

Key Traits of the Successful SOF RST: A Case Studies Workbook for Implementing Best Practices



*U.S. Special Operations Command
Preservation of the Force and Family
Spiritual Performance Program*



This work was performed under CHAMP/USU award MEM-91-8748; POTFF ~ WORKBOOK OF BEST award: 64767-308024-6.00.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Case Studies Workbook is designed to engage Special Operations Forces (SOF) chaplains RSTs and Religious Support Teams (RSTs) with a resource to better understand the successful traits and best practices common to their unique community. Throughout 2018 and 2019, input on successful traits and examples of best practices in SOF chaplaincy was gathered from SOF leaders participating in various courses at the Joint Special Operations University (JSOU). The voluntary input was gathered from a series of workshops during free periods, and the workshop attendees included SOF RST members, SOF Senior NCOs, and leaders in command and medical billets within the SOF community.

During the process of qualitatively analyzing the input, the Spirituality & Performance Research Team at the Consortium for Health and Military Performance (CHAMP) identified “19 Key Traits of Success for the SOF RST,” each of which was explicitly mentioned or recommended within every workshop population. These 19 traits were organized by the study team through thematic association into 6 “Trait Groups” belonging to 3 “Spheres of Practice.”

Each Trait Group listed in the workbook is labeled according to its common theme(s) and accompanied by a composite and narrativized example of a SOF RST in practice. These examples represent the “best practices” offered in the workbook, and illustrate how a SOF RST can incorporate and demonstrate successful traits in addressing complicated situations arising in ministry in the SOF community. Although these examples incorporate themes from actual chaplain encounters that arose within the work groups, and although each example contains fictionalized RST names, no actual SOF RST member is identifiable within this workbook (by name, action, or program). In contrast,



the names of actual SOF units are used in this workbook—with clear disclaimers provided before each use—in order to strengthen the narrative setting of the best-practice examples. However, none of these SOF units are actually connected with any of the events listed in the examples.

Following each best-practice example, a thematically aligned case study is offered. Each case study relates a particular scenario in SOF chaplaincy that is also informed by workshop themes. Readers are then offered a prompt for guided reflection and discussion. The prompt first encourages the reader to examine their own intuition and experiences in ministry in considering a solution. Then they are asked to note whether any of their initial ideas might actually be unhelpful, if acted upon too quickly or without proper discernment. Next, they are encouraged to situate their intuition, experiences, and potential biases within the context of the needs and expectations of all of the other individuals, families, or communities involved in the scenario. There is an opportunity for the reader to consider any peers, supervisors, or subject-matter experts (SMEs) with whom they might consult to better understand the scenario, either as a whole or within one of its component parts. And lastly, the reader is encouraged to develop primary and secondary courses of action about which they can elicit feedback during interactions with supervisors, trainers, and peers.



GUIDING FRAMEWORK

The Mission of USSOCOM POTFF



The mission of the Preservation of the Force and Family Task Force (POTFF-TF) is to optimize and sustain SOF mission readiness, longevity, and performance through holistic human performance programs that strengthen the Force and Family. POTFF operationalizes this mission across the five domains of human performance: Spiritual Performance, Physical Performance, Psychological Performance, Social Performance, and Cognitive Performance.

The POTFF Spiritual Performance Domains

The POTFF Spiritual Performance Program is designed to strengthen, assess, and advance the Spiritual Performance of the SOF Service Member.

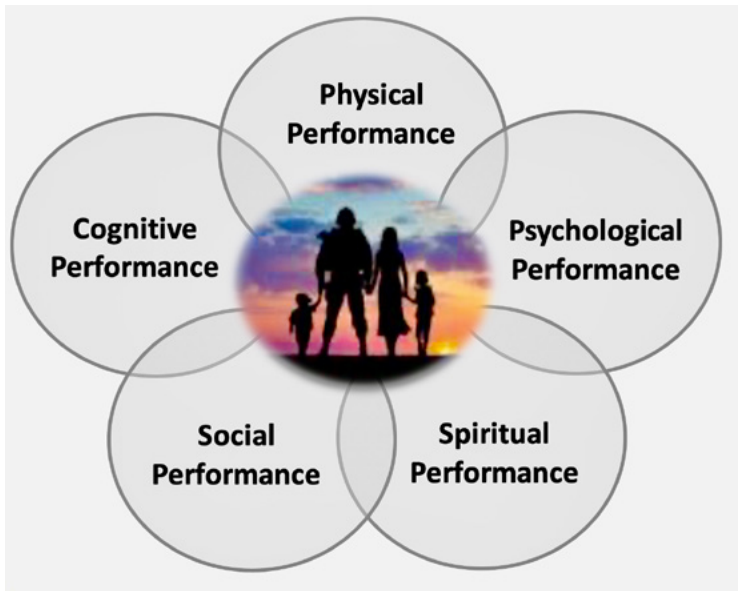
Intent: To strengthen core spiritual, character ethics, moral beliefs and values.

End State: Improved understanding of spiritual practices and religious expressions that strengthen resilience, core beliefs, character ethics, and a sense of value, meaning, and purpose.

These core principles form the basis to promote sound decision-making, healthy living, meaningful relational interactions, and a strong sense of meaning and purpose in the Service Member's life. When these core principles are coupled with one's individual religious and/or spiritual practices and rituals, they form a vital link to strengthen



the human spirit and the force and families' ability to deal with the challenges of life in SOF. This domain is maintained by embedded, dedicated, and experienced RSTs who have undergone specialized training and are capable of functioning in a multi-disciplinary capacity with other POTFF domain leaders.



Integration Within the POTFF Performance Pillars

Spiritual Performance is integrated with the other four POTFF Performance Domains—Physical Performance, Psychological Performance, Cognitive Performance, and Social Performance to provide holistic support to SOF and their families. Spiritual Performance is impacted through RST-led or RST-supported programs for Service Members and their families that emphasize core spiritual components and provide or encourage individual spiritual or religious practices and rituals. Spiritual Performance forms a vital link to strengthen the human spirit to deal with the challenges of life in the SOF community.



INTRODUCTION

The Impact of RST Best Practices on Spiritual Performance

Since the POTFF Spiritual Performance Program is maintained by uniquely trained SOF RSTs, it is crucial to the program that best practices within the SOF RST community be articulated, organized, and made available to all members of the community. It is equally important that RST members who are newly arriving and integrating into the SOF community have access to the best practices of their more experienced peers and supervisors.

This Case Studies Workbook provides exposure to 6 core categories of best practices for chaplaincy within the SOF community. As mentioned in the Executive Summary, these 6 RST Best-Practice Categories best practices were distilled from 19 Key Traits of the Successful in the SOF RST that unanimously arose among workshop groups during the research process. In order to encourage interactions and implementation, these best practices t-practice categories are provided to readers along with examples of actual best-practice activities in the SOF RST and then paired with and reflective case studies.

Key Objectives

Accordingly, the two key objectives of this Case Study Workbook are as follows:

1. Identify successful traits and best practices in the SOF RST as understood, practiced, and articulated within and across the SOF community.



2. Organize and provide access to these traits and best practices to members of the SOF RST community in a manner and form that will encourage and enable their implementation.

Funding Statement and Disclosure

The key traits, best practices, and case studies found in the workbook are developed from de-identified data collected by the Spirituality & Performance Fitness Research Team at the Consortium of Health and Military Performance (CHAMP). The data were de-identified in accordance with human-subject protections guidelines, and therefore all workshop information presented in this workbook represents composite data that cannot be directly linked to any one individual or organization.

The key traits, best practices, and case studies found in the workbook are developed from de-identified data collected by the Spiritual Fitness Research Team at the Consortium of Health and Military Performance (CHAMP). The data were de-identified in accordance with human-subject protections guidelines, and therefore all workshop information presented in this workbook represents composite data that cannot be directly linked to any one individual or organization.

