

# Coping Strategies, Training and Personal Supports Utilized to Prevent Compassion Fatigue

CDR Bradley Thom, CHC, USN  
RPC Parrish Walker, USN



# Domain Ministry

**The Fleet**  
USFF  
CPF

**MPT&E**

**BUMED**

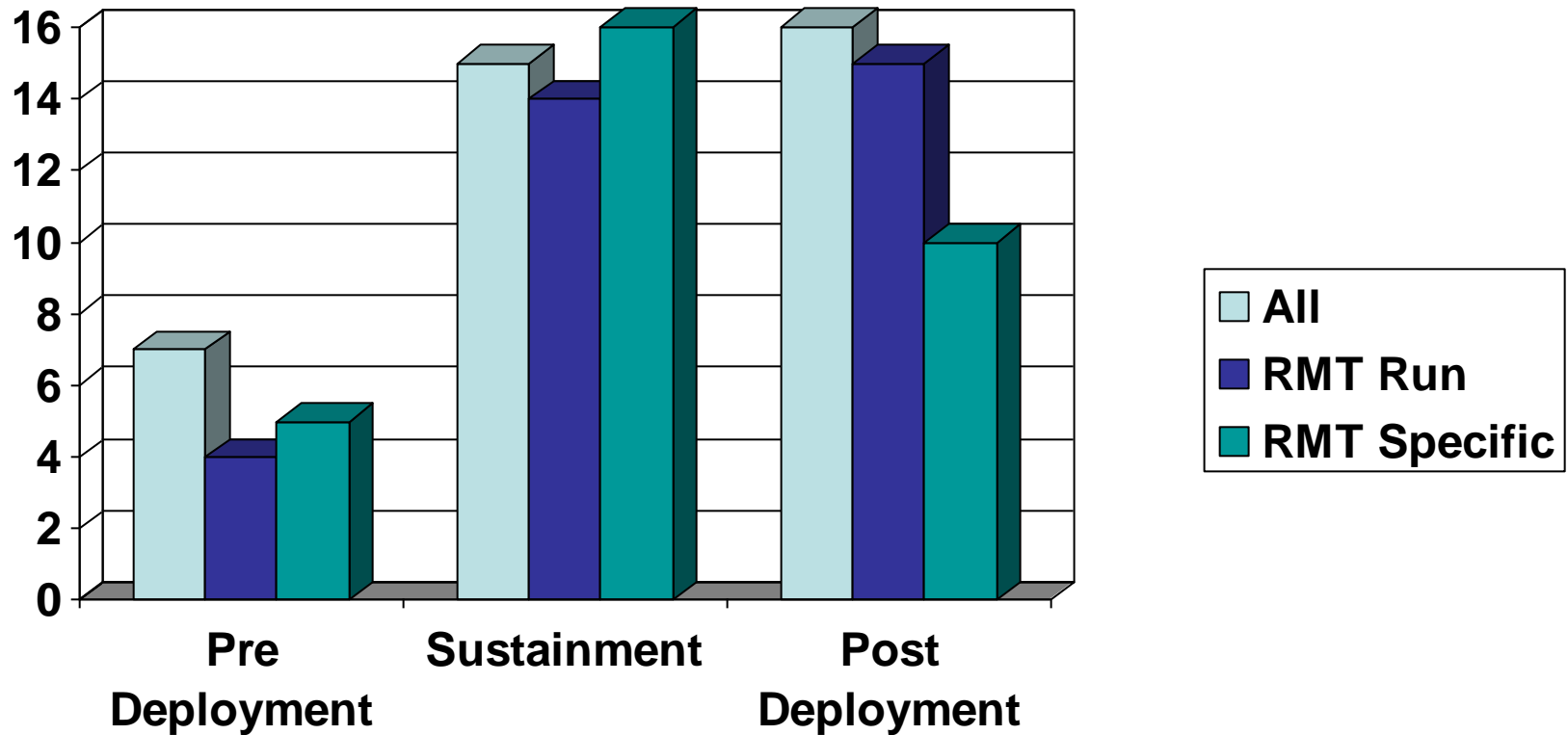
**CNIC**

**USCG**

**USMC**  
MFC  
MFP

**Chaplains and Religious Program Specialists  
Religious Ministry Team (RMT)**

# Various Programs Being Offered



# RMT Pre-Deployment Programs

- Continuum Model. COSC focused.
- Informal breakfast for all deploying Chaplains, RPs and their families.
- Various civilian organizations have provided fully funded retreats for Chaplains, RPs and their spouses.
- Chaplains and RP's who are deploying as IA's attend three weeks of training at FT Jackson/NIACT.
- RMT's are administratively processed through NMPS (Navy Mobilization Processing Site) for at least a week.



# RMT Sustainment Programs

- "Chaplain Self-Care While Caring for Others: The Art of Finishing Well": Professional Development Workshop.
- Compassion Fatigue Class.
- Monthly training/resource identification and mutual support sessions with area RMT's and CHC senior leadership.
- 3rd MARDIV holds monthly Care for Caregivers discussion sessions for all RMTs members, and interviews all combat returning RMT members.
- Individual Augmentees are contacted throughout their deployment for ongoing pastoral care.
- "Daily Soul Check" over coffee.



# RMT Post-Deployment Programs

- Chaplains Religious Enrichment Development Operation (CREDO) retreats for both single and married members
- Various civilian organizations have provided fully funded retreats for Chaplains, RPs and their spouses.
- Overnight decompression retreat for RMTs who had just returned from OIF II.
- After Action Reports.
- Post-deployment meal and prayer.
- At some bases, upon return each Individual Augmentee is provided follow-on pastoral care via CPE-trained chaplain.
- RMT's are administratively processed through NMPS (Navy Mobilization Processing Site) for at least a week.



# Additional RMT Support

- Denominational
- Military One Source
- Fleet and Family Support Center
- Marine Corps Counseling Services
- Numerous Civilian Organizations



# Summary

- Great initiative across the domains
- There's a variety of programs offered
- Not many standardized programs
- We're not using all available programs





# The Way Ahead

## Personal Perspective

- Maintain spiritual practices
- Encourage participation in a retreat experience or counseling with spouse
- Regular exercise
- Proper diet
- Proper sleep
- Use your leave!



# The Way Ahead

## Institutional Perspective

- Standardize decompression retreats for RMTs
- Standardize Submission of After Action Reports, include IAs and RC
- Participate in accountability groups
- Strengthen mentoring relationships
- Maintain awareness of potential for 'compassion fatigue' both in and out of theater



# For Further Conversation...

- Chaplain Bradley Thom  
[bradley.thom@navy.mil](mailto:bradley.thom@navy.mil)
- RPC Parrish Walker  
[parrish.walker@usmc.mil](mailto:parrish.walker@usmc.mil)

