



Approaches to Enhancing Resilience Among Military Couples

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UCLA

NCTSN  The National Child
Traumatic Stress Network

F•O•C•U•S

FOCUS Project for Military Families

- Helps families cope with challenges of:
 - Multiple-deployment stress
 - Physically or psychologically-injured service member
- Resiliency Training skill-building groups for parents, teens and children
- Multi-session Family Resiliency Training for military families with children at family-convenient hours
- Services tailored to individual family strengths and risk
- Community level workshops and consultation



FOCUS Sites

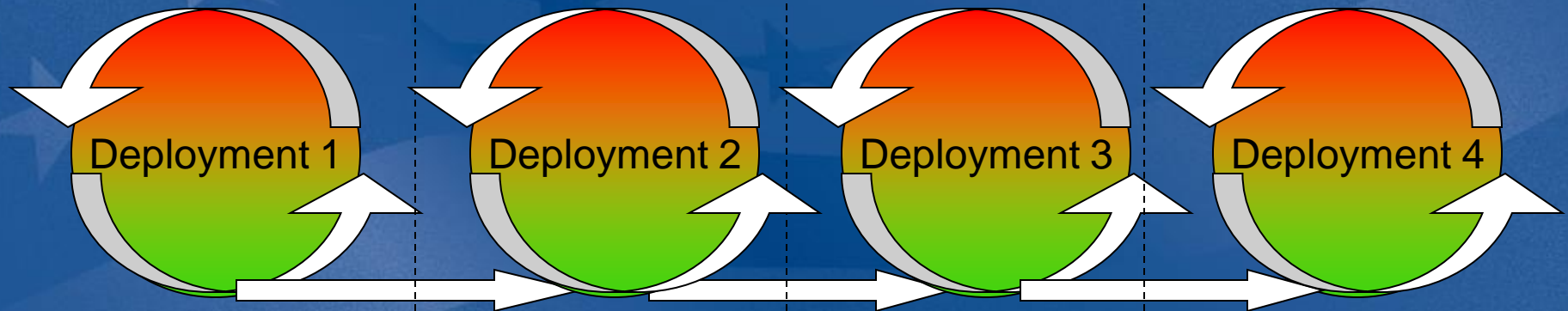


**Navy Bureau of
Medicine & Surgery
(BUMED)**



**MCB Camp Pendleton, California
MCAGCC Twentynine Palms, California
MCB Camp Lejeune, North Carolina
MCB Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii
MCB Okinawa, Japan
MCB Quantico, Virginia
USMC Wounded Warrior Regiment
Naval CBC Gulfport, Mississippi
Naval Base Ventura County, California
Naval Medical Center San Diego, California
Naval Station Norfolk, Virginia
NAB Coronado Island, California
NAB Little Creek / Dam Neck, Virginia
NAS Whidbey Island, Washington**

Deployment Spiral



Selected Conclusions and Directions

Benjamin Karney (2007)

- Combat exposure clearly increases risk for a host of problems including divorce.
- Individual and couple vulnerability may interact significantly with stress.
- The focus on dissolution may mask significant impacts on military families.
- Need to research what are the qualities of a relationship that contribute to resilience?



Hypothesized Sources of Resilience in Couples

- Knowledge
- Shared Beliefs
- Structure and Flexibility
- Communication
- Core Relational Skills
 - Emotional Regulation
 - Goal Setting
 - Problem Solving