19 Key Traits of the Successful SOF RST (Workshop Findings)

These 19 Key Traits of the Successful SOF RST arose explicitly in each of the workshop groups, alerting the research team to their importance among members of the SOF community. Across workshop populations, these traits were presented as critical to the success of the SOF RST. The actual language used by the workshop participants is preserved as much as possible in the description blocks.



Successful Trait	Description
<i>Maintain Identity</i>	The identity of “the RST,” as developed in the SOF context. It refers to the personal identity of individual RSTs in their various assignments, but also to corporate identity as formed and represented in and through RST Corps structures.
<i>Understand Our Population</i>	The skills, strengths, needs, and culture of the populations that the RST serves.
<i>Understand the Individual</i>	The skills, strengths, needs, and culture of the individual persons that the RST serves, including Service Members, family members, and their families.
<i>Be Present</i>	The importance of shared experiences, active listening, and informal conversation in building rapport with the SOF community.
<i>Focus on Human Connection</i>	Making connections with SOF Service Members through informal activities such as the sharing of meals and coffee, exercise, and entering into non-military discussions about life, family, and culture.
<i>Be Visible</i>	Being recognized as a subject-matter expert and a professional member of the larger team, often brought about through established, routine interactions and physical presence.



Successful Trait	Description
<i>Protect Confidentiality</i>	The 100% privileged communication status that is a legally protected, essential feature of the military RST.
<i>Assess</i>	The ability to examine, understand, and be articulate about people and situations, to include seeing opportunities for growth and improvement, as well as areas of strength.
<i>Engage</i>	Intentional interactions with SOF service members and their families during both times of crisis and routine events.
<i>Promote Human Interaction</i>	The practice of facilitating interactions between people that focuses on non-operational and non-tactical tasks and topics, which can serve to promote stronger relationships.
<i>Integrate</i>	Includes the RST in the physical domain and connects RST services to larger Preservation of the Force and Family initiatives. It also includes the importance of RSTs serving as liaisons to other resources on the installation and in the local community.



Successful Trait	Description
<i>Reach</i>	The impact of RST activities on the lives of individual Service Members and their families, and also on larger programs associated with POTFF and even with outside resources serving military populations.
<i>Leverage Performance Metrics</i>	The importance of using tools that examine the performance and effectiveness of individuals and programs. These tools can be either quantitative or descriptive.
<i>Collaborate</i>	Active networking and collaboration with experts in other areas of POTFF and in other areas of the military.
<i>Tailor Programs</i>	Constantly adapting programs to align them more closely with the served population's learning style, culture, and needs in order to increase effectiveness, attendance, and return on investment.
<i>Gain Buy-in</i>	The process of earning the trust, interest, respect, and support of the target audience in any program or service offered. This applies at both individual and leadership levels.



Successful Trait	Description
<i>Leverage Resources</i>	Sourcing and utilizing products and activities from organizations that support performance optimization that can serve to spiritually strengthen SOF Service Members and family members.
<i>Advise Leadership</i>	RST efforts related to advisement and intentional interaction with informal and formal leadership entities within SOF, in order to provide them with character ethical guidance, support, and care.
<i>Understand Barriers to Rapport</i>	Recognizing and understanding barriers that prevent or delay the building of rapport and relationships with the SOF community. These can be barriers that are either temporary or permanent, and they center around trust.

Successful Traits Organized into Best-Practice Categories

The 19 Key Traits of the Successful SOF RST were thematically organized by the research team into 6 Trait Groups belonging to 3 Spheres of Practice, as follows:

First Sphere of Practice: Identity & Acculturation

Trait Group IDENT-1: Sharpen Professional Identity—incorporating the traits of Maintaining Identity, Being Visible, Engaging, and Understanding Barriers to Rapport.



Trait Group IDENT-2: Tailor and Adapt to the Population— incorporating the traits of Understanding Our Population, Understanding the Individual, Being Present, Tailoring Programs, Advising Leadership, and Gaining Buy-in.

Second Sphere of Practice: Care for SOF Families

Trait Group FAM-1: Respond to Unique Stressors Among SOF Families—incorporating the traits of Being Visible, Engaging, Understanding Barriers to Rapport, Understanding Our Population, Understanding the Individual, Being Present, Tailoring Programs, and Advising Leadership.

Trait Group FAM-2: Create Human Connections— incorporating the traits of Focusing on Human Connection, Promoting Human Interaction, Understanding Our Population, Understanding the Individual, Engaging, and Understanding Barriers to Rapport.

Third Sphere of Practice: Interdisciplinary Support

Trait Group IDS-1: Collaborate Across Disciplines— incorporating the traits of Integrating, Reaching, Collaborating, Assessing, Leveraging Performance Metrics, and Leveraging Resources.

Trait Group IDS-2: Coordinate, Facilitate, Refer— incorporating the traits of Protecting Confidentiality, Assessing, Advising Leadership, and Leveraging Resources.

Why Use Case Studies for Relating Best Practices?

Case studies are dynamic, narrative-driven teaching tools that allow readers to consider the application of theories or abstract ideas in real situations. One of the key objectives of this workbook is to provide



readers access to best practices in a form that will encourage and enable implementation. Given that SOF RSTs work in complex social environments, come from a wide variety of backgrounds, and work daily with people from an equally wide variety of backgrounds, there are many variables to be considered when implementing any principle or practice in their work. By using case studies within a larger reflective process, readers of this workbook will have the freedom to consider these many variables in the context of responding to specific spiritual/religious-support scenarios. By developing various courses of action and receiving feedback, the likelihood and conditions for eventual implementation will be strengthened.

Case Study Components and Processes in This Workbook

As mentioned in the Executive Summary, a case study follows the presentation of each RST Trait Group and its accompanying composite best-practice example. Each case study will contain the following 6 components:

1. The narration of a scenario based on actual events within the SOF community, as a composite construction using the input of workshop participants.
2. A reflective pause for the reader to examine their own intuition and experiences in ministry, and also to note any biases that might be activated in such a scenario.
3. A continuing pause for the reader to situate their intuition, experiences, and potential biases within the context of the needs and expectations of all of the other individuals, families, or communities involved in the scenario.



4. A final pause for the reader to consider any peers, supervisors, or subject-matter experts (SMEs) with whom they might consult to better understand the scenario, either as a whole or in any of its facets.
5. The opportunity for readers to develop primary and secondary courses of action.
6. The opportunity for readers to solicit and incorporate feedback on their courses of action, in order to strengthen their preparation for future ministry in the community.



FIRST SPHERE OF PRACTICE: IDENTITY & ACCULTURATION

“Know how the community establishes trust. You need to know when to separate from that ‘cool guy’ mentality. You need to relate, but not lose identity as a RST.”

—WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT

Trait Group IDENT-1: Identity & Acculturation

Incorporating the traits of *Maintaining Identity, Being Visible, Engaging, and Understanding Barriers to Rapport*.

Best-Practice Example from Contemporary SOF Ministry (IDENT-1)

Note: The following best-practice example is a composite and narrativized construction developed from real themes that arose in the research phase of this project. However, this example is not based on the experiences of any one particular RST serving with Special Operations Forces, and it does not refer to actual events involving any “Chaplain Miller,” “RP2 Mendoza,” or any person (or group of persons) who has ever served with Naval Special Warfare Group Two.

Chaplain Miller has been working with Naval Special Warfare Group Two in Little Creek, VA, for a little more than a year. His Religious Programs Specialist, RP2 Mendoza, has served with the unit for over 2 years, and is well-liked and trusted among the SEALs. When Chaplain



Miller first arrived and was assigned to a team, he felt excited and honored to work with such elite and dedicated warriors. He also felt a bit unsure of how to present himself in the team areas and, more generally, unsure of how he would fit in with his SEALs and their families. Over the first 6 months, he found himself “trying on” various identities to ease his anxiety and to allow him to make connections with his team. At one point his RP noticed his anxiety about fitting in and asked to speak to him alone: “Sir, you don’t have to be Cool Joe around here. They’re all cocky SOBs – I get it. But they don’t need a cocky SOB as a chaplain. Just be you.” Chaplain Miller appreciated his RP having his 6, and reflected on that counsel.

