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SPIRITUAL FITNESS CAN STRENGTHEN YOUR RESILIENCE

Session one is introduced by a class discussion on resilience. You then will share in small groups a challenging experience in which you were successfully resilient. From this experience, you will identify the major domains of life and how they contributed to your resilience. Four basic principles that are foundational to this course are defined and discussed. The steps toward spiritual fitness are defined and then the primary tasks of each of the four domains of life are explained. This session concludes with an activity to define your spiritual source.

Session Outline

INTRODUCTION: three preliminary points about the R&R course

TOPIC: what it means to be resilient

ACTIVITY: sharing a challenging experience

TOPIC: major domains of life

TOPIC: basic principles for this course

TOPIC: steps toward spiritual fitness

TOPIC: primary tasks of the domains of life

ACTIVITY: identifying your spiritual source



What is resilience?

defining resilience

What does it mean to be resilient?

Most of us have lived through an experience where we faced some hardship. Write down one experience you encountered where—looking back—you were resilient. What helped you to be resilient during and/or after that experience? If you were to attribute your resiliency to some source (e.g. personal characteristic, perspective, faith, others), what contributed to making you resilient?

Sources of resilience



major domains of life

The qualities that are associated with greater resiliency are associated with the skills that you use to manage four fundamental domains of life. It is these skills that can be learned and practiced to increase your own resiliency. In other words, your resiliency will be determined by the extent that you have mastered the skills of managing these domains of life. **Please list the four major domains of life.**

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____



Principles of the course

principles of the course

There are four basic principles to this course. Please list and describe these four principles.

1 _____

2 _____

- *One's purpose, core values, beliefs, identity, and life vision. These elements, which define the essence of a person, enable one to build inner strength, make meaning of experiences, behave ethically, persevere through challenges, and be resilient when faced with adversity. An individual's spirituality draws upon personal, philosophical, psychological, and/or religious teachings, and forms the basis of their character. From Comprehensive Soldier Fitness 2.*
- *Strengthening a set of beliefs, principles or values that sustain an individual's sense of well-being and purpose. Spiritual fitness is about having a sense of purpose and meaning in your life. It's essential to an individual's resiliency as esprit de corps is vital to a unit's mission accomplishment. It includes but is not limited to worldviews, religious faith, sense of purpose, sense of connectedness, values, ethics and morals. From Comprehensive Airman Fitness.*
- *Spirituality is the continuous journey people take to discover and develop their human spirit. It is the process of searching for the sacred in one's life; discovering who one is; finding meaning and purpose; establishing interconnectedness with others, and if one so believes, with the divine; and charting a path to create a life worth living.*



principles of the course

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Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism, who should labor to subvert these great pillars of human happiness, these firmest props of the duties of men and citizens. George Washington (Farewell Address 1796)

Harold Koenig reviewed 724 quantitative research studies examining the relation between religion and mental health in five areas: depression, suicide, anxiety, psychotic disorders, and substance abuse. The majority (476) of these studies reported statistically significant positive associations between practicing a religion and the ability to cope. He states, "Religious beliefs provide a sense of meaning and purpose during difficult life circumstances that assist with psychological integration; they usually promote a positive world view that is optimistic and hopeful; they provide role models in sacred writings that facilitate acceptance of suffering; they give people a sense of indirect control over circumstances, reducing the need for personal control; and they offer a community of support, both human and divine, to help reduce isolation and loneliness. Unlike many other coping resources, religion is available to anyone at any time, regardless of financial, social, physical, or mental circumstances."

Quotes from Koenig, Harold. Research on Religion, Spirituality, and Mental Health: A Review. La Revue canadienne de psychiatrie. Vol 54, no 5, mai 2009, pp 285.

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