “What is the purpose?” The chaplain is there, in the midst of the sorrow, to answer that question. That is why it is critical for the chaplain to be viewed as approachable rather than as aloof. The chaplain provides sage wisdom to the questions that haunt men and women trying to survive in the foxholes.

Intersubjectivity in the Home

“What is the purpose? Is it all worth it?” are questions that have been asked between sailors and spouses enduring yet another deployment. Years spent apart are difficult on the healthiest of families. With effective communication skills, which are critical to attachment, meaning can be found in the pain of life. In Paul’s letter to the Roman church, Paul wrote, “We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose.” From a Christian perspective, obedience to God and gaining the crown of life is the hope that makes longsuffering profitable. A healthy family must be able to provide purpose to their pain. When couples are apart for extended periods, they must be intentional in staying emotionally attached and honest with their feelings and expectations.

Safety and Exploration

Children should feel safe to explore their surroundings. Toddlers learning to walk shuffle from one solid object to the next. They move with arms stretched out to balance themselves but also to reach back to grasp ahold of the object of security from which they launched. Hughes lists

150. Rom 8:28, NIV.
nine areas of safety and exploration for children. Two of them are: “experience self and parent (primary) or self and object/event (secondary) at the same time as experiencing the parent’s experience of the same,” and “develop the capacity to maintain acceptance, curiosity, and empathy toward self, with a readiness to integrate past and present events into the self-narrative. Aspects of self-associated with certain experiences are not ‘off-limits.’” For parents, Hughes says, “the parent’s central intention is to focus on the experience of her child. Her affect, attention, and intentions are fully engaged with her child.”

Safety and Exploration in the Military

A chaplain in the United States military has complete confidentiality, and the service member has privileged information, similar to that of a lawyer and client. If a Marine says, “Chaps, this is just between us,” that chaplain cannot share that information. A chaplain is not a mandatory reporter. That confidentiality gives safety to the service member to unload sins and stress that they carry on their shoulders.

Within the safety of the chaplain’s office, tent, or stateroom, the service member and chaplain explore the meaning of life, sexuality, and sin. There is no judgment when searching for the truth when a listening ear is required. Though chaplains wear the same uniform and are full-time service members, they are often viewed as the most-accepted outsiders. This is a good thing, as the chaplain should bring a unique perspective according to his or her religious experiences and convictions. When service members feel safe with their chaplain, they will confess the most heinous of situations, suicidal ideations, and sins of the father. Chaplains must know how to take that information in stride and take it to the divine in prayer.

151. Hughes, 20.
152. Ibid., 21.
154. Secretary of the Navy Instruction 1730.9.
Safety and Exploration in the Home

When a service member leaves a war zone, they do not want to return to another one at home. The home should be a safe place where emotions and concerns can be shared and explored. Questions do not need to be answered during exploration; they just need to have the freedom to be voiced. Rudi Dallos states, “Our lives are seen as shaped by the narratives or stories that we have accumulated about ourselves and our experiences and the world.”155 The home should be a safe place where personal stories are allowed to have a voice.

Within exploration is the opportunity to ask good questions. Questions that are not just yes or no but open-ended so that more dialogue and exploration can be had. Exploration does not need to have an ending; it is part of the journey to discovery. With healthy exploration, a topic can be shelved and then revisited later. However, if the significant others are always fearful that they will not be heard or respected, then they cannot voice their concerns. That silence due to fear is a slow death to intimacy.

Sequence of Breaks and Repairs

Within all relationships, there are good times and bad. The troubled times do not mean that the relationship is over. Miscommunication and missed expectations are often the cause of attachment breaks. Daniel Hughes states, “Researchers speak of interactive repair as the process whereby the parent and child initiate a state of re-attunement with each other following these various breaks”156 These relationships can be fixed. When marriage partners feel heard and accepted, they mentally and emotionally process the events.

156. Hughes, 25.
Sequence of Breaks and Repairs Within the Military

As stated earlier, chaplains tend to be older than the average service member. Simply having lived life longer than the majority of the chaplain’s flock, the chaplain is able to provide clarity to breaks and repairs. When someone tells their life story, it is difficult to tell it in a purely lineal fashion. The chaplain helps service members tell their own stories in ways that make sense for the service member.

With the chaplain deployed with the warfighter, the chaplain understands the timeline. A chaplain speaks the lingo of “zero-dark-thirty.” The chaplain understands the pain of riding in an armored truck and hoping not to hit an IED (improvised explosive device). Often, the chaplain knows the timeline of the war as well if not better than their flock. Therefore, when the service member is struggling to tell the story of what happened while de briefing a situation, the chaplain can help keep the details in proper order. Being able to tell the story from start to finish helps the brain to process a traumatic event.

Sequence of Breaks and Repairs in the Home

When someone must leave home for an extended period, be it a deployment, mission trip, or working in another city, there is a natural break in the relationship. The two who have become one almost become two again and their lives go down parallel paths. A lonely spouse may resent that the service member gets to make a port call in an exotic location such as Hawaii or Thailand. While the service member laments not being home to see the baby’s first steps, their child’s graduation, or say goodbye to their grandparent when the grandparent breathes their last breath.