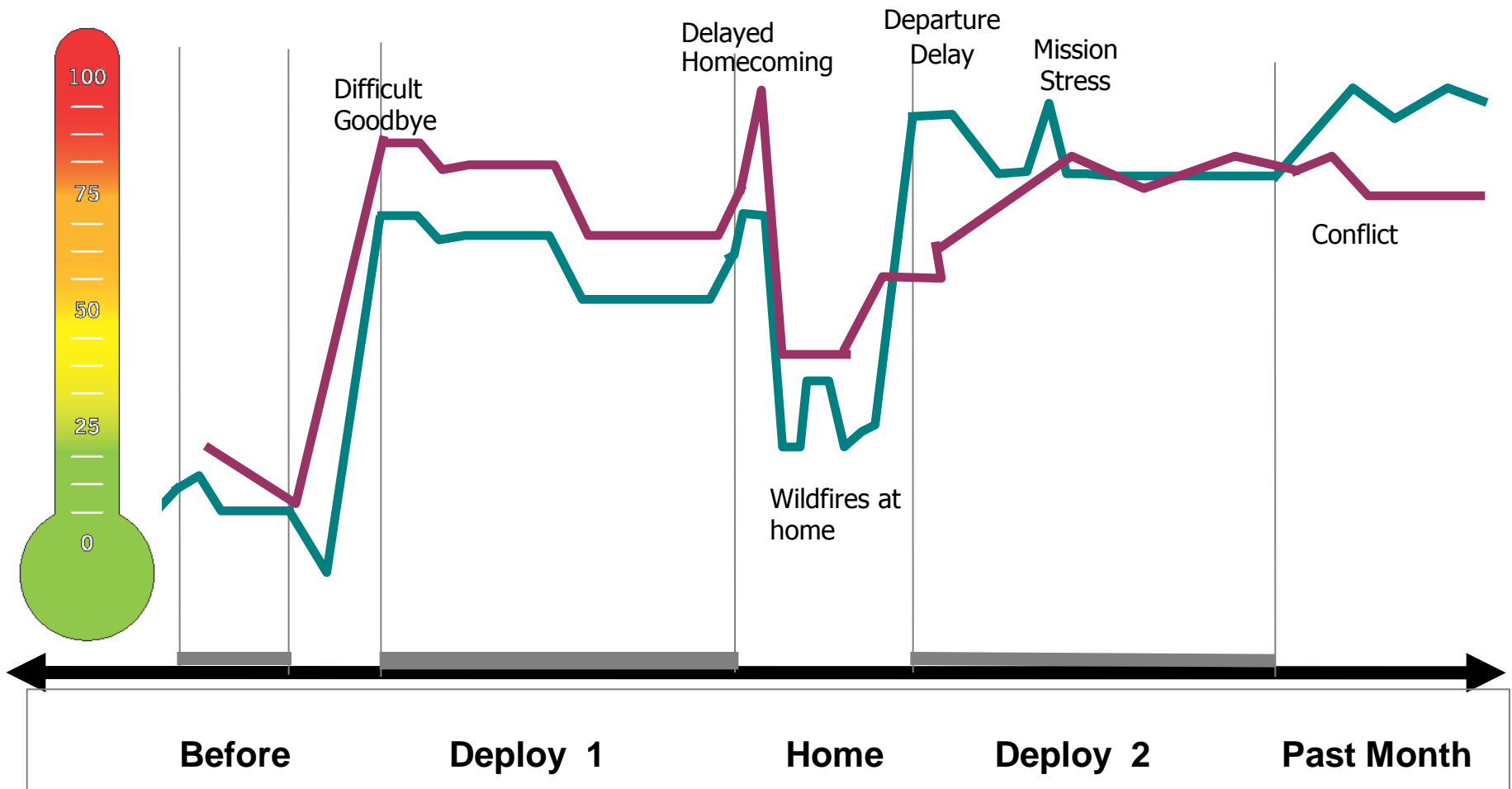


FOCUS Resiliency Training Components

- Trauma-informed education on impact of deployment and combat / operational stress.
- Marital resilience skills
 - Goal setting
 - Communication
 - Emotional regulation
 - Problem solving
- Narrative timeline activity
 - Appreciate differences
 - Develop a shared narrative and mission
- Activities to build coping, cohesion, and support



