

Valuing the Strengths and Addressing the Challenges of Military-Affiliated Students

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Executive Director of the Center for Deployment Psychology



USU

Uniformed Services University

CDP

Center for Deployment Psychology

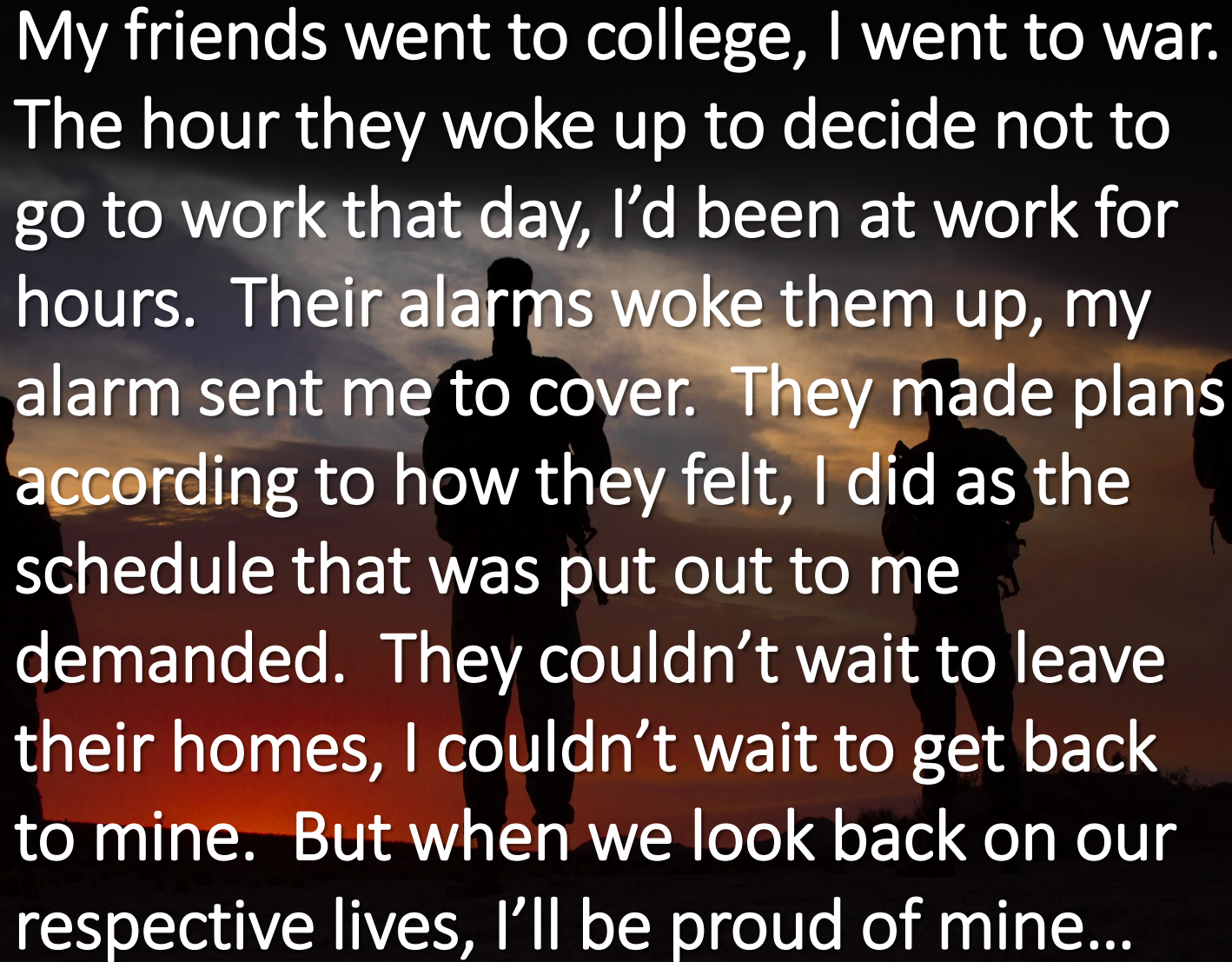
Disclaimer

The views expressed are those of the presenter and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, the Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government.

This presentation contains video clips and photographs that some people may find emotionally upsetting. Please feel free to leave during these portions of the presentation or to talk to staff after the presentation.

Veterans, Service Members, & Military-Connected Students on Campus:

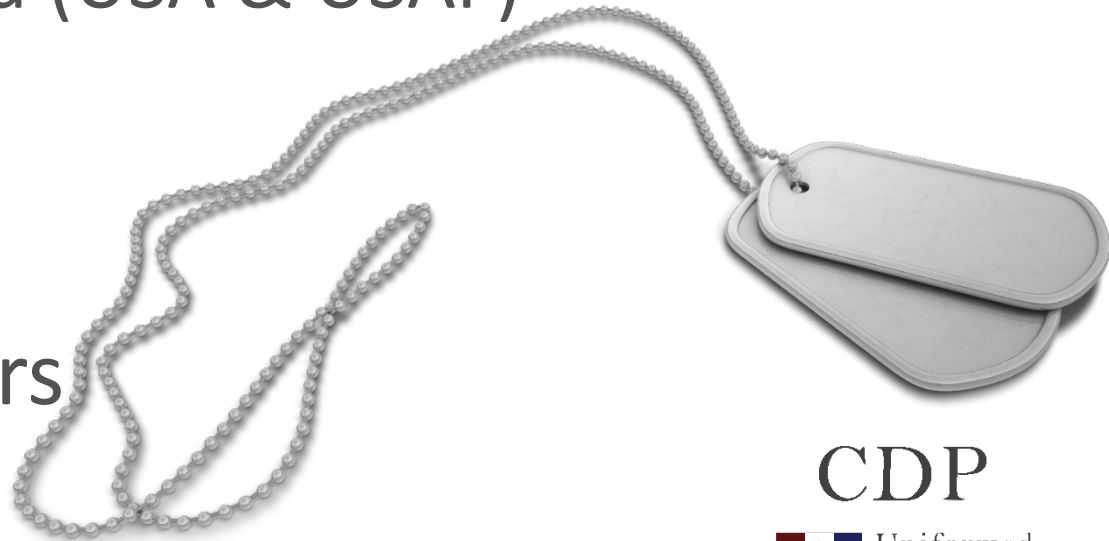
Culture and Experience

The background of the image shows four soldiers in silhouette, standing on a dark ridge or hill. They are facing away from the camera, looking out over a vast landscape under a dramatic, low-angle sunset sky. The sky transitions from a deep orange near the horizon to a darker, cloudy blue at the top. The soldiers are wearing full combat gear, including helmets and backpacks. The overall mood is contemplative and somber.

My friends went to college, I went to war. The hour they woke up to decide not to go to work that day, I'd been at work for hours. Their alarms woke them up, my alarm sent me to cover. They made plans according to how they felt, I did as the schedule that was put out to me demanded. They couldn't wait to leave their homes, I couldn't wait to get back to mine. But when we look back on our respective lives, I'll be proud of mine...