The home needs to be a safe place where the partners can get emotional, tearful, and even loud without fear of abandonment. This fear of abandonment though may stem from something that happened years ago. With the home being a safe place for exploration, it is also a place where the narrative of one’s life can be told, and the timeline put back together.
Coregulation of Affect

Relationships need to stay in a state of homeostasis. It is a balancing act of remaining calm during trying times and finding motivation during dull times. Hughes says of coregulation: “Coregulation of affect, occurring naturally in intersubjective experiences, refers both to helping children to increase minimal affective states and also to decrease maximal affective states. This process occurs for both positive and negative affective experiences, making both more understandable, more able to be contained, and more validated and shared.”157 Parent and child are able to help calm each other to stay centered and balanced in the relationship.

Coregulation of Affect in the Military

“Hurry up and wait” is a military axiom that is applicable when dealing with minimal experiences and maximum distress. Military members are often sent to fight and end up sitting and waiting, enduring harsh elements without firing a bullet or taking a hill. The chaplain can help bring an educated perspective to the questions of why they are there. The chaplain is also able to provide calm when there is maximum angst. When a crisis occurs, a chaplain must be able to respond immediately with strength and vigor that is actually calming and not fueling the situation. When an airmen dies, a chaplain is called. When unwelcome news must be shared, the chaplain is called on to deliver the foreboding message. The chaplain is called on to help someone else manage their stress.

Coregulation of Affect Within the Home

Couples who are securely attached to one another know how to communicate and often without saying words. Within the home, events that are unpleasant need to be discussed. Security provides safety during that stress. It is important for one to openly share something that is bothering him or her and for the other to help make sense of it. Couples need to help each other

157. Ibid., 27.
balance their current act of life. They can remind each other of what they are standing for and what centers them. This helps to bring some clarity of the why something is happening.

**Cocreation of Meaning**

Daniel Hughes explains:

Infants want to see themselves reflected in their parents’ eyes, face, voice, movements, touch, timing, and rhythm of affective expressions. How infants affect their parents will tell them who they are. The enjoyment, interests, acceptance, love, and delight that they see in their parents’ eyes will tell infants that they are enjoyable, interesting, acceptable, lovable, and delightful.158

Children learn if something is scary by the way their parents react. Parents learn if they should be alarmed at a situation by the way the child reacts. This is a process where each shares in creating meaning from the event.

**Cocreation of Meaning in the Military**

There is often no answer to why a person suicides. Yet, during postvention of a suicide is when a chaplain is called upon to help a military unit find meaning in something so devastating. A young sailor, much like an infant, wants to look his or her chaplain in the eyes and see that he or she matters to someone. A chaplain can only see the eyes of the sailors when they are with the sailors. Chaplains have the authority and freedom to take a sailor to the side so that meaning can be explored. Sailors need to see the divine at work in the life of the chaplain if the sailor is to allow the divine to work in his or her own life. A sailor, or any service member, finds meaning in situations by observing how those who are senior to them in rank and more mature in life handle the situation. Service members want to be valued more than just as assets; they want to know they are still people who have inherent worth.

158. Ibid., 29.
Cocreation of Meaning in the Home

People must live their own lives and take responsibility for their own journey. However, in a healthy relationship, people walk that solo journey together. This togetherness is attachment and the two becoming one. Couples must work through the dynamics of what an event means for themselves personally and for themselves as a couple. This is true for parents and children and significant others.

To find meaning again means that exploration is valued. Questions are allowed and expected to be asked. Ideas are shared and explored without condemnation and ridicule. As words change, meanings of events can often change as well. Exploration of these things is a lifelong process, and the home must always be a safe place to explore the meaning of life’s most intimate mysteries.

Development of a Coherent Self

Adversity is required to know thyself. It is easy to be happy and joyful when times are good, but what about when times are bad? Children learn who they are in a secure environment with their parents. One day, they will need to learn who they are without being around their parents. This is the development of the coherent self. Hughes states, “Attachment security and intersubjective states are the stem cells of subjective experiences that become organized into a coherent sense of self. The parents’ subjective experiences of their child’s nonverbal expressions of his or her inner states, co-creates the meanings of these expressions.”

Development of the Coherent Self in the Military

Bootcamp is designed to change a civilian into a basically trained service member in a matter of weeks. This change often creates an identity crisis for an 18-year-old who has left home for the first time. Those young adults know who they want to be and who they were, but

159. Ibid., 35.
are completely confused about who they are during boot camp. The chaplain is a great resource to help provide a place of discovery for that coherent self. After a lifetime of service, many military members struggle to hang up the boots. They do not know who they are outside of the military. Chaplains, again, are a resource for navigating life stories

Development of the Coherent Self in the Home

As children require their parents to help them know who they are, couples need each other to know who they are as a couple, a family, and as individuals. An attached couple will change each other. This change needs to be explored and understood. The home needs to be a place where change is not scary, but it is an anticipated journey. Each stage of life brings new meaning. A young couple with no children is in a completely different mindset than a young couple with children hanging onto their pant legs and every word. An older couple with no children is in a completely different state of mind than a young couple with no children. Each couple must find their own meaning in who they are as people and as a family unit. A man is often a father, husband, brother, and employee. Each function of the man has its own meaning and never can only one of them fully define who that man is as a single organism. Meaning is found in the full experiences of each person. The home needs to be a safe place where people can be fully present with their good and bad traits.