Spousal Timelines



Sharing the Narratives: Enhancing Marital Resiliency

- Make meaning out of adversity
- Normalize distress
- Clarify confusion and misunderstandings
- Promote perspective taking
- Enhance shared understanding
- Support expression of individual experiences
- Increase positive interactions
- Encourage family-level problem solving and goal setting



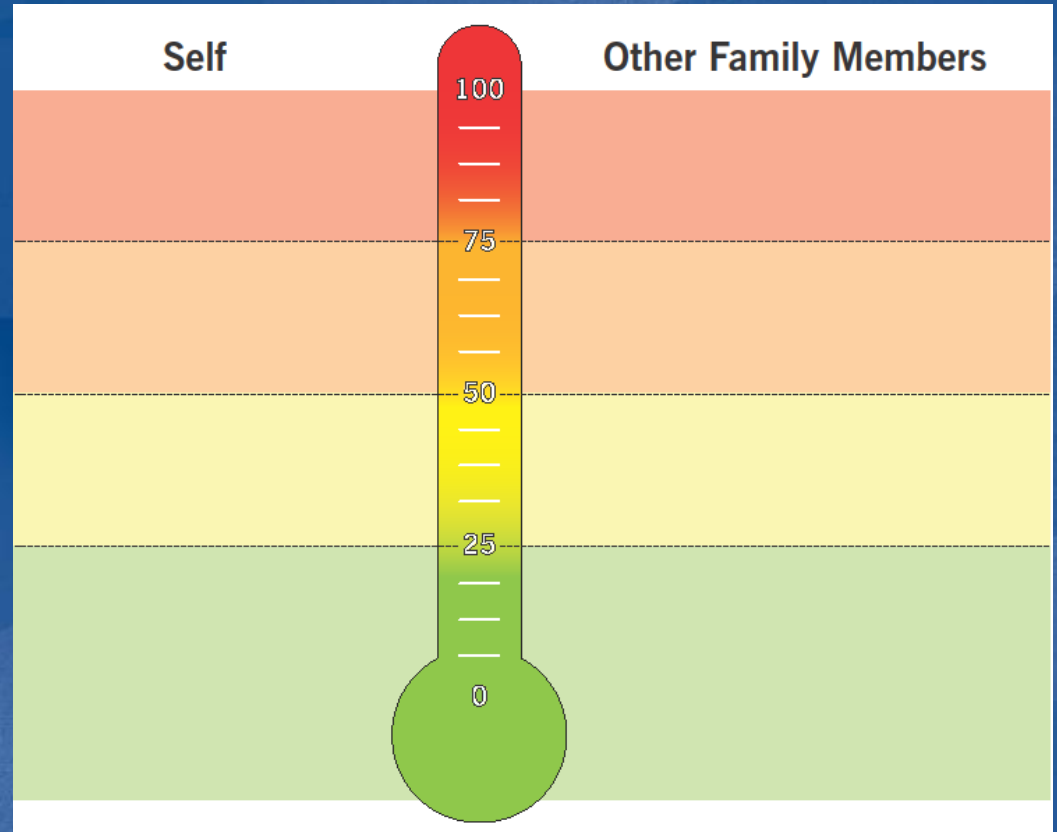
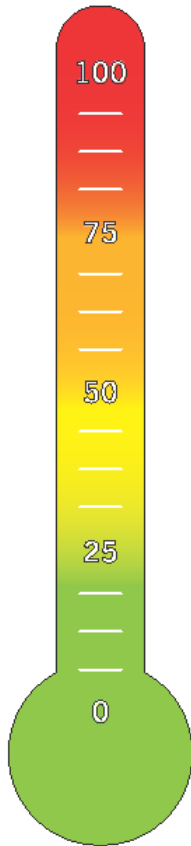
FOCUS Skill Building for Couples

- Emotional Regulation
- Goal Setting
- Problem Solving
- Communication Skills
- Managing Deployment Stress/Combat Stress Reminders