A couple of months later, a more seasoned chaplain peer asked him about what kinds of creative religious ministry solutions he was developing to meet the unique needs of his people and their families. This simple inquiry had an unexpected impact on Chaplain Miller, who paused that night to ask himself a few questions: “Do I even know their needs? Have I been focused on the *people* on the team at all, as human beings with unique needs, or have I been dazzled by their status and camaraderie and preoccupied with trying to turn myself into someone I imagine they will respect?”

These two incidents—that is, (1) receiving feedback from his RP, and (2) being asked a simple question in ministry from a chaplain working for an adjacent team—prompted Chaplain Miller to reorient to his calling. Remembering his first priorities as a chaplain, he began to situate himself (with his unique strengths, leadership attributes, and personality features) more naturally within the context of his assignment and his community. Chaplain Miller made a disciplined effort to “be himself” as he arrived at formal and informal team functions and training evolutions, and he even adopted the practice of saying a brief prayer before entering any room or area. To him, “being



himself” included: (1) lowering his defenses against the idea of social exclusion; (2) adjusting his expectations of what it would mean to be accepted by his people at any given time; and (3) becoming open to what small connections were possible as they arose naturally.



Within weeks, Chaplain Miller’s new approach began to pay dividends. He found his sense of humor becoming more pronounced in conversation, and he became more flexible in both recognizing and responding to spontaneous openings for spiritual support.

Perhaps most importantly, his newly re-established poise allowed him to recognize when, where, and how to offer himself and his RP as a resource, which was what (in hindsight) he felt had most been missing since his arrival.

Near the close of his first year with the team, deployment orders came down, and one of the team’s officers approached him: “Chaplain, I hear you like to study world religions, and not just your own. Any chance you can set us up to be more familiar with that subject matter, especially as it relates to our upcoming AO?” In the final 6 weeks before deployment, Chaplain Miller brought in two guest speakers from the Mid-Atlantic Region to address religious concerns among specific indigenous populations present in the team’s upcoming area of operations. RP2 Mendoza coordinated with another RP who had previously served in the region and brought him in to talk about his



experiences. They also developed a unique set of (brief) presentations on the seasonal religious practices of these populations, tailored to their team's expected activities, which informally supplemented their pre-deployment training. By the time they deployed, Chaplain Miller and RP2 Mendoza were firmly enfranchised as the team's RST.

In this example, Chaplain Miller and RP2 Mendoza demonstrated the key leadership traits of:

- | **Maintaining Identity,**
- | **Being Visible,**
- | **Engaging,** and
- | **Understanding Barriers to Rapport.**

Being open to feedback from his RP when it came, Chaplain Miller was able to recognize the pressures he felt to adopt personality traits that were not organically his, as well as the ways that these pressures both (a) posed a threat to his hope to gain rapport with the team and (b) alienated him from his own strengths and calling. Remarkably, he continued to be present and engaged with the team as much as possible even while recalibrating his approach to ministry in the new setting. This combination of leadership traits and practices allowed Chaplain Miller to become well situated as the team's chaplain as he and RP2 Mendoza prepared for the approaching deployment.



Composite Case Study IDENT-1: “Getting in the Saddle”

You and your Religious Affairs NCO are newly assigned to a team that has recently completed a 6-month rotation. During that rotation, the team had continuous encounters with IEDs, and several team members sustained blast injuries. The team that replaced them had a death within the first week due to an IED—and he was an Operator that many of your team members knew well. During your in-brief, the senior enlisted leader told you that the team hasn’t really seemed to decompress. He says there has been an increase in family member requests for substance-abuse resources, and two of your members have had DUIs in the past 2 weeks. More than one team member has requested to deploy again, in support of the next team out the door. He also says he’s been surprised how few leave requests there have been, compared to requests for new specialty schools.

You and your Religious Affairs NCO spend some time in the Human Performance Training Center (HPTC) with your new team and develop a good relationship with a few of the trainers. They tell you both about some of the comments they have heard that indicate a shared sense of frustration and guilt:

“They never just come out into the street to fight. Cowards. Hiding behind their little tin-can-bombs. When we get back there, I’m going to take the fight into shadows.”

“Can’t believe Jeff got taken out that way. What if we had just been a little more aggressive in cleaning up the streets? Maybe we would have gotten that guy. If it was me, my ghost would be furious at the last team for not taking care of business.”

“My wife keeps talking about Jeff and the family he left behind. She



tells me she wants me to get a job that doesn't involve killing people or being killed. But no way am I leaving the fight now."

You knew that it would take some time to understand and to connect with your people, especially since you are not a former SOF Operator, and have never before served as a SOF chaplain. Your Religious Affairs NCO is also new to this team, although he served with SOF in a previous assignment. You also knew that there would be some difficulty relating to a team just back from deployment (a deployment you did not share with them). You are willing to take it slow, but you also hear clear needs being expressed directly from the command team and also indirectly from the team members. At least some of these needs seem to invite an RST response or intervention, if it can be formulated wisely.



How might you approach the process of sharpening your professional identity for service in this scenario? More specifically, how might you establish an engaged presence among the leaders and members of this team—one that is aligned with your personality, particular strengths, and sense of calling? How might you address any barriers to rapport that you sense are present in the scenario? How can you use your Religious Affairs NCO as a force multiplier?



Looking Inward

Pause to consider how your previous experiences in ministry might shape your intuition about how to respond to the scenario above. Could any of your initial ideas be unhelpful, if acted upon too quickly or without proper discernment?

Widening the Aperture

Here you can situate your reflections from the “Looking Inward” block (above) within the widest context possible, taking into account the needs and expectations of all of your leaders and team members, their family members, other SOF support staff members, your RST peers and supervisors, your faith group leadership, and the larger SOF community.



Reaching Out

Can you now consider any peers, supervisors, or subject-matter experts with whom you might consult in order to better understand the scenario (either as a whole or in any of its facets)?

Course(s) of Action 1

Now you can develop a primary action plan in response to the scenario questions, which are once again stated here:

How might you approach the process of sharpening your professional identity for service in this scenario? More specifically, how might you and your Religious Affairs NCO establish an engaged presence among the leaders and members of this team—one that is aligned with your personalities, particular strengths, and sense of calling? How might you address any barriers to rapport that you sense are present in the scenario?



Course(s) of Action 2

If you have time, you can also develop a second action plan in response to the scenario questions. Is there a way you can imagine addressing this situation in ministry that is completely different than your first action plan?

Opening Up

You can take this opportunity to solicit and incorporate feedback on your courses of action, in order to enrich and strengthen your perspective on ministry to SOF and their families.



Trait Group IDENT-2: Tailor and Adapt to the Population

Incorporating the traits of *Understanding Our Population, Understanding the Individual, Being Present, Tailoring Programs, Advising Leadership, and Gaining Buy-in.*

Best-Practice Example from Contemporary SOF Ministry (IDENT-2)

Note: The following best-practice example is a composite and narrativized construction developed from real themes that arose in the research phase of this project. However, this example is not based on the experiences of any one particular RST serving with Special Operations Forces, and it does not refer to actual events involving any “Chaplain Johnson,” “SSgt Frank,” or any person (or group of persons) who has ever served with 1st Special Operations Group.

Chaplain Johnson reported to the Air Force’s 1st Special Operations Group 18 months ago, having achieved success and notoriety in his previous assignment as a SME on warrior resilience programming. While in divinity school, Chaplain Johnson completed a specialized certificate in community-based pastoral counseling, which included intensive training weekends at a nearby center for performance psychology. Chaplain Johnson believes strongly in the role that performance psychology can play in helping Airmen face the spiritual adversities of long deployment periods (those more than 6 months). During his previous assignment he developed a unique, 16-hour pre-deployment/ in-deployment/post-deployment spiritual-enrichment program that incorporated elements of performance psychology. He entitled the program *Never Been Stronger* (NBS). NBS became extremely popular with leadership at the large Security Forces Squadron on Chaplain Johnson’s



previous installation, whose members had endured heavy deployments throughout the world in support of OEF, OIR, and smaller security missions. That Squadron Commander had even dedicated annual funds to support Chaplain Johnson's travel downrange to conduct the in-deployment evolutions of NBS. A write-up from his local public affairs office was picked up by *Air Force Magazine*, and Chaplain Johnson's Wing RST asked him to go on the road to share NBS with RSTs at another installation in the region.