PACE

The basic posture for a counseling session can be summed up in the acronym PACE: playfulness, acceptance, curiosity, and empathy. Daniel Hughes explains that playfulness is “integrating a playful attitude into the treatment session. It will often provide a way to realize that the stressful experiences are only one aspect of the ongoing relationship.”160 Of acceptance,

160. Ibid., 62.
he says, “join the affective rhythms and bring some regulations to them.”\textsuperscript{161} For curiosity, he states, “begins to explore and develop the theme or themes that are running through the narrative of the family member at that time.”\textsuperscript{162} Empathy is “context of an enveloping state of acceptance, along the path of nonjudgmental curiosity, the therapist is led to where she is now standing with her client. She is experiencing an event that her client previously experienced without her. She is experiencing her clients experience of the event. Her experience is affective and reflective (a/r)”\textsuperscript{163}

**Playfulness**

Playfulness is a great strategy for any counseling session. There is a moment during the talk or session when a joke is made to break the tension. It is also a useful way to continue building rapport. Humor is a defense mechanism used by many people to deflect from a serious situation. If a counselor can use humor appropriately, then the counselee can be made to feel at ease. Having a playful posture is important with children and teens. In the military, the majority of the service members are only going to serve one term. That means this group is only a few years older than high schoolers. It is important for counselors and chaplains to have a playful demeanor. Hughes states that playfulness helps to move the conversation to something lighter for just a minute. This movement allows all parties involved not to focus on just objective facts but to help process the event.\textsuperscript{164}

**Playful in the Military**

For military chaplains, being out of the office and into the foxholes brings an element of playfulness. The service members appreciate the chaplain being there in the fight. Many times,

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{161} Ibid., 67.
  \item \textsuperscript{162} Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{163} Ibid., 87.
  \item \textsuperscript{164} Ibid., 63.
\end{itemize}
service members will tell the chaplain to use earmuffs so that inappropriate language will not be heard. This ministry of presence introduces playfulness even before the service member needs to sit down and talk about a serious issue.

Therefore, it is critical for the chaplain to be with the flock, the service members. If the Marines are out doing a ruck march, then their chaplain should be with them. The chaplain should be found with the soldier they are running down the road doing cardio exercises. Being up in the air and being part of the aircrew will bring a sense of playfulness and comradery for the chaplain to the airmen.

Playfulness at Home

After a homecoming from deployment, it is important to keep the atmosphere in the home as one of playfulness. Playful people do not need to be silly; they simply need to be allowed not to fret and stress for a minute. The first week home is not the time to unveil the honey-do list. Even if there is a problem that must be handled, in a spirit of playfulness, spouses or significant others can agree to deal with that issue in the near future. The couple gives themselves permission to unwind and decompress, and then they will tackle the elephant in the room.

The survey results in Chapter 3 discovered that the three things most commonly found to alleviate negative feelings were: time, romance, and food. Coming home from a deployment should have an atmosphere of a honeymoon for a reuniting couple. The agenda of a honeymoon should be simply to go unwind from the stress of the marriage ceremony and to celebrate the beginning of the rest of their lives. The loving couple just wants to leave everyone else behind and spend time together. The cliché assures us that “time heals all wounds;” however,
sometimes, time turns into PTSD. For couples coming back together after a deployment, prioritizing each other and spending time together is the best thing they can do.

Romance is difficult and more than just touch and sex; it is an attitude. It is an attitude of being desired and pursued. Romance has an expectation of carefree love and vulnerability. “Do you want to be with me?” This is a question that must be answered but is rarely asked aloud. Romance should include a healthy sex life. As with the honeymoon and a young couple who is experiencing that part of their lives for the first time, sex after deployment can feel like the first time (at least in a long time). It may be awkward at first but worth it all the same.

Eating together helps to reestablish a bond. Sharing stories around the dinner table and asking God to bless the food and union is a fabulous way to reconnect. This author has recommended couples after deployment never to eat apart for the first several weeks. This makes the other person critical to survival and places them back into a position of importance. Eating together fulfills the need for time to be spent together, which in turn can be and should be romantic. The couple should be playful with food and have fun with sex; enjoy each other. The writer of Proverbs 21:9 wrote, “Better to live on a corner of a roof than share a house with a quarrelsome wife.”