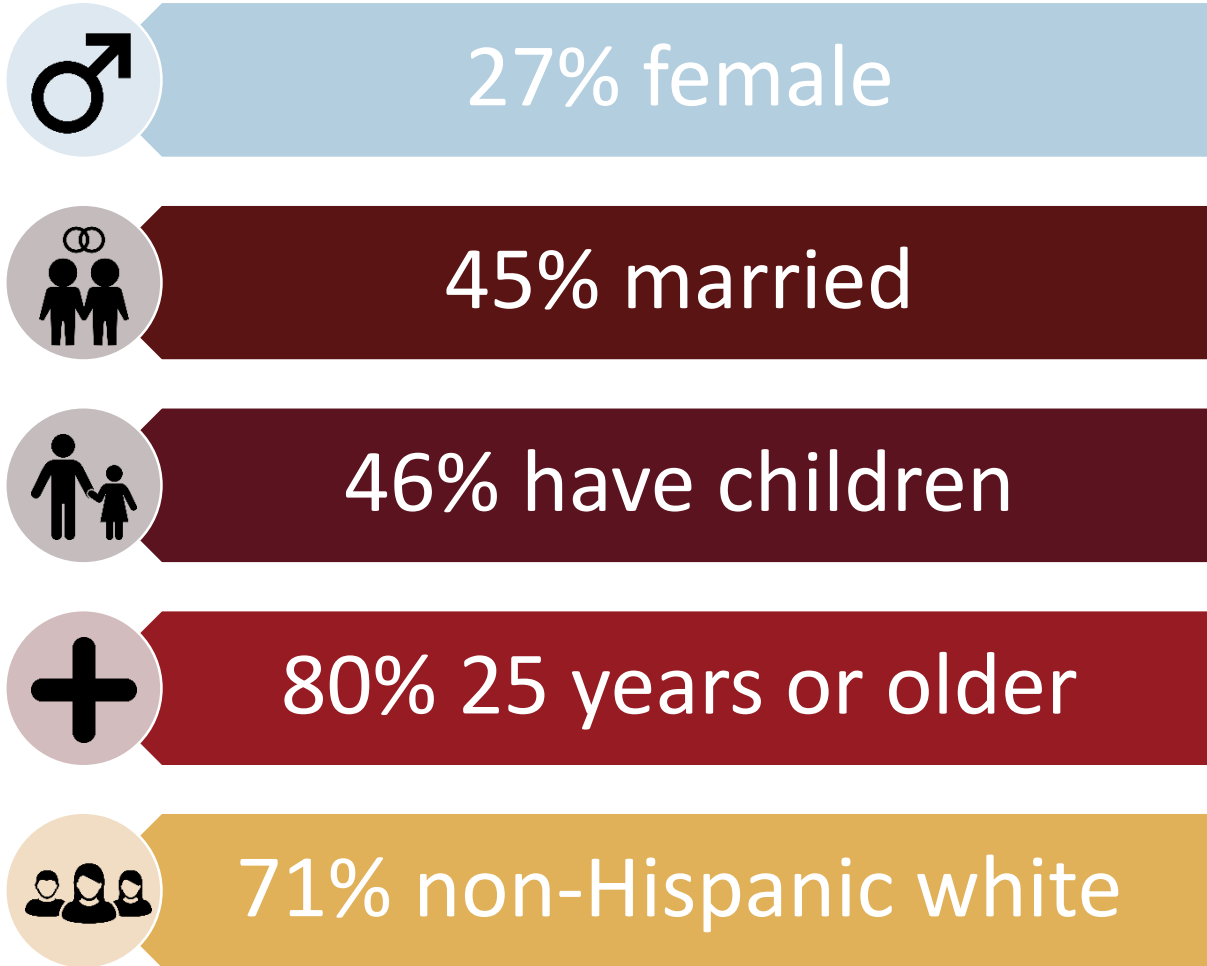
Military-Connected Students

- ROTC
- Active Duty (AD)
- Reserve Component (RC)
 - National Guard (USA & USAF)
 - Reserves
- Veterans
- Family Members



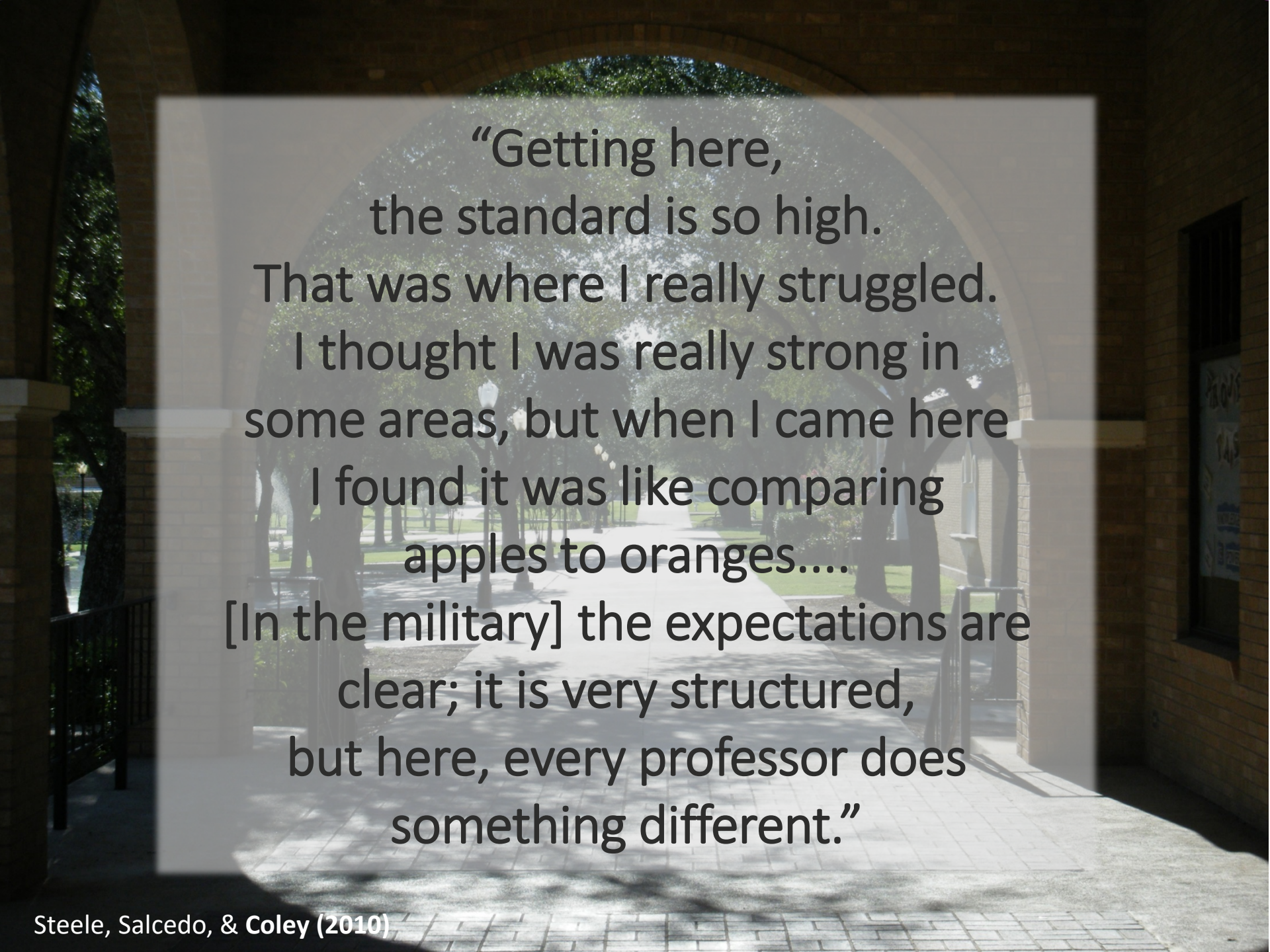
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Student Veterans



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A photograph of a university walkway seen through an archway, with text overlaid. The walkway is paved with light-colored bricks and is lined with trees and a brick building. The text is centered and reads: "Getting here, the standard is so high. That was where I really struggled. I thought I was really strong in some areas, but when I came here I found it was like comparing apples to oranges.... [In the military] the expectations are clear; it is very structured, but here, every professor does something different."