As Chaplain Johnson prepared for his transition to Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC), he felt sure that NBS was going to become a marquis program in the new setting. He tried not to let his imagination reach too far ahead, but he felt it was possible that this was going to gain the attention of the AFSOC Command Chaplain, and even perhaps the USSOCOM Command Chaplain. However, during his in-brief with the Group Commander and Senior Enlistee Leader—a meeting that otherwise went quite well—he did not receive a warm response when he mentioned his plans to launch NBS. Chaplain Johnson's supervisory chaplain, who was also present during the meeting, suggested afterwards that he step back a little on his “big program idea” and get to know his community and the priorities of his new leaders before deciding how to proceed.

In the coming weeks, Chaplain Johnson developed an informal connection with Major Thomas, the Executive Officer of a Special Operations Squadron in the Group. Major Thomas sensed Chaplain Johnson's eagerness to offer NBS to the unit, and he agreed to take a look. After slowly flipping through the pages of the NBS outline, Major Thomas handed it back. “I don't know. This looks a lot like a resilience program we saw a couple of months back. It didn't go over very well with the guys. What else you got?”



Chaplain Johnson was disappointed as he went back to his office. His Religious Affairs Airman, SSgt Frank, listened as he vented his frustrations, and afterwards made the surprising suggestion that maybe a new program for a new community was a better path anyway. SSgt Frank was always a good listener, and often thought out-of-the-box. Chaplain Johnson trusted him, and took his input seriously. When Chaplain Johnson returned home, he talked to his wife about his conversations with both Major Thomas and SSgt Frank. Her input resonated with SSgt Frank's: "But Jim, was the whole NBS thing really that great? I was proud that you saw a need on the base and then made something new that could help people. But that was then. These people are different, right? And their needs are going to be different, aren't they? You are just getting to know them. In time, I'm sure you can make something new that helps these people."



Although Chaplain Johnson still felt the impulse to try to implement NBS over the next few months, he restrained himself from following the impulse. He dedicated himself instead to listening, observing, and orienting himself to his people by being present with SSgt Frank at as many training evolutions and organizational meetings as possible and by sharing his observations with leaders and peers in the community. In time, he began to see how many of the primary assumptions of NBS would not allow his program to fit cleanly into this setting (included assumptions related to conventional warfare activities,



deployment length and cycling, and pre-contact exposure to ideas in the fields of positive and performance psychology, etc.).

Now Chaplain Johnson is in the early stages of designing a new program for strengthening warrior resilience, which will draw on spiritual paradigms that are fresh for both Chaplain Johnson and the warriors in his community. He will be working to incorporate feedback from his unit leaders, his Operators, POTFF domain leaders, and other chaplains serving within AFSOC. His leaders have been more impressed with his new idea, in part because they are coming to trust him as their chaplain.

In this example, Chaplain Johnson and SSgt Frank demonstrated the key leadership traits of:

- | **Understanding Our Population,**
- | **Understanding the Individual,**
- | **Being Present,**
- | **Tailoring Programs,**
- | **Advising Leadership,** and
- | **Gaining Buy-in.**

By being open to cues from SOF leaders, his supervisory chaplain, his Religious Affairs Airman, and his wife, he was able to overcome his impulses to try to “re-create his previous successes” in a new environment with resources tailored to a



different community. His ability to receive and integrate good advice, show self-restraint, turn towards listening and observation, and wait for trust to develop with key leaders before moving forward have all allowed Chaplain Johnson to become well situated in his new role as an AFSOC Chaplain.

Composite Case Study IDENT-2: “Now for Someone Completely Different”

You are a Religious Affairs NCO serving with a SOF unit scheduled to deploy in 2 months. Your chaplain is newly assigned, and the unit has had a complicated past with chaplains. The most recent chaplain was sent back early from the previous deployment after complaints from both Operators and key leaders that he was “not a good fit in the community.” While you were deployed with that previous chaplain, he had always wanted to do things on his own, and he never seemed to view you as a part of the team. For instance, you would find out second-hand that he was imposing himself on the Operators, asking to be taken along for routine missions (without ever telling you where he was going or what he was doing). He was loud and outspoken, often failed to properly read the people around him, and often alienated himself without realizing it. The Senior Enlisted Leader for the command even once pulled you aside to tell you that you needed to “get your chaplain under control.” Although there was no scandal involved, it is clear to you that the command team was more than willing to finish the last 6 weeks of their deployment without a chaplain, rather than continue to accommodate the one they had been assigned any longer. You coordinated with other RSTs in the AOR during your last 6 weeks there to ensure the spiritual needs of the team could be met. However, there wasn’t much interest in outside chaplains coming in, since the unit didn’t know or trust them.



Your unit has now been home for 6 months and have been receiving chaplain support on an ad hoc basis through your connections with other RSTs nearby. Your supervisory RST has given the command team room to recover from their past experience but thinks it is now time to permanently assign a new chaplain. The new chaplain has previously served and deployed with a special operations support unit, and you feel he could become acculturated to the community and its mission in time, if he integrates carefully and wisely. Your Senior Enlisted Leader asks you to “be a good NCO” and help him along. He suggests you do this by focusing on building relationships through normal, positive interactions with both leaders and Operators as the two of you go about the everyday accomplishment of your tasks.

During his first week, you do pick up a few comments from the Operators that seem to walk the line between good-natured humor and a challenge (not something you are unfamiliar with, in this community). An example: *“Chaplain, you gonna head out the door with us? Better eat your Wheaties and put on your big-kid pants. The last guy didn’t.”*

How might you approach the process of helping your chaplain tailor and adapt to the population in this scenario? Who might you need to consult, and why? More specifically, how might you help him focus on key leadership traits such as understanding this population and its experiences, tailoring programs, advising leadership, and gaining buy-in?



Looking Inward

Pause to consider how your previous experiences in ministry might shape your intuition about how to respond to the scenario above. Could any of your initial ideas be unhelpful, if acted upon too quickly or without proper discernment?

Widening the Aperture

Here you can situate your reflections from the “Looking Inward” block (above) within the widest context possible, taking into account the needs and expectations of all of your leaders and team members, their family members, other SOF support staff members, your RST peers and supervisors, his faith group leadership, and the larger SOF community.



Reaching Out

Can you now consider any peers, supervisors, or subject-matter experts with whom you might consult in order to better understand the scenario (either as a whole or in any of its facets)?

Course(s) of Action 1

Now you can develop a primary action plan in response to the scenario questions, which are once again stated here:

How might you approach the process of sharpening your professional identity for service in this scenario? More specifically, how might you establish an engaged presence among the leaders and members of this team—one that is aligned with your personality, particular strengths, and sense of calling? How might you address any barriers to rapport that you sense are present in the scenario?



Course(s) of Action 2

If you wish, you can also develop a second action plan in response to the scenario questions. Is there a way you can imagine addressing this situation that is completely different than your first action plan?

Opening Up

You can take this opportunity to solicit and incorporate feedback on your courses of action, in order to enrich and strengthen your perspective on ministry to SOF and their families.



SECOND SPHERE OF PRACTICE: CARE FOR SOF FAMILIES

“When we put on programs where Service Members just show up and RSTs push play for canned presentations, where human connection is not happening, this is not a good use of resources. Given what Service Members have to pay in terms of their relationships, canned programs are a slap in the face.”