Acceptance

Feelings are curious things because everyone has them; just not everyone is in touch with them or understands them. Some people are stuck on primary emotions such as anger. Others cry at everything. Emotions can run amok. Counselors need to feel comfortable with people expressing emotions. Often, people exhibit emotions that are not expected, and they need to be given the freedom to feel. It seems almost cliché to say you cannot heal what you cannot feel.
Accepting Feelings in the Military

Chaplains in the military are around an emotional yet non-emotional bunch. The service members repress their emotions so that they can go and do the dirty work of the country. This hiding of emotions is exhausting in an already exhausting environment. These repressed emotions will still come to a head in an intense argument, exercise regime, or counseling session. If service members can trust the chaplain or counselor with their emotions, then perhaps they will learn to trust themselves with their own emotions. Hughes poignantly states:

Most of us, within our developing attachment relationships, hope deeply that we will be accepted as we are. Until the quality of acceptance enters the intersubjective presence, the relationships maintain a distance and formality with an understanding that certain aspects of our narrative and certain intersubjective states are not ready to be expressed to each other. Acceptance communicates a commitment to the person and a confidence in what that person is.166

Chaplains wear the uniform just as the service members with whom they serve. This blending in allows them to be connected in a way that a civilian counselor cannot. When chaplains wear the uniform and show emotional strength to a Marine who is in tears, then that Marine sees that someone in the uniform can handle those emotions, and does not need to fear the emotions. On deployment, this author has needed to give permission to sailors and Marines alike to work out their emotions; that it is okay to cry and have a moment of emotional expression. If that sailor can have a moment of emotional vulnerability in the office of the chaplain, he or she can learn to rest in the chaplain’s strength. Then, when that service member calls home, they can be strong for loved ones. Chaplains model to service members the ability to be at ease and comfortable with emotions.

When people do not accept themselves for who they are, then they live a lie. This hypocrisy can drive someone mad. They feel helpless and trapped with no escape. If they cannot

166. Hughes, 67.
find someone who will accept their confusing emotions, then whom can they trust? Insecurities often drive people away from seeking the help they need. Chaplains need to be able to accept their service members—language and all—just as they are, so that they can help them become who they want to be.

Accepting Feelings at Home

When couples reunite after a long separation such as a military deployment, anger and resentment may abound. The heart may temporarily close itself off from the other person for fear of being hurt again. It is critical for the relationship to be on secure grounds. A partner needs to have the confidence in the relationship, that if he or she is currently unhappy, it does not mean that the marriage is coming to an end.

When a relationship is secure, they can share things with each other knowing that the temporary pain will not be a permanent issue. A secure couple has the ability to say, “When you did this, I felt bad because of it.” “Right now, when I feel bad, I need to spend some time away from you but always know, I need to know I can come back.” “Just give me ten minutes on my own.” This type of open communication almost seems unattainable, and at first, it may be difficult, but with time, it will strengthen the relationship.

“Our do not judge, or you too will be judged.” 167 Accepting allows someone else to feel and perceive an event on his or her own terms, without outside interpretation. This is important for those temporary negative changes that take place during or after a deployment. This author is a sailor who has deployed on both land and sea, this author believes that the family members who are at home have a more challenging time. Even with that, there is no way even for this author’s spouse to understand the amount of stress and work that is done while underway on a ship.

Stopping in ports such as Dubai, France, and Spain may seem glamorous, but often, all a sailor

167. Matt 7:1, NIV.
wants to do is take a shower without fear of foot fungus. Those who shower at home in their own showers, and with the added luxury of continuous hot water, do not have that worry.

Those in the midst of the war do not understand the prevalent fear of those who watch the war and get updates from anonymous sources on flamboyant news channels back in the United States. For a Marine to tell their significant other that there is nothing to worry about is the exact opposite of accepting one’s feelings. That Marine needs to learn to acknowledge the fear the other may be enduring and to ensure that person of their love, not safety.

Curious

Curiosity may kill the cat, but it propels counseling sessions forward. Curiosity allows a counselor to ask good questions and is a useful way to bring in playfulness and humor. This curiosity is more than just “how does that make you feel?” It is a genuine attempt to get to know someone. At its core, attachment is about feeling known. Daniel Hughes states, “The presenting and emerging themes are explored. . . Proponents of narrative therapy stress the importance of curiosity in coming to know the other’s individual story. As described here, curiosity is a very affective act of joint discovery.”

Asking questions and hearing the whole story can be therapeutic in itself. When someone tells his or her entire life story, it allows the person to see where their roadblocks are. It allows that person to own the other’s story. Curiosity brings about additional information that has been hidden away or suppressed.

Curiosity in the Military

This idea of curiosity is critical in a military setting. People intentionally give up individuality to join the military. Everyday uniforms match, haircuts are similar, and people go by rank, last name, or job description. This uniformity can drive someone with insecurities into

168. Hughes, 75.
feelings of isolation and despair. That is why it is critical for chaplains who are deckplating to interact with the people on their turf. A popular slogan for some is, “People don’t care what you know until they know you care.” Being curious about someone’s life and who they are helps service members to see that chaplains care. This can all be done outside of a counseling session.

This author does not tend to allow sailors to unload their problems without first introducing who they are, where they are from, and if they are married or not. Often, questions like do you have a cat or dog, or do you like football or basketball, help to de-escalate the emotions in the moment. The seeker of help begins to feel valued and known. This is when attachment begins.