Emotional Regulation Skills

Feeling Thermometer



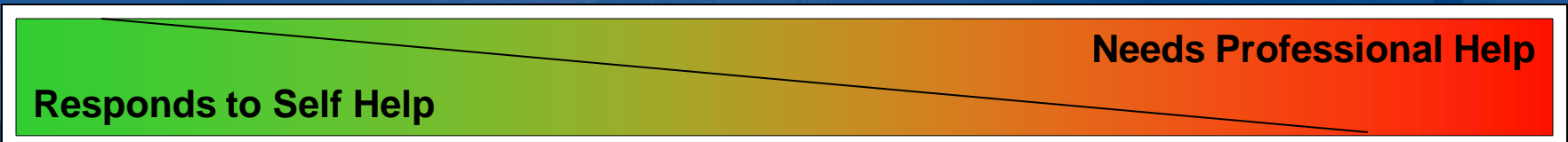


Common Stress Symptoms for Couples

STRESS CONTINUUM



READY	REACTING	INJURED	ILL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Confident and competent •Getting the job done •In control of emotions •Sense of humor •Sleeping enough •Eating well •Working out, staying fit •Playing well •Active socially •Coping well •Functioning well in school, at work and home •Relating well with Marine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Anxious, irritable, short tempered •Fighting, tantrums, opposition •Unusual sadness or crying •Trouble sleeping •Aches and pains •Eating too much or too little •Loss of interest •Keeping to self, not socializing •Negative, pessimistic •Loss of confidence •Developmental regression •Problems with school or work performance •Communication breakdown 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Persistent sadness or irritability •Can't fall or stay asleep •Persistent loss of appetite •Social avoidance or isolation •Inability to enjoy activities •Severe misbehavior •Persistent aches and pains •Severe deterioration of school or work performance •Misuse of alcohol or drugs, or other addictive behavior •Other significant symptoms of depression, anxiety, or misconduct 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Stress injury symptoms that persist •Symptoms that get <u>worse</u> over time instead of better •Symptoms that get better for awhile but then come back worse •Suicidal or homicidal behavior



Goal Setting Skills

Family Goal Worksheet

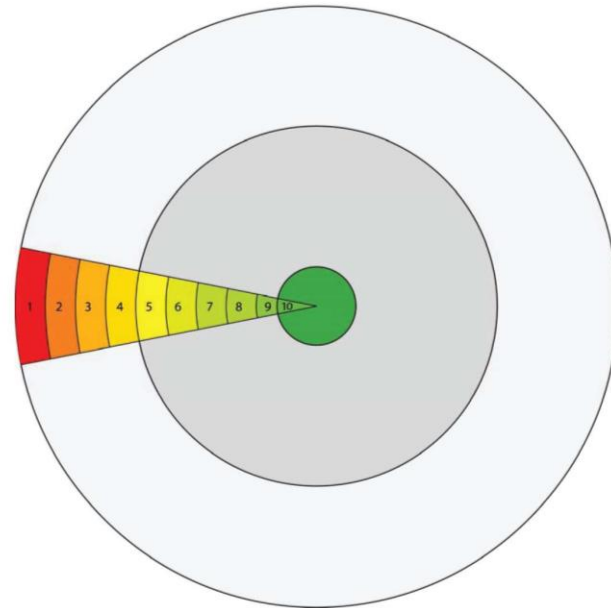
Tracking Our Progress

Family Goal: _____

CURRENT RATING	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4	WEEK 5	WEEK 6	WEEK 7	WEEK 8
10							
9							
8							
7							
6							
5							
4							
3							
2							
1							

Family Target Worksheet

Family Goal: _____



Problem Solving Skills

Problem Solving is a **SNAP!**

STEP 1: **S**tate the problem

STEP 2: **N**ame the Goal

STEP 3: **A**ll possible solutions

STEP 4: **P**ick the best one and try it out



Communication Skills

- Active Listening
- Accurate Support
- De-escalation strategies
- Assertive communication



FOCUS

Families OverComing Under Stress

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