– Workshop participant

Trait Group FAM-1: Respond to Unique Stressors Among SOF Families

Incorporating the traits of *Being Visible, Engaging, Understanding Barriers to Rapport, Understanding Our Population, Understanding the Individual, Being Present, Tailoring Programs, and Advising Leadership.*

Best-Practice Example from Contemporary SOF Ministry (FAM-1)

Note: *The following best-practice example is a composite and narrativized construction developed from real themes that arose in the research phase of this project. However, this example is not based on the experiences of any one particular RST serving with Special Operations Forces, and it does not refer to actual events involving any “Chaplain Milton,” “SGT Bush,” or any person (or group of persons) who has ever served with the 2nd Ranger Battalion.*



Chaplain Milton reported to the 75th Ranger Regiment, 2nd Ranger Battalion, about 2 years ago. As a former infantry officer, he had long ago attended Ranger school, and he arrived to the unit with a tab. However, he had never before worn a Ranger scroll, and he knew he had a lot to learn. His Religious Affairs NCO, SGT Bush, had arrived 6 months prior and was brand new to SOF. During Chaplain Milton's first few months at Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM), he came to realize that the Ranger Wife Network is a powerful constituency, albeit an informal one. At a meeting with the 2/75 spouses, he introduced himself and his wife, as well as SGT Bush and his wife.



Then—rather than talking about his own experiences or his intended programs—he asked everyone present to chime in about what they would most like to see from the chaplain in support of families at 2/75. Although feedback was slow in coming at first, he listened with very careful attention, took notes, and validated the speakers who shared. This seemed to mean something to the attendees, and it certainly encouraged more participation. In the end he heard from more than 15 different Ranger spouses and noted that, when one wife was speaking, it was common for dozens of others to be nodding in agreement. This was a closely-knit group.

The following week, Chaplain Milton worked with SGT Bush to analyze themes from his notes, also leveraging his own wife's perspective, and the thoughts from SGT Bush and his wife, in order to find some



patterns in the feedback he had received at the meeting. Using informal tools for thematic analysis he had found posted online, he arrived at three conclusions:

1. For the most part, spouses at the 2nd Ranger Battalion had little exposure to RST programs and RST communiques. Although they were quite familiar with the role of Social Fitness and Social Performance programs in supporting families, they were not at all familiar with the role of Spiritual Fitness and Spiritual Performance in doing the same.
2. For the spouses who did know something about RST programs, most fit into two groups: the first comprised of religious families who attended a Base Chapel community, and the second comprised of spouses who had heard that RSTs offer couples retreats. Regarding the latter group, only one spouse present at the meeting had actually attended such a retreat, and the others mentioned that childcare issues and the 2-3-day length of such retreats had prevented them from attending in the past.
3. There was a significant constituent of spouses in the meeting who considered themselves “spiritual-but-not-religious,” and while they were interested in the idea of learning faith-based approaches to marriage and family enrichment, they weren’t so sure about subjecting themselves to any one particular religious tradition’s approach.

Chaplain Milton and SGT Bush met with the local Family Readiness Group representatives to cross-check his findings and to discuss some ideas for addressing the themes they had identified. Soon after, during a trip out to Fort Benning, they sat down with the



Regimental FRG leaders to do the same. They discussed their ideas with both the Regimental RST and the RST serving with 3/75. Upon their return to Fort Lewis, Chaplain Milton asked SGT Bush to reach out to a small cross-section of the wives they had initially met at the spouses' event. SGT Bush invited them (and their kids) to have lunch together with his wife, the Chaplain, and the Chaplain's wife. They met at Chaplain Milton's residence at JBLM, at a day and time that worked for everyone.

Using feedback from this second meeting, they learned once again that Ranger Wife Network was very interested in programs that are designed for their own particular population and that take into consideration the Ranger operations tempo and the Ranger mindset (i.e., "the Ranger Way" of life). He also surmised that holding 3 or 4 separate one-day/one-night marriage workshops throughout the year would be a much better strategy for meeting the needs of Ranger families. SGT Bush even received an informal offer from the Ranger Wife Network to arrange for slumber parties hosting the kids of families whose parents were attending marriage workshops together, on a rolling basis. This plan would capitalize on informal community resources while ensuring that as many interested couples as possible would have the chance to attend. In addition, at the advice of his Regimental RST (who had previously served as a Family Life RST, receiving a graduate education in family therapy), Chaplain Milton reached out to the John Gottman Foundation to better understand options for faith leaders seeking to use the Gottman materials in marriage and parenting programming. He and SGT Bush signed up for a Gottman conference and then let their Ranger Wife Network contacts know that he had found an evidence-based approach to family programming that accommodated a wide range of spiritual backgrounds.



Finally, at about his 4-month mark, Chaplain Milton circled back to his Battalion staff. He explained the need for RST-led, Ranger-family-specific enrichment programming as it had arisen within his own layered, local investigations. He presented solutions that had been influenced by his Regimental RST and had already been affirmed by the Ranger Wife Network, along with a clear dollars-and-cents



cost for development training and program implementation. His Battalion Commander was sufficiently impressed. “Chaplain,” he said, “I just want to make sure we’re working smart, working collaboratively, and making sure our Ranger families are

getting something they want and need. You’ve got your ducks in a row here, and it’s not costing me an arm and a leg. Go execute, and show me results, and we’ll talk about the future.”



In this example, Chaplain Milton and SGT Bush demonstrated the key leadership traits of:

- | **Being Visible,**
- | **Engaging,**
- | **Understanding Barriers to Rapport,**
- | **Understanding Our Population,**
- | **Understanding the Individual,**
- | **Being Present,**
- | **Tailoring Programs, and**
- | **Advising Leadership.**

Rather than coming into the unit with his own ideas about meeting needs, Chaplain Milton put himself into the midst of his constituents and listened carefully and responsively to their perspectives before developing anything (eventually winning some of their trust). SGT Bush networked with other NCOs to help his chaplain develop the program. Once Chaplain Milton felt sure he had understood the perspectives of his Ranger families, through multiple evolutions of engagement, he developed unique programming that was Ranger-specific and brought his leaders a clear and mature proposal that predisposed them to buy in. Although working with families is only one dimension of his work as a Ranger Chaplain, his approach to the families of 2/75 earned him trust and respect moving forward.



Composite Case Study FAM-1: Pete and Jennifer

Your unit's SEL approached your Religious Affairs NCO after the close of a Senior Enlisted meeting. He asked, "Are you all tracking the situation with Pete Siler and his wife?" Your NCO said that he wasn't, so the SEL laid it out for him.

Both you and your NCO know Pete Siler as a solid and experienced Operator and a respected team leader. You both also know that his team is slated to deploy in just 5 weeks' time. Your SEL tells your NCO that, just this morning, Pete came into the command suite to ask if he can sit this one out. That's just not done very often in your community, so he had everyone's full attention. Pete told the command team that if he goes out the door this time, his wife won't be there when he gets back. The SEL had suggested to Pete that he and his wife sit down with you before talking about it any further. And now he is asking you, through your NCO, to do what you can. It's a sign of trust and respect that you are being called in to help like this, but you know from experience that there is no guarantee of a mutually positive outcome for both the couple and the team.

You sit down with Pete and his wife Jennifer, and here is the general situation, as they describe it to you: They have been married for just a year, and it is the second marriage for each of them. Pete is 35 and Jennifer is 27. Although Jennifer has no children from her previous marriage, Pete has 2. His son Paul, who is 14 years old, is on the autism spectrum, and Jennifer says she has never been able to "connect" with him. Pete's younger son is Jonathan, who is 8 years old. Jennifer says she is very close with Jonathan.

Jennifer has a master's degree in non-profit administration, and she enjoyed her last job posting very much (and believed deeply in



the altruistic work her organization accomplished). However, since moving to be with Pete last year, she has been unable to find good work. Jennifer says she has lost a part of herself in this transition, and she worries that as Pete deploys, she will take on more responsibility with Paul and Jonathan—something she is not feeling ready for. Pete’s ex-wife lives in the area, and has limited custody, but is unwilling to offer any more help than she already does. Jennifer is both relieved and annoyed by this. Although she calls herself agnostic, Jennifer is open to looking to a chaplain for help (*if a chaplain can help*).