Chaplains have the ability and luxury to share in the misery of their flock. They deploy together, exercise together, eat together, and hygiene together. There are many opportunities to get to know each other in the military on a deeper level. Chaplains must learn the art of asking good questions.

Curiosity at Home

Throughout a deployment, for six months or more, a couple has led two separate lives instead of one. Sometimes, curiosity cannot be satisfied, and questions cannot be answered due to security clearance reasons. When a line of questioning is shut down, a feeling of mistrust can develop. Sailors may not be allowed to say where they are or were in the world, but that does not mean they do not trust their loved one. Conversely, their loved ones are still allowed to feel mistrusting (that is accepting).

Families also need to learn the art of asking good questions. Good questions allow for open-ended responses that can generate a dialogue. The one who is asking the good questions needs to be a good listener. Listening without interjecting or allowing the mind to wander requires practice and intentionality. However, when people feel like they are really being heard
then they genuinely feel valued. Sailors love to tell sea stories of foreign ports, good food, and life on the sea. What they are not good at doing is hearing stories about the grass at home being cut and the fence being mended. Partners in life must have good communication skills, both speaking and listening.

**Empathy**

In the machismo world that is the military, to show genuine empathy for someone is a lost art. “Empathy is at the heart of the transformative therapeutic experience . . . Empathy is never a ‘thing’ that must be ‘given to’ or ‘done to’ our client. It is an intersubjective experience, with the minds and hearts of both therapist and family member focused on a troubling aspect of each family member’s narrative or their joint family narrative.”

Counselors are to be empathetic. They should care what someone else is going through and how they feel about it. This empathy will help the counselee to feel accepted.

Distraught people do not want to be pandered to; they want empathy. They want to know that the counselor feels pain with them, not just for them. For chaplains and counselors to connect or attach with their military clientele, they must learn to have empathy. This may mean that counselors and chaplains see fewer people so that they do not suffer from secondary posttraumatic disorders.

**Empathy in the Military**

Chaplains are empathetic because they are embedded with the unit and have shared stories with service members. The chaplain understands the lingo and the difference between the head and head shed. They know what a leatherneck is and where Camp Leatherneck was and

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169. Ibid., 90.

170. Head is the restroom on a ship and the head shed is the office of the Commanding Officer, usually an Army term.
what is the GOO. Chaplains interact with such a variety of people. Each person has his or her own story and uniqueness. A local pastor experiences the same, but at a local parish, everyone is from a similar general location, and they are serving many of the same people for years at a time. That is not so in the military. Chaplains quickly learn not to be surprised or shocked at how some people were reared or the terrible things that happened to them. A chaplain’s life is not a sheltered life. That awareness allows for a true spirit of empathy to develop.

Empathy at Home

Spouses may not know what it is like to be deployed to a war zone, but they can be empathetic and understand what it is like to be separated from their loved one by thousands of nautical miles. Service members generally fail to be empathetic for their loved ones back home. Their loved ones get to see the children every day, sleep in their own beds, and eat home cooking. What fails to be realized is that all those events are done while missing the one they love. Things such as church become a chore because they are only fun when done in the proper community. Challenges, such as a broken appliance or car troubles, which might seem small to the service member, can feel far more stressful to the spouse who must bear that burden alone.

Empathy requires one to have acceptance for another person’s feelings and the curiosity to find out why the other person feels that way. It is difficult for someone with an attachment wound, especially if it has been reopened, to feel empathy when trying to sort out one’s own feelings.

Summary

The military is a wonderful ministry for a minister and counselor alike. The service members have volunteered to serve their country and to fight the enemy. Many of these service members have

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171. Leatherneck can be a slang term for a U.S. Marine. Camp Leatherneck was in Helmand Province, Afghanistan. The GOO is the Gulf of Oman.
members unknowingly sacrifice relationships at the altar of boot camps. When counselors and chaplains have a good grasp of attachment theory, they can help recruits and seasoned service members navigate the difficult terrain of relationships. Marriages can be salvaged, children can be connected to, and our fighting force will be even stronger because families will be stronger.

With the PACE style of counseling, chaplains specifically have an advantage over other counselors because they are embedded in military units. Chaplains have the ability to be playful at exercise programs and to see the service members in the midst of the fight. They get the chance to be curious about where someone is from and why they joined the military. Chaplains are to bring something different to the table and to be accepting of people’s feelings. This acceptance allows the service member to feel cared for and can help service members heal. This feeling connection must be expressed in empathy and not just sympathy. Young service members and their families deserve the very best support that the United States can offer them. Learning and applying family attachment as taught by Daniel Hughes is a great tool for any chaplain or counselor.