“Getting here,
the standard is so high.
That was where I really struggled.
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some areas, but when I came here
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[In the military] the expectations are
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something different.”

Student Veterans and Service Members on Campus



Photo by RForster / permissions granted

Administrative

Social

Visibility and Identity



Stigma/Barriers

Financial

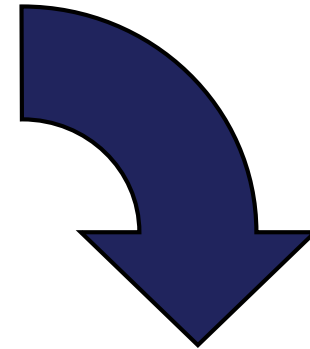
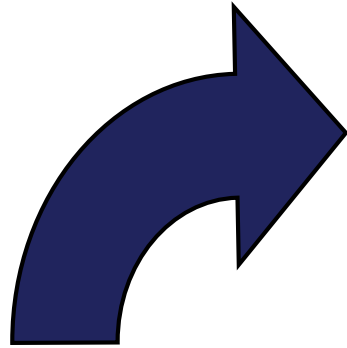


DEPLOYMENT CYCLE

Pre-Deployment

Pre-deployment

Notification
Preparation
Training

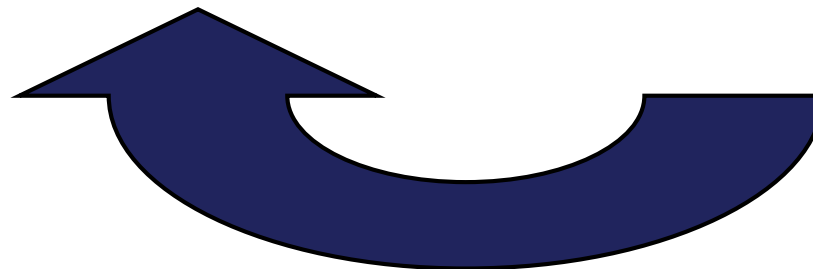


Return from Deployment

Reunion
Reintegration

Deployment

Departure
Sustainment
Combat and conflict



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Campus Concerns

- Notification
- Possible class withdrawal
- Coping with unit preparation vs. class responsibilities
- Loyalties to friends, family, and unit
- Romantic relationships
- Challenges “outside the norm”



Image By Monika M. Wahi [CC BY-SA 3.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>)], from Wikimedia Commons

- Power of attorney/will/financial plan
- Location of important papers
- Emergency contact procedures
- Child care arrangements

Practical Preparation



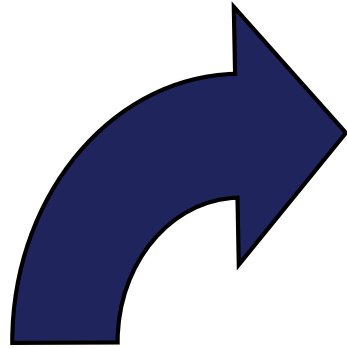
By Brandon Beach (<https://www.dvidshub.net/image/1741158>) [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons

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Deployment

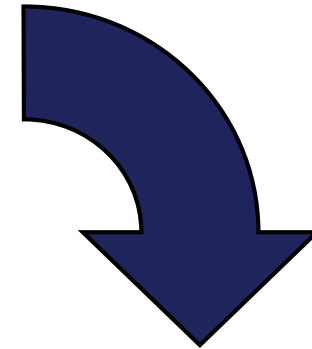
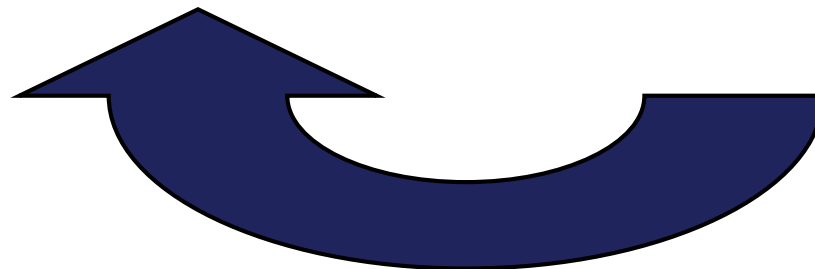
Pre-deployment