Pete has been in the military for 16 years and has been working with SOF for 11 of those years. He is a highly trusted and highly valued member of his team, and he has never missed a training evolution or deployment for any reason. He mentions that money has been tight, since both he and Jennifer had expected to operate on two incomes after their marriage. As of right now, they are facing significant student-loan debt from Jennifer’s last degree program, and their credit cards are carrying over a high amount of lifestyle debt each month. Pete is a conservative non-denominational Christian who attends services every week. His pastor has been speaking about the covenant of marriage during a recent sermon series, and Pete feels convinced that he needs to do anything he can to save their marriage. He has been hitting the gym twice a day to combat the stress, but he admits that he stays late at the gym some nights because he doesn’t really know how to make things better at home.



How might you work with this couple, given the information you have? Do you feel any pressure from unit leadership in this scenario (either by the weight of their expectations of you or by their vested interest in returning Pete to a ready status)? Who else might you need (or want) to consult as you begin working with this family, and why? Also, as you develop a response, how might you focus on the key leadership traits of engaging, understanding barriers to rapport, understanding our population, understanding the individual, and advising leadership?

Looking Inward

Pause to consider how your previous experiences in ministry might shape your intuition about how to respond to the scenario above. Could any of your initial ideas be unhelpful, if acted upon too quickly or without proper discernment?



Widening the Aperture

Here you can situate your reflections from the “Looking Inward” block (above) within the widest context possible, taking into account the needs and expectations of all of your leaders and team members, their family members, other SOF support staff members, your RST peers and supervisors, your faith group leadership, and the larger SOF community.

Reaching Out

Can you now consider any peers, supervisors, or subject-matter experts with whom you might consult in order to better understand the scenario (either as a whole or in any of its facets)?



Course(s) of Action 1

Now you can develop a primary action plan in response to the scenario questions, which are once again stated here:

How might you approach the process of sharpening your professional identity for service in this scenario? More specifically, how might you establish an engaged presence among the leaders and members of this team—one that is aligned with your personality, particular strengths, and sense of calling? How can you use your Religious Affairs NCO as a force multiplier? How might you address any barriers to rapport that you sense are present in the scenario?



Course(s) of Action 2

If you wish, you can also develop a second action plan in response to the scenario questions. Is there a way you can imagine addressing this situation in ministry that is completely different than your first action plan?

Opening Up

You can take this opportunity to solicit and incorporate feedback on your courses of action, in order to enrich and strengthen your perspective on ministry to SOF and their families.



Trait Group FAM-2: Create Human Connections

Incorporating the traits of *Focusing on Human Connection, Promoting Human Interaction, Understanding Our Population, Understanding the Individual, Engaging, and Understanding Barriers to Rapport.*

Best-Practice Example from Contemporary SOF Ministry (FAM-2)

Note: *The following best-practice example is a composite and narrativized construction developed from real themes that arose in the research phase of this project. However, this example is not based on the experiences of any one particular RST serving with Special Operations Forces, and it does not refer to actual events involving any “Chaplain Edwards,” “SSG Rivera,” or any person (or group of persons) who has ever served with the 528th Sustainment Brigade (SO) (A).*

Chaplain Edwards reported to the 528th Sustainment Brigade (Special Operations) (Airborne) last year, with orders to serve as the Brigade RST. During a previous assignment just down the street with the 4th Psychological Operations Group (Airborne), Chaplain Edwards had worked closely at times with Special Forces Soldiers, and the idea of providing ministry to SOF support Soldiers and contributing to the overall USASOC mission inspired her. She was therefore excited to get started at the 528th, and during her turnover she was pleased to inherit a robust and popular family care program which had—under her predecessor’s supervision—provided excellent and innovative enrichment opportunities for her married Soldiers, their spouses, and their children.

As Chaplain Edwards became acclimated to her responsibilities and found time to closely examine the religious-support strategies she had inherited from her predecessor, she noticed that the lion’s share of her



RST's time and effort had been dedicated to family programming over the previous 3 years. Her Religious Affairs NCO, SSG Rivera, attested that most of his time was spent setting up those events. Speaking with key leaders as she and SSG Rivera made their rounds in the unit, she came to sense that, at the 528th, religious support had become synonymous with marriage workshops and family retreats. She collaborated with her POTFF team and learned about a new line of funding for training programs that focus on Spiritual Performance (SP).

Unlike funding lines for family programs, these funds were directly focused on the spiritual development of Military Service Members, and



she immediately sat down with SSG Rivera to brainstorm new ideas. After a few days, and as she neared the 2-month mark of her time in the Brigade, Chaplain Edwards decided that she and SSG Rivera should sit down again with the Brigade's Commanding Officer and Command Sergeant Major to discuss her interest in expanding the RST's work to include warrior resilience, moral and ethical leadership, and other enrichment programming for single Soldiers.

"Chaplain," the CO said, "I'm not going to tell you how to do your job. I'm willing to trust you. But the family programs thing has gone over really well here, and our Brigade has a sterling reputation for taking care of families. I like that. And I attribute a lot of that to the chaplain's work. SSG Rivera has also done an excellent job of organizing those events, and everyone in the unit knows him because of it. If



you're going to take a risk to do something else, I'm just asking you to do it slow—and don't drop the ball on something that's tried and true." The frankness of that conversation had a lasting impact on Chaplain Edwards, and she decided to wait before making any changes.

However, after about 6 months on station, and still focusing most of her programmatic efforts on family enrichment, Chaplain Edwards continued to sense that more focus was needed on single Soldiers. After a particularly hard 2-week period for the 528th on the blotter, in



which one unmarried Soldier was arrested for a DUI, two popped positive on random drug screenings, and three Soldiers got into a physical altercation at an unaccompanied housing unit, she decided to begin a new faith-based initiative entitled *All For One*.

Joining forces with the Fort Bragg Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers (BOSS) team, she designed and combined funding lines for a program to engage her single SOF Support Soldiers. The *All for One* program incorporates leadership principles from the history of Airborne and Special Forces support operations, hosts seminar-style discussions with key leaders from the Fort Bragg and Fayetteville-area communities, and features large and small group outings designed to create connections between Soldiers.

All for One has quickly come to be seen in the unit as the single Soldier's equivalent to the family enrichment program. Because Chaplain



Edwards is an outgoing person, she has been able to reach an unexpectedly high number of the unit's single Soldiers. As one said: "Chaplain E never gives up. I finally just attended one of the events to get her to leave me alone about it. But there was this doctor that came down from Raleigh to talk about justice in healthcare, and I heard some serious questions coming out of the mouths of people in the unit I would have thought never had it in them. I saw some people in a new light."

Recently, Chaplain Edwards engaged a DoD Center of Excellence with a team specifically dedicated to spirituality and performance research. The team helped her in developing a disciplined program evaluation tool to help reliably measure the success of her program.

In this example, Chaplain Edwards and SSG Rivera demonstrated the key leadership traits of:

- | **Focusing on Human Connection,**
- | **Promoting Human Interaction,**
- | **Understanding Our Population,**
- | **Understanding the Individual,**
- | **Engaging, and**
- | **Understanding Barriers to Rapport.**



Initially inheriting a religious support program which she felt was slightly out of balance, and then noticing needs that existed outside the range of existing programming, she addressed her leadership with her concerns. Receiving a cautious approval for making changes, she waited until a particular opening occurred and then capitalized on the opening by partnering with a sympathetic organization and developing a layered approach to the underserved population that made use of their unique location and identity. By understanding the importance of human connections for single Soldiers as well as Soldiers with families—evident even in the name of her new initiative—she demonstrated to leaders that relationship enrichment in a unit is a complex endeavor that should exclude no part of the population.