Website

This project has generated a website to accompany the research. The reason a website was selected was because the internet is connecting the populations of the world as never before. Couples can now be halfway around the globe from each other and still communicate instantly over messaging applications and social media. This author cannot be with every military unit that returns from deployment; a website, however, can be accessed by almost all people with internet capabilities. As discovered from the applied research, there is an inadequate selection of relationship re-engagement material. The website created as part of this project begins to populate that void.
Most military installations and ships have some form of internet capabilities embedded at the location. Using email and other web applications is simply how wars are fought and planned. A website gives couples the ability to learn and review the information at their own pace. When given the opportunity to learn together, a couple can establish a connectedness even though they are physically apart. Maintaining this connection is critical to attachment.
Appendix A

Survey Questions

1. What is your gender?
   a. Male
   b. Female

2. What is your age?
   a. 18-29
   b. 30-39
   c. 40-49
   d. 50-59
   e. 60-69
   f. 70 or older

3. Which race/ethnicity best describes you? (Please choose only one.)
   a. American Indian or Alaskan Native
   b. Asian / Pacific Islander
   c. Black or African American
   d. Hispanic
   e. White / Caucasian
   f. Multiple Ethnicity / Other (please specify)

4. Which of the following best describes your current relationship status?
   a. Married
   b. Widowed
   c. Divorced
   d. Separated
   e. In a domestic partnership or civil union
   f. Single, but cohabitating with a significant other
   g. Single, never married

5. What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?
   a. Less than high school degree
   b. High school degree or equivalent (e.g., GED)
   c. Some college, but no degree
   d. Associate’s degree
   e. Bachelor’s degree
   f. Graduate degree
6. How would you categorize your military affiliation?
   a. Active Duty / Reserve Component
   b. Retiree
   c. Spouse
   d. Dependent
   e. None

7. Which military branch were you predominately affiliated with?
   a. Army
   b. Navy
   c. Air Force
   d. Marine Corps
   e. None

8. Other than a military exercise or deployment how many consecutive days (24hr+) have you been physically separated from your spouse or significant other?
   a. 0-3 days
   b. 4-7 days
   c. 1-4 weeks
   d. 1-3 months
   e. 4-9 months

9. How many military deployments have you endured as a service member or dependent?
   a. 0
   b. 1
   c. 2
   d. 3
   e. 4
   f. 5+

10. How many estimated months of separation have you endured as a service member or dependent from a spouse or significant other?
    a. 1-6 months
    b. 6-9 months
    c. 9-15 months
    d. 15-24 months
    e. 24 months +

11. Describe the temporary impact the deployment had on your significant relationships.
    a. Positive
    b. Negative
    c. Indifferent
12. Describe the permanent impact the deployments had on your significant relationships.
   a. Positive
   b. Negative
   c. Indifferent

13. As a service member or dependent, were you offered a reintegration relationship class?
   a. Yes
   b. No

14. If yes, which organization offered the class?
   a. Unknown or None
   b. Fleet and Family Support Center or service equivalent
   c. Ombudsman
   d. Family Readiness Officer (FRO)
   e. Chaplain
   f. Deployment Resiliency Counselor

15. Were the tenets of Attachment Theory (secure and insecure attachments) discussed during the class?
   a. Yes
   b. No

16. Were popular relationship enhancement programs referenced such as but not limited too: *The Five Love Languages; His Needs, Her Needs; Boundaries in Marriage; or Love and Respect*?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Do not remember
   d. Not Applicable

17. If reintegration relationship course was offered, did you attend?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Not Applicable

18. If you attended the relationship reintegration class, did you find it informative or helpful?
   a. Extremely helpful
   b. Somewhat helpful
   c. Not informative or helpful
   d. Extremely not informative or helpful
   e. Not Applicable
19. If your separation was not due to a military assignment, did you find it difficult to emotionally reconnect with your significant other or spouse?
   a. Difficult
   b. Somewhat difficult
   c. No change
   d. Somewhat decreased
   e. Decreased
   f. Not applicable

20. Did the separation (military or not) perhaps cause any of the following? (check all that apply)
   a. Anxiety
   b. Anger
   c. Abandonment
   d. Abuse
   e. Other (please specify)

21. Which feeling of distance did the separation cause or inflame?
   a. Emotionally distant
   b. Physically distant
   c. Romantically distant
   d. Spiritually distant
   e. None of the above

22. How long did the feelings of separation last?
   a. None
   b. 1 week
   c. 1 month
   d. 3 months
   e. 1 year
   f. Not applicable
   g. 1 week
   h. 1 month
   i. 3 months
   j. 1 year

23. How long did the feelings of separation last?

24. It has been said, “Absence makes the heart grow fonder.” Do you find this to be true?
   a. Yes
   b. No
Appendix B

Other Results from Question 20

1. There is a tension when a service member does workups, coming and going frequently before deployment. They are overworked and stressed about deployment. You see them occasionally, and they bring tons of laundry and upheaval to the schedule. Also, after deployment, it is hard for a spouse, who had control of her time, money, activities, to share the decisions again. And after deployment, they want to spend money and enjoy freedom.

2. Suspicion. Work schedule takes me out of town for six days then home for eight. It works out well for us to vacation often.