Notification
Preparation
Training



Return from Deployment

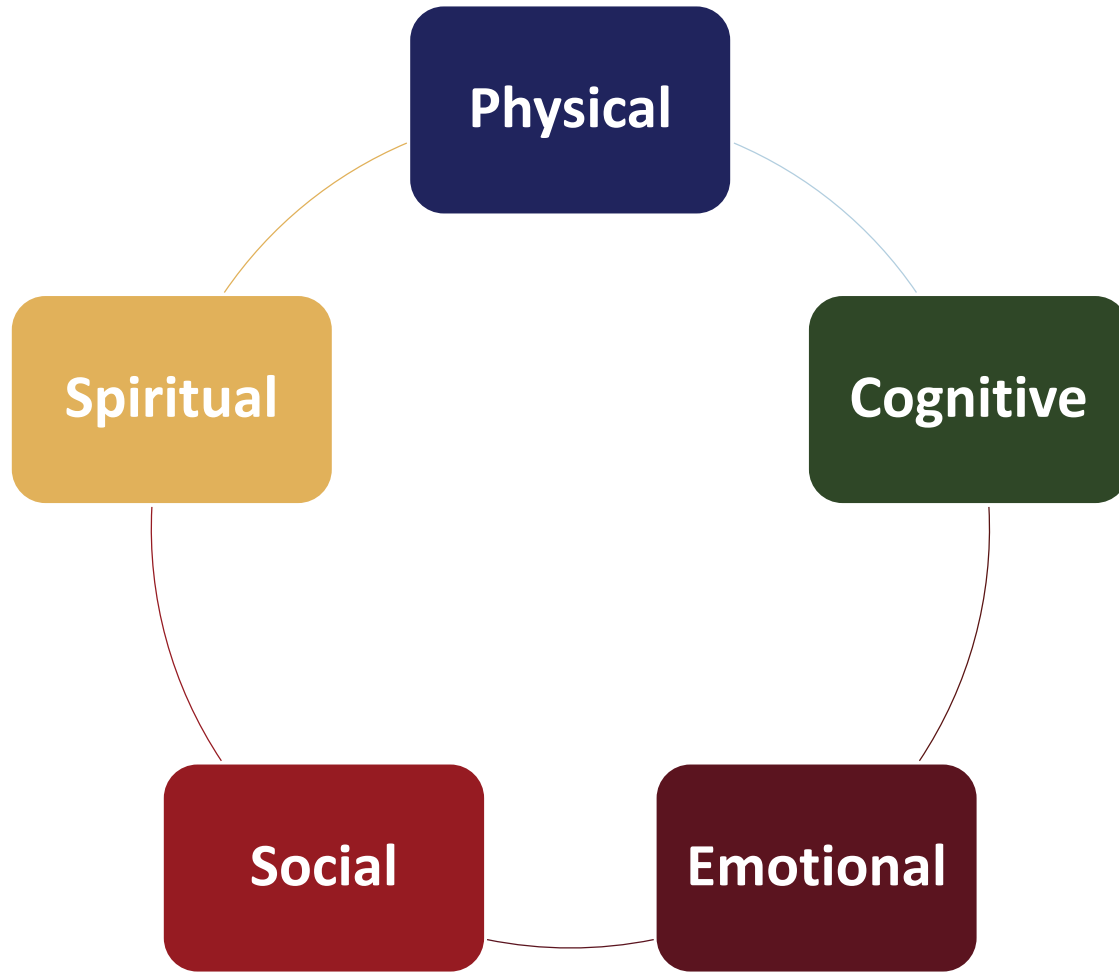
Reunion
Reintegration



Deployment

Departure
Sustainment
Combat and conflict

Deployment Challenges for Service Members



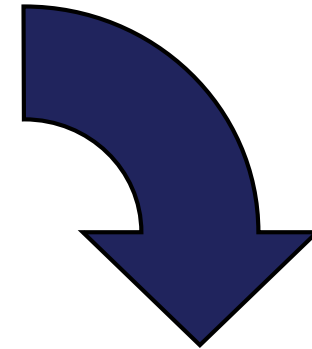
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Return from Deployment

Pre-deployment

Notification
Preparation
Training

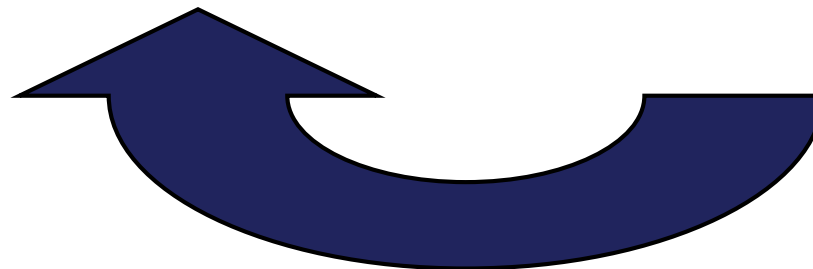


Deployment

Departure
Sustainment
Combat and conflict

Return from Deployment

Reunion
Reintegration



Reintegration

5 critical challenges Service members need to master

- Overcome alienation
- Move from simplicity to complexity
- Replace war with another form of high
- Move beyond war and find meaning in life
- Come to peace with self, God, and others

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Overcome Alienation

- Family
- Friends
- Coworkers
- Community



U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Eifren Lopez/Released

Simplicity to Complexity

- From self to others
- From survival to thriving
- From others thinking for you to responsibility
- From no choices to overwhelming choices



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Replace War with Another High

- War is an adventure
- Nothing in civilian life matches the intensity
- Speed kills: So do drugs, alcohol, etc...
- How do SMs learn to accept life as it is?



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Move Beyond War

- Find meaning and purpose outside of combat
- Change in identity



Photo by Tech. Sgt. E.



U.S. Army, www.army.mil/media

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Make Peace with Self, God, & Others


- SMs may have done, or not done things that violated their moral code
- SMs may have participated in the killing of other humans



U. S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. James Selesnick/released. <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/deed.en>

- SMs may ask, “Is there absolution or do I live with guilt, (real, false, survivors) forever?”

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Brave, Courageous,
Ambitious, Hero, Strong,
Loyal, Disciplined,
Honorable, Dedicated,
Dependable,
Compassionate,
Committed,
Professional, Resilient,
Trained, Steadfast,
Vigilant, Patriotic,
Capable

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Military Culture

Spectrum of Military Ethos

<u>Strength</u>	<u>Guiding Ideal</u>	<u>Vulnerability</u>
Placing the welfare of others above one's own welfare	Selflessness	Not seeking help for health problems because personal health is not a priority
Commitment to accomplishing missions and protecting comrades in arms	Loyalty	Survivor guilt and complicated bereavement after loss of friends
Toughness and ability to endure hardships without complaint	Stoicism	Not acknowledging significant symptoms, and suffering after returning home
Following an internal moral compass to choose "right" over "wrong"	Moral Code	Feeling frustrated and betrayed when others fail to follow a moral code
Becoming the best and most effective professional possible	Excellence	Feeling ashamed of (denial or minimization) imperfections

Culture Clash

Military Culture

- Collectivistic
- Interdependent/Self-Sacrifice
- Fulfill Role within Group
- Group Achievement
- Hierarchical Decision Making
- Maintain Tradition
- Pain: Increased Tolerance
- Emotional Suppression
- Unique and Separate
- Locus of Control: External
- Model: Strength Based
- Shame and Guilt due to Failing Group

Behavioral Health Culture

- Pursue Individual Goal/Interests
- Individual Achievement
- Self-Determination and Individual Choice
- Progress and Change
- Pain: Reduction
- Emotional Expression
- Common and Ordinary
- Locus of Control: Internal
- Model: Pathology
- Shame and Guilt due to Individual Failure

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Challenges on Campus

Overview of PTSD, Sleep, SUD, TBI, Pain, Depression, and Suicide

Social Stressors

- Some student SM/Veterans reported:
 - Feeling misunderstood by faculty members and civilian students
 - Desiring more camaraderie with other student Service members/Veterans
 - Needing support for mental health issues
- Upon return from combat deployment:
 - Difficulties maintaining and forming relationships with civilians
 - Exposure to combat → feelings of alienation on campus and increased PTS sx