Composite Case Study FAM-2: “Kids Like Us”

You are just sitting down at your desk one day when Deb, your point of contact from the Family Readiness Group, calls. “Hi. Can I ask if you have any program ideas for middle school kids from SOF families? You know, between the ages of 12 and 15 or so? We’ve got a demand signal that arose from a recent spouse’s meeting.”

“Okay, Deb,” you say, “but can you tell me what the demand is, exactly?” Deb tells you that, during the meeting, she went through the usual process of informing the spouses that the focus of the FRG is SOF-specific, always taking into con-



sideration the particular needs of SOF families. She says one of the spouses opened up after this, expressing that her middle-schooler was having trouble making friends. This spouse lamented that, ever since her husband became fully qualified in the SOF community, he had been gone more often and on shorter notice than they had ever expected. She worries about the strong impact of this on her middle-school son, and she wondered out loud to the group if having the chance to meet with other “SOF kids” his own age might help. “After that,” says Deb, “maybe a dozen other spouses chimed in, saying they thought it was a good idea, or that it might help their sons and daughters also. So, any ideas? I know that ministers are good at children and youth programs...”



You are very busy already, but as you discuss things with Deb, the need seems real. The way it spontaneously arose in the meeting, and then resonated so strongly with so many spouses, makes it seem like something you need to take seriously. You talk it over with your NCO, as she has a middle-schooler too. She says that her son could really use some friends who understand what it's like to have a SOF parent. As you talk it over with various stakeholders in the community, you realize that it fits clearly within your focus on creating and sustaining connections between people at all levels in your own corner of the SOF community.

How might you approach the process of addressing this unique request from your SOF families? Who else might you need to consult, and why? In what ways can your NCO be a force multiplier for you? More specifically, as you develop a response, how might you focus on the key leadership traits of human connection and promoting human interaction, taking into consideration their particular needs and any barriers to rapport you might face?

Looking Inward

Pause to consider how your previous experiences in ministry might shape your intuition about how to respond to the scenario above. Could any of your initial ideas be unhelpful, if acted upon too quickly or without proper discernment?



Widening the Aperture

Here you can situate your reflections from the “Looking Inward” block (above) within the widest context possible, taking into account the needs and expectations of all of your leaders and team members, their family members, other SOF support staff members, your RST peers and supervisors, your faith group leadership, and the larger SOF community.

Reaching Out

Can you now consider any peers, supervisors, or subject-matter experts with whom you might consult in order to better understand the scenario (either as a whole or in any of its facets)?



Course(s) of Action 1

Now you can develop a primary action plan in response to the scenario questions, which are once again stated here:

How might you approach the process of addressing this unique request from your SOF families? Who else might you need to consult, and why? In what ways can your NCO be a force multiplier for you? More specifically, how might you establish an engaged presence among the leaders and members of this team—one that is aligned with your personality, particular strengths, and sense of calling? How might you address any barriers to rapport that you sense are present in the scenario?



Course(s) of Action 2

If you wish, you can also develop a second action plan in response to the scenario questions. Is there a way you can imagine addressing this situation in ministry that is completely different than your first action plan?

Opening Up

You can take this opportunity to solicit and incorporate feedback on your courses of action, in order to enrich and strengthen your perspective on ministry to SOF and their families.



THIRD SPHERE OF PRACTICE: INTERDISCIPLINARY SUPPORT

“The programs have to be at the cutting edge of research, statistical and empirical. This community stays on top of it. If it is old, it needs to [become] as tried and true and tested as they are.”

– Workshop participant

Trait Group IDS-1: Collaborate Across Disciplines

Incorporating the traits of *Integrating, Reaching, Collaborating, Assessing, Leveraging Performance Metrics, and Leveraging Resources.*

Best-Practice Example from Contemporary SOF Ministry (IDS-1)

Note: The following best-practice example is a composite and narrativized construction developed from real themes that arose in the research phase of this project. However, this example is not based on the experiences of any one particular chaplain serving with Special Operations Forces, and it does not refer to actual events involving any “Chaplain Brighton,” “Chaplain McMann,” “RP2 Pembroke,” or any person (or group of persons) who has ever served with the 2nd Marine Raider Battalion.

Chaplain Brighton has served with the 2nd Marine Raider Battalion for nearly 2 years, during which time he and his RP have deployed with elements of the Battalion twice (once for 4 months and once for 7 months). Upon his recent homecoming from the 7-month deployment, he noticed a palpable difference in the esprit de corps and fighting



spirit in Company F, one of his Marine Special Operations Companies. His RP2, John Pembroke, was always working out with those guys, and he mentioned to his chaplain that things seem “different this time.” In fact, this change was even evident during the return and reunion briefs Chaplain Brighton and RP2 Pembroke had conducted with the company just before homecoming. In the last month before deployment, one of the company’s Raiders had been severely injured in a firefight, and everyone knew that his wounds would likely keep him from ever returning to fight again. He was a well-loved and well-respected Marine, and many of his fellow Raiders shared the sense that they should have done something different during the engagement in which he was injured.



The company’s difficulties didn’t abate at home. In the 10 weeks following the deployment, there were a number of domestic-violence incidents involving Raiders from Company F, a number of alcohol incidents, and a number of heated altercations around the team areas that descended into outright brawls. Chaplain Brighton enjoys good relationships with his Battalion Commander, his Sergeant Major, the Company F Commander and First Sergeant, and his Battalion Surgeon. He spoke with each of them about these troubling trends at length, and at least once he had the chance to speak with them all together. The Battalion Surgeon mentioned to Chaplain Brighton offline that the company had a number of psychological referrals in progress, as well.



One day the Marine Raider Regiment's lead psychiatrist called Chaplain Brighton. "Chaplain, I hear that you know the men of Company F well, and that you were over with them on this recent deployment. How familiar are you with the concept of moral injury?" Chaplain Brighton explained to the psychiatrist that he was no expert, but that he had become familiar with the paradigm while attending the USSOCOM Moral Injury Symposium the previous fall. "Great, chaplain. I'd like to invite you up here to talk with me, along with some of our other MPOTFF professionals next week. We'd like to form a multi-disciplinary approach to better understanding what these men went through over there and what they might need now."



Chaplain Brighton agreed and reached out the next day to 4 individuals he thought might help him. First, he reached out to a peer chaplain in the Navy, whom he knew was studying moral injury in a year-long graduate fellowship at a leading

divinity school. That peer had been one of the presenters at the Moral Injury Symposium the previous fall. Second, he called the USSOCOM POTFF Spiritual Domain OIC, Chaplain McMann, to see about receiving copies of all of the slides from the Moral Injury Symposium, in order to review the talks he had attended. Third, he placed a call to a member of the Navy's Caregiver Operational Stress Control (CgOSC) Training Team in San Diego. The CgOSC team had been out to meet with some of the MPOTFF stakeholders the previous year, and Chaplain Brighton knew that a psychologist on the team had completed a doctoral project with



the VA centered on moral injury. Lastly, he called his pastoral counseling professor from seminary, who happened to be a retired Army chaplain from the Vietnam era. Chaplain Brighton had remained in periodic contact with this professor during the 10 years since graduation, and he felt excited for the opportunity to reconnect.

During these 4 conversations, Chaplain Brighton took extensive notes, and—more importantly—he resisted some momentary impulses to act as if he knew more than he did on the ideas that arose. He took risks to show his own gaps in knowledge and to ask questions that he knew might sound elementary to these professional colleagues. His risks paid off. He hung up the phone from the fourth and final call with eight pages of nuanced notes and an email box full of presentations from the symposium. He still had 3 days until the meeting up at Regiment with the MPOTFF team, and Chaplain Brighton took one of those 3 days off to sit in an empty office on the other side of Camp Lejeune. There he reflected on his men from Company F, by face and by name, and prayed for each according to his tradition. He reflected on the events of his most recent deployment, his notes from the recent phone calls, and some of his past experiences in ministry. By the end of the day, he had used 2 fresh pages in his notebook to outline the key ideas that (to him) represented important perspectives from the spiritual dimension of care—perspectives that, although unique, would still likely prove complementary to the psychological, cognitive, social, and physiological contributions offered by other professionals during the meeting. As a last preparation, he also sent an email to the USSOCOM POTFF Spiritual Domain RST about potential program evaluation designs for his own spiritual interventions, as they took shape.