3. Resentment, loneliness.

4. Depression, loneliness.


6. Depression, feeling the need to always be with a very close friend in my location.

7. Physical disability.

8. Sadness.

9. Children not sure of father’s role upon return home.

10. Fun.

11. Lack of sexual intimacy.

12. Loneliness.

13. Nervousness. Not wanting to mess up the family routine once returned.

14. Always feeling like they are not doing enough to support. Finding myself to disconnect and think about divorce.

16. Depression.

17. Pornography use.

18. Hard to get back to normal life.


20. Distrust.
Emotional Re-engagement after Deployments:
Using Attachment Principles with Relationship Resources
For Post-Deployment Relational Enhancement

By: Robert D. Fasnacht
Spring Grove, Illinois, 2018
Table of Content

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• Website

Introduction
Abstract

An understanding of attachment theory has the ability to help one overcome personal problems that may be exacerbated by past traumas. This thesis project focused on how long durations of separations, especially in a military setting, can trigger symptoms from past traumas, which may impede relational attachment to friends and family. A survey was crafted and answered by over 100 adults, including military members, military dependents, and non-military civilians. The results were analyzed to discover how often people were separated from loved ones, the length that perhaps caused problems, and the feelings that developed. A literary review of books and scholastic articles on attachment and military separation also provided insight and supporting documentation to the survey. The biblical narrative is evident throughout the project with Scripture passages incorporated into the text. This project led to the development of a website that provides additional material on attachment and relationship aids.

Thesis Statement

• This project is designed to provide insight into attachment theory as it relates to military families to encourage the strong bonds of healthy relationships.

• The purpose of this thesis project is to explain how the use of attachment theory within relationships, especially within the U.S. military and specifically utilizing military chaplains, has a positive impact on keeping service members in healthy relationships.
Book review

- **Attachment-Focused Family Therapy**
  - Daniel Hughes
  - This book is the foundation of this thesis project. Hughes describes the PACE model for counseling: Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity, and Empathy.

- **God Attachment**
  - Tim Clinton and Joshua Straub
  - The content of the book explains attachment theory and why people struggle in not only personal relationships but also their relationship with God.

- **Wired for Love**
  - Stan Tatkin
  - Tatkin focuses on the idea of the “couple bubble.” This idea helps to reinforce the biblical concept of the “two shall become one.”

Scripture Review

- **Mark 10:8,** “‘and the two shall become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two but one.”

- **Romans 12:1, 2,** “I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”

- **1 John 4: 7, 8,** “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.”
Chapter one

Military Marriages

• 2015 Demographics for military*
  • 1,313,940 active duty servicemembers
  • 52.6% were married
  • 41.7 were never married
  • 5.5% were divorced

Attachment

• Definition:
  • Humans are born with an innate psychobiological system that motivates them to seek out and bond with others*
  • Attachment has four categories.
    • Secure: Secure attachment strengthens one’s coping skills, sense of worth and self-efficacy, as well as reduces anxiety and increases capacities of adaption to stress
    • Insecure-ambivalent: believes that he or she is not worthy of love or to be cared for but knows that others have the ability to take care of him or her
    • Insecure-avoidant: is when one learns that others cannot help taking care of them, so they learn to distrust everyone except themselves
    • Disorganized: grow up in chaotic and destructive home environments become relationally disorganized. They often can’t figure out whom to trust, where to find safety, and how to gain confidence in their abilities.


Deployment Cycles

• Pre-deployment
  • Training
  • Mobilization

• Deployment
  • Employment
  • Redeployment

• Post-deployment
  • Sustainment
  • Reconstitution
Chapter two

Survey / Questionnaire

- How would you categorize your military affiliation?
  - Active Duty / Reserve Component
  - Retiree
  - Spouse
  - Dependent
  - None

- Which military branch were you predominately affiliated with?
  - Army
  - Navy
  - Air Force
  - Marine Corps
  - None

- Other than a military exercise or deployment how many consecutive days (24hr+) have you been physically separated from your spouse or significant other?
  - 0-3 days
  - 4-7 days
  - 1-4 weeks
  - 1-3 months
  - 4-9 months

- Other than a military exercise or deployment how many consecutive days (24hr+) have you been physically separated from your spouse or significant other?
  - 0-3 days
  - 4-7 days
  - 1-4 weeks
  - 1-3 months
  - 4-9 months
Survey / Questionnaire

- How many estimated months of separation have you endured as a service member or dependent from a spouse or significant other?
  - 1-6 months
  - 6-9 months
  - 9-15 months
  - 15-24 months
  - 24 months +

- Describe the temporary impact the deployment had on your significant relationships.
  - Positive
  - Negative
  - Indifferent

- Describe the permanent impact the deployment had on your significant relationships.
  - Positive
  - Negative
  - Indifferent

- As a service member or dependent, were you offered a reintegration relationship class?
  - Yes
  - No

- If yes, which organization offered the class?
  - Unknown or None
  - Fleet and Family Support Center or service equivalent
  - Ombudsman
  - Family Readiness Officer (FRO)
  - Chaplain
  - Deployment Resiliency Counselor

- Were the tenets of Attachment Theory (secure and insecure attachments) discussed during the class?
  - Yes
  - No

Survey / Questionnaire

- Were popular relationship enhancement programs referenced such as but not limited to: The Five Love Languages; His Needs, Her Needs; Boundaries in Marriage; or Love and Respect?
  - Yes
  - No
  - Do not remember
  - Not Applicable