Military Representation in Counseling Center Clientele

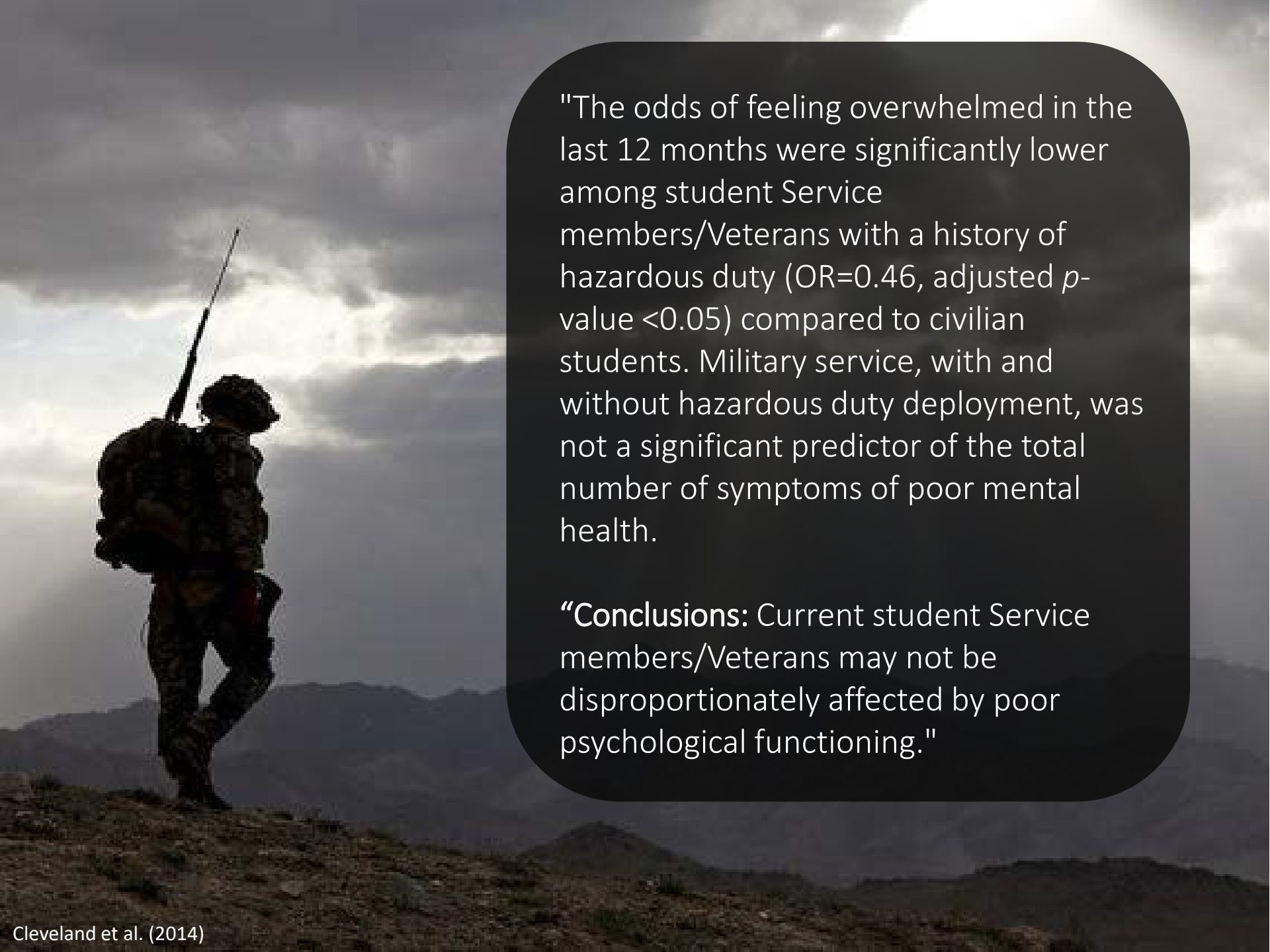
Have you ever served in any branch of the US military (AD, Veteran, NG, Reserves)?

	Overall (%) <i>n</i> =105,752	Female (%) <i>n</i> =67,472	Male (%) <i>n</i> =36,314	Transgender (%) <i>n</i> =604	Self-Identify (%) <i>n</i> =1,362
No	98.5	99.1	97.2	98.3	99.1
Yes	1.5	0.9	2.8	1.7	0.9

Did your military experience include any traumatic or highly stressful experiences which continue to bother you?

	Overall (%) <i>n</i> =1,397	Female (%) <i>n</i> =506	Male (%) <i>n</i> =871	Transgender (%) <i>n</i> =9	Self-Identify (%) <i>n</i> =11
No	66.9	73.3	63.6	44.4	54.5
Yes	33.1	26.7	36.4	55.6	45.5



A silhouette of a soldier standing on a hillside, looking out over a mountain range under a cloudy sky. The soldier is wearing a helmet and carrying a rifle and a large backpack. The background shows a vast landscape with rolling hills and mountains under a dramatic, overcast sky.

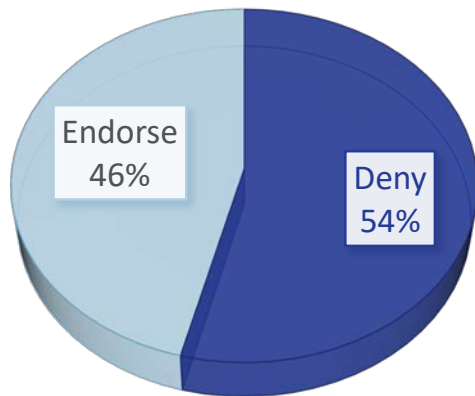
"The odds of feeling overwhelmed in the last 12 months were significantly lower among student Service members/Veterans with a history of hazardous duty (OR=0.46, adjusted p -value <0.05) compared to civilian students. Military service, with and without hazardous duty deployment, was not a significant predictor of the total number of symptoms of poor mental health.

"Conclusions: Current student Service members/Veterans may not be disproportionately affected by poor psychological functioning."

Student SMs/Vets Mental Health

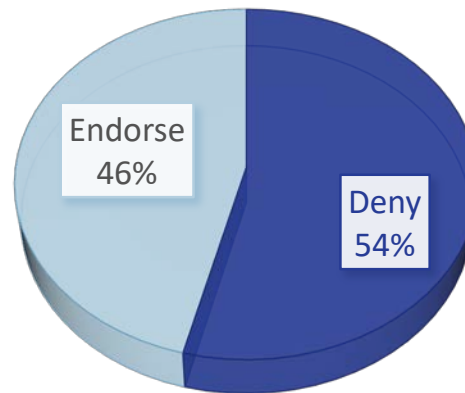
46%

*CURRENT POST-
TRAUMATIC STRESS
SYMPTOMS*



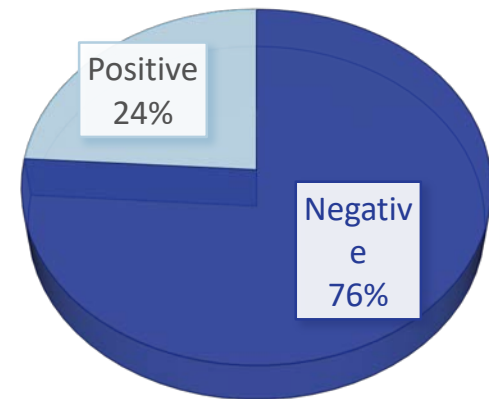
46%

*THOUGHTS OF SUICIDE
IN PAST YEAR*



24%

*SCREEN POSITIVE FOR
SEVERE DEPRESSION*



n=628

Student SMs/Vets Affiliated with
Student Veterans of America chapters

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Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder



DSM-5: Symptom Criteria for PTSD

Intrusion (B)

Intrusive, Distressing Recollections

Distressing Dreams

Dissociative Reactions (e.g. flashbacks)

Psychological Distress to Reminders

Marked Physiological Reactions to Reminders

1

Avoidance (C)

Avoidance of Internal Reminders (memories, thoughts, feelings)

Avoidance of External Reminders (people, places, conversations, activities, objects, situations)

1

Negative Alterations Cognitions/Mood (D)

Traumatic Amnesia

Persistent Negative Beliefs and Expectations

Persistent Distorted Blame

Persistent Negative Emotional State

Diminished Interest

Detachment or Estrangement

Persistent Inability to Have Positive Emotions

2

Arousal (E)