- If reintegration relationship course was offered, did you attend?
  - Yes
  - No
  - Not Applicable

- If you attended the relationship reintegration class, did you find it informative or helpful?
  - Extremely helpful
  - Somewhat helpful
  - Not informative or helpful
  - Not applicable

- If your separation was not due to a military assignment, did you find it difficult to emotionally reconnect with your significant other or spouse?
  - Difficult
  - Somewhat difficult
  - No change
  - Somewhat decreased
  - Decreased
  - Not applicable
Survey / Questionnaire

- Did the separation (military or not) perhaps cause any of the following? (check all that apply)
  - Anxiety
  - Anger
  - Abandonment
  - Abuse
  - Other (please specify)

- Which feeling of distance did the separation cause or inflame?
  - Emotionally distant
  - Physically distant
  - Romantically distant
  - Spiritually distant
  - None of the above

- How long did the feelings of separation last?
  - None
  - 1 week
  - 1 month
  - 3 months
  - 1 year

- It has been said, “Absence makes the heart grow fonder.” Do you find this to be true?
  - Yes
  - No

Chapter three
Survey / Questionnaire Results

• Which military branch were you affiliated with predominately?
  - Army: 11.24%
  - Navy: 69.66%
  - Air Force: 6.74%
  - Marine Corps: 11.24%
  - None: 1.12%

• How many deployments have you endured as a service member or dependent?
  - 0: 7.87%
  - 1: 15.73%
  - 2: 29.21%
  - 3: 15.73%
  - 4: 6.74%
  - 5+: 24.72%

• How many estimated months of separation have you endured as a service member or significant other?
  - 1-6 mths: 6.82%
  - 6-9 mths: 11.36%
  - 9-15 mths: 18.18%
  - 15-24 mths: 14.77%
  - 24 mths +: 48.86%

• Describe the temporary impact the deployment had on your significant relationships.
  - Positive: 13.64%
  - Negative: 50.00%
  - Indifferent: 36.36%

• Describe the permanent impact the deployments had on your significant relationships.
  - Positive: 35.23%
  - Negative: 26.14%
  - Indifferent: 38.64%
Survey / Questionnaire Results

• Did the separation (military or not) perhaps cause any of the following? (Check all that apply.)
  • Anxiety: 75.00%
  • Anger: 36.96%
  • Abandonment: 21.74%
  • Abuse: 0.00%
  • Other: 29.35%

• Which feeling of distance did the separation cause or inflame?
  • Emotionally distant: 60.18%
  • Physically distant: 51.33%
  • Romantically distant: 42.48%
  • Spiritually distant: 23.89%
  • None of the above: 23.01%

• How long did the feelings of separation last?
  • None: 23.21%
  • 1 week: 18.75%
  • 1 month: 23.21%
  • 3 months: 17.86%
  • 1 year: 17.86%

• What method(s) helped to alleviate the negative feelings (click all that apply)?
  • Education: 8.91%
  • Counseling: 11.88%
  • Religious practices: 36.63%
  • Time: 83.17%
  • Meals together: 43.56%
  • Romantic moments: 54.46%

• It has been said, “Absence makes the heart grow fonder.” Do you find this to be true?
  • Yes: 58.77%
  • No: 41.23%
Attachment-focused Family Counseling

- **Intersubjectivity**
  - The goal of family counseling with an emphasis on attachment therapy is to get the parents to attach or connect with the therapist.

- **Safety and Exploration**
  - Feeling safe to explore emotions and past experiences.

- **Sequence of Breaks and Repairs**
  - Researchers speak of interactive repair as the process whereby the parent and child initiate a state of re-attunement with each other following these various breaks.*

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Attachment-focused Family Counseling

• **Coregulation of Affect**
  - This process occurs for both positive and negative affective experiences, making both more understandable, more able to be contained, and more validated and shared.

• **Cocreation of Meaning**
  - Creating meaning from an experience from how it affects someone else.

• **Development of a Coherent Self**
  - Attachment security and intersubjective states are the stem cells of subjective experiences that become organized into a coherent sense of self. The parents’ subjective experiences of their child’s nonverbal expressions of his or her inner states, co-creates the meanings of these expressions.*


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PACE

• **Playfulness**
  - Introducing a moment of carefreeness or levity into a counseling session.

• **Acceptance**
  - Allowing feelings to exist and to bring regulation to them through acceptance of said feelings.

• **Curiosity**
  - Getting to know the person and not just the problem during a counseling session or interaction.

• **Empathy**
  - To care what people are going through and to help people feel known.
Website

Thesis Project Website
www.relationshipreengagement.com
accessed: 27 January 2018
Photo credits: author
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March 27, 2017

Robert Fasnacht
IRB Exemption 2814.032717: Attachment Therapy Enabling More Efficient Relationship Reintegration

Dear Robert Fasnacht,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under exemption category 46.101(b)(2), which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46.101(b):

- Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless:
  - information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and
  - any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any changes to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by submitting a change in protocol form or a new application to the IRB and referencing the above IRB Exemption number.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible changes to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Bizer, MA, CIP
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
The Graduate School

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