Irritable Behavior and Angry Outbursts

Reckless or Self-Destructive Behavior

Hypervigilance

Exaggerated Startle Response

Concentration Difficulties

Sleep Difficulties

2



Common Interpretive Biases

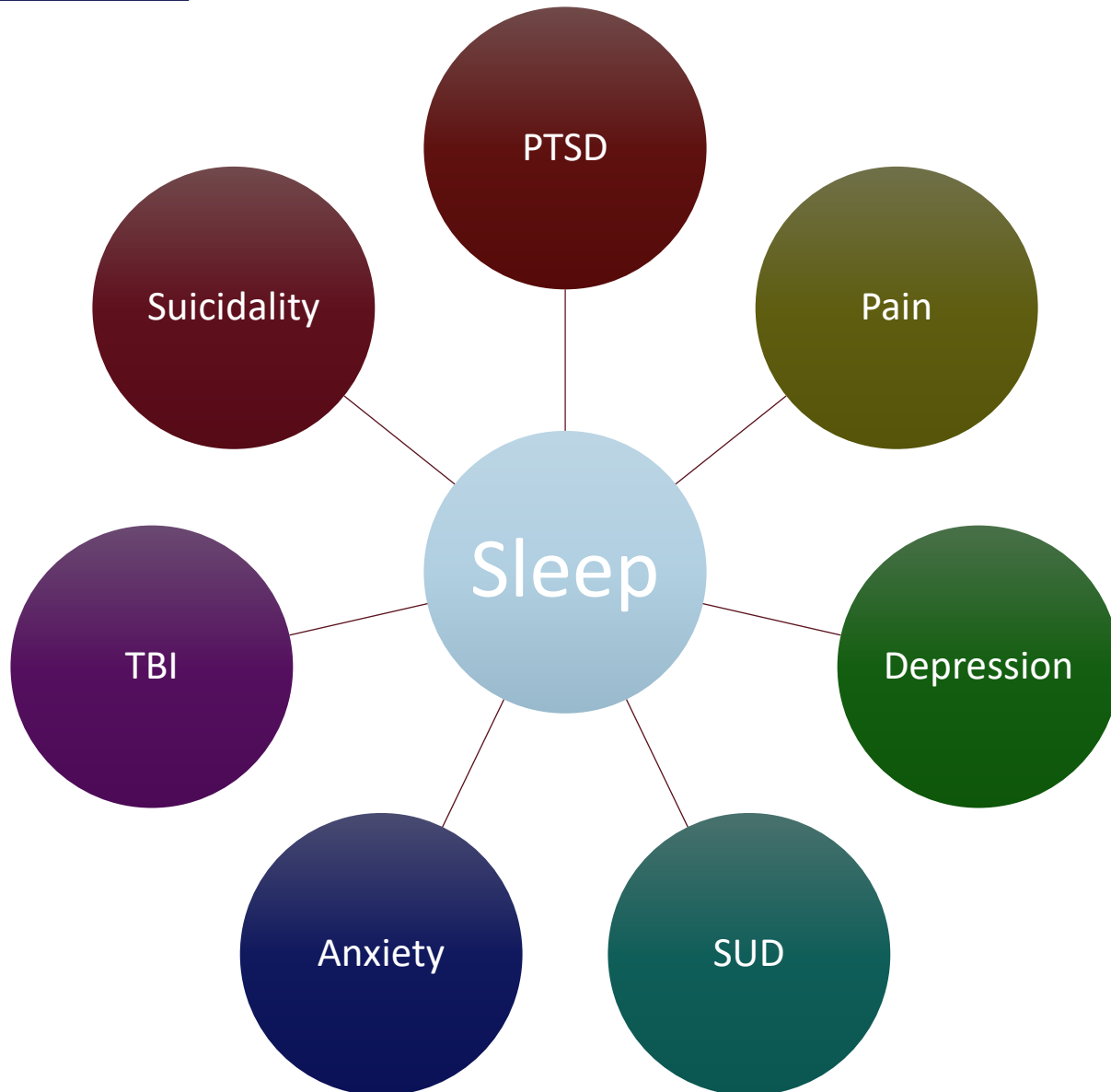
GOING CRAZY
OTHER PEOPLE WOULD
GET OVER IT
NO ONE CAN BE TRUSTED
WHAT I DID IS
UNFORGIVEABLE
IT IS ALL
MY FAULT
MISTAKE
I CAN'T HANDLE THIS
I HAVE TO
CONTROL
EVERYTHING
THE WORLD IS
UNPREDICTABLY
DANGEROUS
NO PLACE
IS SAFE
DANGEROUS
I AM WEAK
BURDEN
INTOLERABLE
I AM SCREWED UP
LOSING CONTROL
VULNERABLE
I CAN'T COPE
SHOULDA
COULDA
WOULDA
DONE SOMETHING
EVERYONE
I LET DOWN
THREATS
CAN APPEAR AT
ANY MOMENT
DESTROYED
I AM INCOMPETENT
DISGRACED
PTSD SHOWS WEAKNESS



Sleep Problems



Why talk about sleep?



Sleep Disorders Common in the Military



WHY?

Common Sleep Disorders

The most common complaint of military members returning from deployment is about **sleep**

1. Obstructive Sleep Apnea
2. **Insomnia**
3. Circadian Rhythm Disorder
4. **Nightmare Disorder**



= 6x



24 – 54% OIF/OEF VETERANS



OSA = 7.6x
Insomnia = 6.3x

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University

Student Sleep Problems

- 50% experience daytime sleepiness
- 36 - 71% report < 7 hrs a night
- 43% > 30 min to fall asleep at least 1x/week
- 82% believe inadequate sleep impacts school performance
- Rank sleep problems second only to stress in factors that negatively impact academic performance
- 2.7 “all nighters” a month
- 62% met cut-off criteria for poor sleep



Becker et. Al, 2018; Orginska & Pokorski, 2006; Lund et al., 2010; Hershner, 2011; American College Health Association, 2011; Bachman & Bachman, 2006

Sleep Disorders in Students

- 37 % at risk for at least one sleep disorder or sleep-related problem
 - OSA: 4%
 - Insomnia: 14%
 - RLS or PLMD: 8%
 - Circadian Rhythm Sleep Disorder: 7%
 - Hypersomnia: 4%



Depression



Depression Prevalence: Veterans



11%

OF VETERANS AGED 65+ ARE DIAGNOSED WITH MDD (TWICE THE RATE OF ADULTS 65+ IN THE GENERAL POPULATION)

Lifetime 12-Month

	Lifetime	12-Month
Male Veterans	36.3%	7.5%
Female Veterans	46.5%	13.7%



Substance Use Disorders (SUD)



Health Risk Behaviors in OEF/OIF Student Veterans

+ Risk

- 1.8 times more likely to report smokeless tobacco use
- 1.3 times more likely to be current smokers
- 1.3 times more likely to report high-risk drinking
- 1.5 times more likely to report involvement in a physical fight

- Risk

- Greater intentions to quit TOB by graduation
- Strength training exercises
- Lower marijuana use
- Less likely to report more than 2 hours of screen time per day



Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)





DoD Numbers for Traumatic Brain Injury Worldwide – Totals

2000 - 2017 (Q1-Q3)

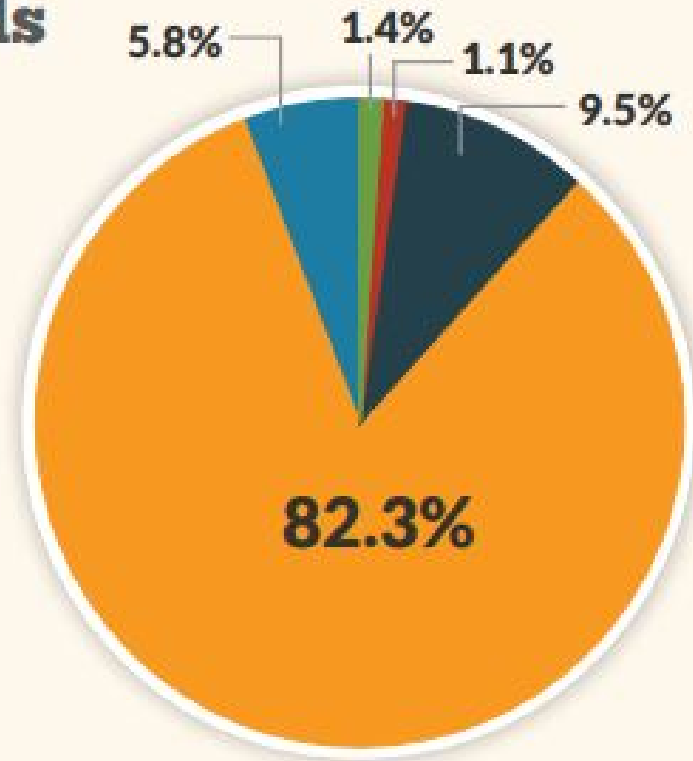
Penetrating	5,157
Severe	3,942
Moderate	35,674
Mild	308,853
Not Classifiable	21,604

Total - All Severities 375,230

Source: Defense Medical Surveillance System (DMSS), Theater Medical Data Store (TMDS) provided by the Armed Forces Health Surveillance Center (AFHSB)

Prepared by the Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center (DVBIC)

*Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.



2000-2017(Q1-Q3), as of November 14, 2017



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Common Changes Following Concussion

Executive Functioning	Other Changes in Thinking	Emotional, Behavioral, and Social
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Planning/goal setting- Organization- Flexibility- Problem Solving- Prioritizing- Decreased self-awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Learning and memory- Attention- Processing Speed- Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Depression- Sleep disturbance- Anxiety- Impulsivity- Irritability- Socially inappropriate behavior- Increased risk taking- Interpersonal conflicts



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Long Term Challenges Post TBI

- Vocational and/or school failure
- Family life/social relationships collapse
- Increased financial burden on families and social service systems
- Alcohol and drug abuse
- Chronic depression/anxiety



Suicide



Student Suicide Risk

Students on Campus

6.0% “Seriously considered suicide”

1.3% “Attempted suicide”

N = 30,147

Anonymous; Survey-based

Veterans on Campus

20% Have a plan

10.4% Thought about suicide “often” or “very often”

7.7% Previous suicide attempt

3.8% Suicide is either “likely” or “very likely”

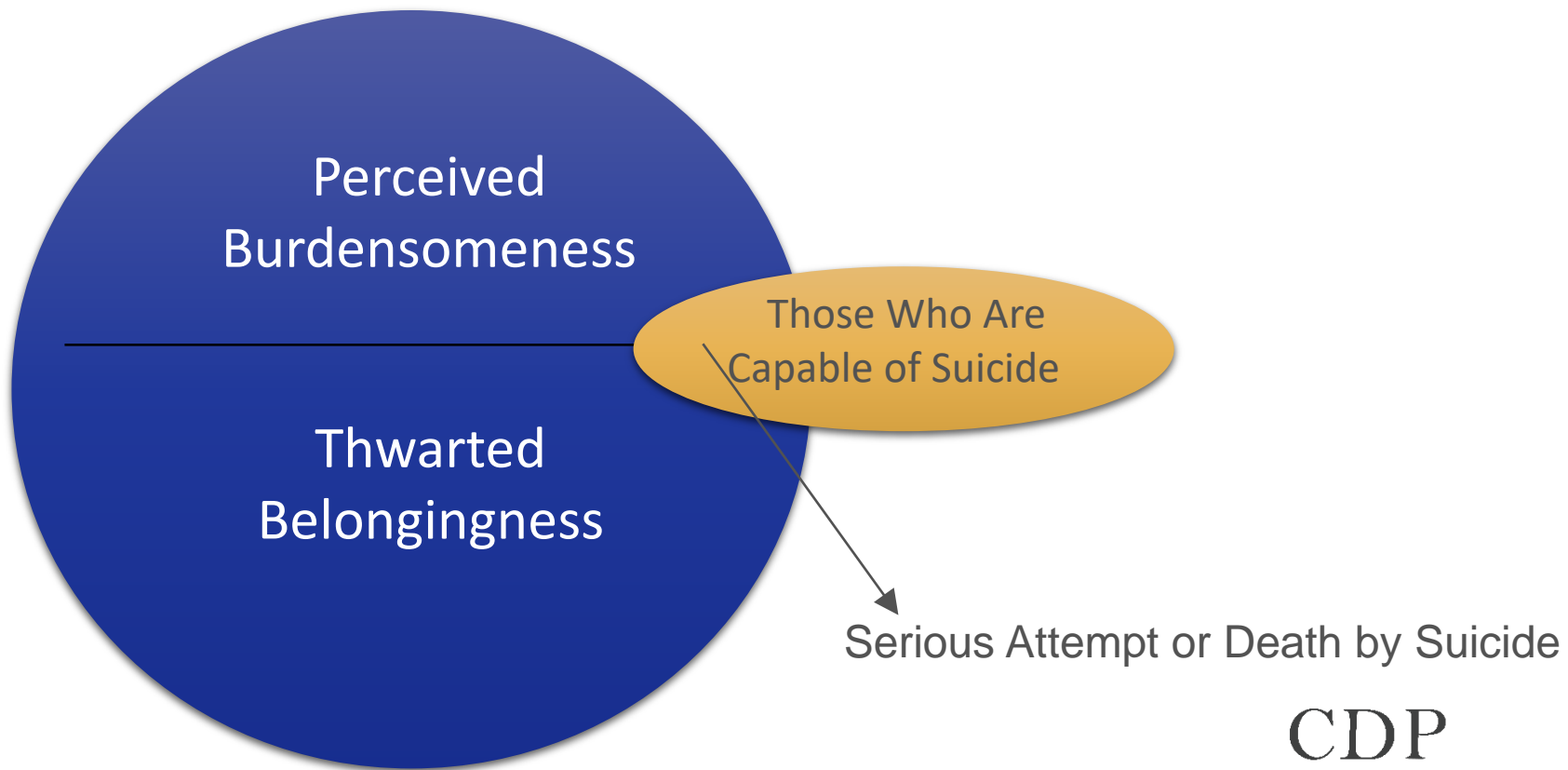
N = 628

Anonymous; Screening-based



Activated Suicide Model

Joiner's Model of Suicide (2005): Interpersonal-Psychological Theory



Military Suicide Risk Factors

- Relationship Problems
- Hopelessness/Worthlessness
- Alcohol Abuse/Dependence
- Feelings of Disgrace/Isolation
- Stressful Military Life Events
- Easy Access to Firearms
- Unexplained Mood Change/Depression
- Financial, Legal or Job Performance Problems
- Medical or Administrative Discharge Processing
- Previous Suicide Attempts **



Veteran Suicide Risk Factors

- Combat Exposure
- Posttraumatic Stress Disorder
- Psychiatric Disorder
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Poor Social Support
- Access to Lethal Means



Military and Veteran Suicide Protective Factors

- Social Support or Sense of Belonging
- Leadership Responsibilities
- Effective Coping and Problem Solving
- Unit Cohesion
- Access to Assistant Services
- Healthy Lifestyle Promotion
- Spiritual Support
- Policies/Culture that Encourage Help-Seeking



Additional Training Opportunities deploymentpsych.org



CDP PRESENTS
MONTHLY WEBINAR SERIES

A banner for 'Learn Now' featuring a computer mouse on a target graphic. The target has numbers 6, 7, 8, and 8 around a central red circle with the word 'LEARN' in white. The text 'Learn Now' is in a bold, sans-serif font, with 'Now' in yellow and 'Learn' in black. Below it, 'Knowledge • Resources • Support' is written in a smaller font. A lightbulb icon is to the right of 'Now'. At the bottom, it says 'Check out the Learn Now page!' and 'Enhance your skills immediately through Webinars, eLearning courses, and other resources! »'.

Learn Now
Knowledge • Resources • Support

Check out the **Learn Now** page!

Enhance your skills immediately through Webinars, eLearning courses, and other resources! »

A banner titled 'MILITARY CULTURE' with the subtitle 'Core Competencies for Healthcare Professionals'. The background image shows soldiers in camouflage gear in the foreground and a military helicopter in flight against a hazy sky in the background.

MILITARY CULTURE
Core Competencies for Healthcare Professionals



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deploymentpsych.org

- Descriptions and schedules of upcoming training events
- Blog updated daily with a range of relevant content
- Articles by subject matter experts related to deployment psychology, including PTSD, mTBI, depression, and insomnia
- Other resources and information for behavioral health providers
- Links to CDP's Facebook page and Twitter feed

The screenshot shows the homepage of deploymentpsych.org. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for 'BLOG', 'SUPPORT', 'FAQ', 'NEWSROOM', and 'CONTACT US', along with social media icons for Facebook, Google+, LinkedIn, and YouTube. A 'SIGN IN / REGISTER' button is also present. The main header features the logos for 'USU' (Uniformed Services University) and 'CDP' (Center for Deployment Psychology), with a search bar for 'Search CDP'. Below the header is a secondary navigation bar with links for 'LEARN NOW', 'TRAINING', 'DISORDERS', 'TREATMENTS', 'RESOURCES', 'MILITARY CULTURE', and 'ABOUT CDP'. The main content area is dominated by a large banner with the text 'Learn Now Knowledge • Resources • Support' and a graphic of a computer mouse on a target. Below the banner is a call to action: 'Check out the Learn Now page! Enhance your skills immediately through Webinars, eLearning courses, and other resources!'. Underneath are four featured sections: 'Find Training', 'PTSD', 'Request/Host Training', and 'Join CDP's Site'. The 'Our Training Events' section lists four upcoming events with their dates, locations, and types. The 'Latest News' section is partially visible at the bottom.

Event	Date	Type	Details
Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT) - Wright-Patterson AFB - 7-8 Nov. 2018	NOV 7	Training	Details >
CDP Presents: Building Military Family Resilience Online via Zoom, 9 Nov. 2018	NOV 9	Webinar	Details >
Online Serving Student Veterans on Campus via Zoom, 13 November 2018	NOV 13	Webinar	Details >
Online Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT) Training via Second Life, 27-28 November 2018	NOV 27	Second Life	Details >

Other Learning Opportunities

The screenshot displays the CDP website's 'Webinars and Online Courses' page. The header includes navigation links like 'LEARN NOW', 'TRAINING', 'DISORDERS', 'TREATMENTS', 'RESOURCES', 'MILITARY CULTURE', and 'ABOUT CDP'. The main content is divided into two sections: 'Upcoming Webinars' and 'Archived Recordings'. The 'Upcoming Webinars' section lists three events with 'REGISTER NOW' buttons. The 'Archived Recordings' section lists three recordings with 'VIEW ONLY' and 'TAKE FOR CE CREDIT' buttons. A sidebar on the right provides additional navigation options for webinars and eCourses.

Upcoming Webinars	Register
CDP Presents: Building Military Family Resilience - 9 November 2018	REGISTER NOW
CDP Presents: Working with LGBT Service Members and Veterans: An Overview - 12 December 2018	REGISTER NOW
CDP Presents: Case Conceptualization - 15 January 2019	REGISTRATION COMING SOON

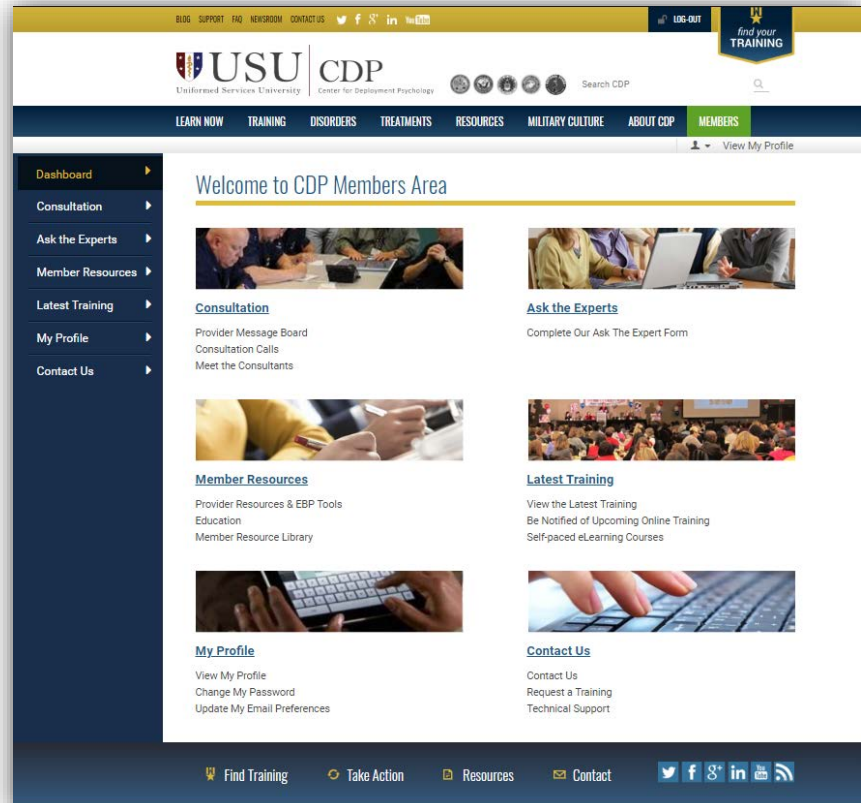
Archived Recordings	View the Course
CDP Presents: Comparing and Contrasting Conceptualization and Treatment of PTSD from the Perspectives of Social Cognitive and Emotional Processing Theories Duration: 90 minutes Course Description	VIEW ONLY
CDP Presents: Comparing and Contrasting Conceptualization and Treatment of PTSD from the Perspectives of Social Cognitive and Emotional Processing Theories Duration: 88 minutes Course Description	TAKE FOR CE CREDIT VIEW ONLY
CDP Presents: Suicide Prevention for Veterans with Other Than Honorable Discharges Duration: 88 minutes Course Description	TAKE FOR CE CREDIT VIEW ONLY

- CDP Presents - Monthly Webinar Series
 - Live and Archived
 - CEs free for live, small fee for on-demand CEs
 - View archived webinars free for no CEs
- On Demand Courses
 - Military Culture
 - Deployment Cycle
 - Intro to PE and CPT

Provider Support

CDP's "Provider Portal" is exclusively for individuals trained by CDP in evidence-based psychotherapies (e.g., CPT, PE, and CBT-I)

- Consultation message boards
- Hosted consultation calls
- Printable fact sheets, manuals, handouts, and other materials
- FAQs and 1:1 interaction with answers from SMEs
- Videos, webinars, and other multimedia training aids



Participants in CDP's evidence-based training will automatically receive an email instructing them how to activate their user name and access the "Provider Portal" section at Deploymentpsych.org.

Center for Deployment Psychology

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Twitter: @DeploymentPsych