Chaplain Brighton's dedication and preparation allowed him to play a crucial role on the multi-disciplinary committee, and this role took two parallel forms. First, he was able to ensure that the committee more fully



understood the experiences and perspectives of his Raiders—including the spiritual dimensions of their experiences and perspectives—*before* any interventions or responses were formulated. Secondly, he was able to have a voice in shaping those actual interventions *during* the period of their formulation, ensuring that the spiritual dimension of his Raiders was addressed in the interventions (and capable of being measured).

In this example, Chaplain Brighton demonstrated the key leadership traits of:

- | **Integrating,**
- | **Reaching,**
- | **Collaborating,**
- | **Assessing,**
- | **Leveraging Performance Metrics, and**
- | **Leveraging Resources.**

He responded to the Regimental Psychiatrist's invitation to participate on a multi-disciplinary team by carefully preparing himself for service, thereby activating his full potential to make a contribution. This included remarkable humility and initiative, as he reached for the input of trusted SMEs, integrated their ideas and experiences into his own, reflected at length on the needs of his Raiders, and began to prepare for a reliable measurement of any spiritual activities he might develop as a part of a larger response to those needs.



Composite Case Study IDS-1: “Work with Me Here, Chaplain”

As you enter your office one morning, your Religious Affairs NCO comes in behind you with a note. He had run into the unit’s Military & Family Life Counselor (MFLC) while talking with some Operators after an early workout. The note asks you to give the MFLC a call, so you do. She says that she has been working with a SOF Operator from your unit over the past few weeks and has just received his permission to reach out to you for another line of support. He is a devout Latter-Day Saint, and she tells you that his conversations with her are so laden with references to his faith and to religious matters that she no longer feels comfortable continuing with him—unless a helping professional with more specialization in religion and spirituality becomes involved. Her idea is that perhaps you could begin working with him once a week, in which case she could also continue to work with him once a week. From time to time, if he agrees, she would be grateful if she could call to consult with you on some religious material that arises in her consultation with him.

She gives you a brief synopsis of the situation, with his permission. She says that he has been working with SOF for 7 years and that he has been married (no kids) for 12 years. His 2 closest friends on the team have PCS’d since his last deployment, and this has been a struggle for him. He has been spending less time at home and more time at work and the HPTC since his last 9-month deployment. In addition, he has taken on an extra collateral responsibility on the team (which demands a considerable amount of time and focus on top of his existing responsibilities). He says that, according to his wife, he “never really came home” from the last deployment, and she feels as if his personality has changed. At the same time, his evaluations at work have been extraordinarily high, and his physical strength and stamina have increased.



He is also a leader at the church your Religious Affairs NCO attends, and he is very dedicated to youth education and programming. He spends 10–12 hours each weekend preparing and delivering classes and service opportunities for the youth. He says that everyone in his church community seems to appreciate his work and service and that it is in serving the church that he feels closest to God and his wife.



He came to counseling originally because his wife asked him to do so. However, he admits that he often feels uneasy since returning from his last deployment. He has been experiencing higher incidences of restlessness and irrita-

bility, and he occasionally experiences racing thoughts and very slight trembling in his arms and legs.

“So, what do you think? Can you consider helping? I think that, between the two of us, we could probably really help. His symptoms are sub-clinical, and I think that talking regularly has been doing some good. I have been using interventions from Acceptance & Commitment Therapy in our sessions, and there are some faith-based paradigms for ACT that might be even more helpful—but I’m just not ready to get into that myself, not being religious...”

How might you approach the process of answering this counselor’s questions, and what do you make of her offer to collaborate in care? Who else might you need to consult before you give her an answer,



and why? If you do decide to work with her, which of these key leadership traits might be useful to you as you make a specific plan for collaboration: integrating, reaching, collaborating, assessing, and/or leveraging resources?

Looking Inward

Pause to consider how your previous experiences in ministry might shape your intuition about how to respond to the scenario above. Could any of your initial ideas be unhelpful, if acted upon too quickly or without proper discernment?



Widening the Aperture

Here you can situate your reflections from the “Looking Inward” block (above) within the widest context possible, taking into account the needs and expectations of all of your leaders and team members, their family members, other SOF support staff members, your RST peers and supervisors, your faith group leadership, and the larger SOF community.

Reaching Out

Can you now consider any peers, supervisors, or subject-matter experts with whom you might consult in order to better understand the scenario (either as a whole or in any of its facets)?



Course(s) of Action 1

Now you can develop a primary action plan in response to the scenario questions, which are once again stated here:

How might you approach the process of answering this counselor's questions, and what do you make of her offer to collaborate in care? Who else might you need to consult before you give her an answer, and why? How might your Religious Affairs NCO help? If you do decide to work with her, which of these key leadership traits might be useful to you as you make a specific plan for collaboration: Integrating, Reaching, Collaborating, Assessing, and/or Leveraging Resources?

Course(s) of Action 2

If you wish, you can also develop a second action plan in response to the scenario questions. Is there a way you can imagine addressing this situation in ministry that is completely different than your first action plan?



Opening Up

You can take this opportunity to solicit and incorporate feedback on your courses of action, in order to enrich and strengthen your perspective on ministry to SOF and their families.



Trait Group IDS-2: Coordinate, Facilitate, Refer

Incorporating the traits of *Protecting Confidentiality, Assessing, Advising Leadership, and Leveraging Resources*.

Best-Practice Example from Contemporary SOF Ministry (IDS-2)

Note: *The following best-practice example is a composite and narrativized construction developed from real themes that arose in the research phase of this project. However, this example is not based on the experiences of any one particular RST serving with Special Operations Forces, and it does not refer to actual events involving any “Chaplain Faust” or any person (or group of persons) who has ever served with 3rd Battalion, 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne).*

Chaplain Faust has served the 3rd Battalion, 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) for 3 years, and he has deployed several times with them to various places in the world in support of various missions and operations. He has known Sergeant First Class Jameson, a senior Special Operations Engineer Sergeant (18C) on one of his teams, for all of those 3 years. Chaplain Faust and SFC Jameson are both members of the Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod (LCMS), and their families both attend worship services with the same LCMS community near Fort Carson, Colorado.

When SFC Jameson called him late one night on his personal cell phone, Chaplain Faust picked it right up. “Hi Steve. What’s up?” SFC Jameson apologized for calling him so late, but he said that he really needed to talk, and it couldn’t wait. Sensing something heavy in SFC Jameson’s tone of voice, Chaplain Faust asked if it was okay to talk over the phone, or should they perhaps meet in person? SFC Jameson



said meeting in person would be great, so Chaplain Faust invited him over to the house. “Sarah,” he said to his wife, “we’re going to have some unexpected company. I’m going to put some decaf coffee on.”

When SFC Jameson arrived, all of Chaplain Faust’s concerns were heightened. SFC Jameson was in a clear state of agitation and hyper-arousal, his eyes seemed fearful, and his speech was pressured.



“Chaplain, I’m in big trouble,” he said. He described an increasingly compulsive online gambling addiction, complete with layered debt, that had developed in his life over the past 6 months. Chaplain Faust was taken by surprise, but he worked to bracket this response

and to remain attentive to SFC Jameson’s story. SFC Jameson said that he was now at “rock bottom,” and this evening’s gambling losses had left him with no more possible lines of funding for “his habit.” His house was already double-mortgaged, his credit cards were already maxed, and he had lost 2 personal loans from family members that he had lied to obtain.

“I’m ready to get help, sir, and to finally call this an addiction,” Jameson said. “But the thing is that military leaders don’t view gambling addiction in the same way they view substance addiction.” He expressed his worry about maintaining his high security clearance if he were to come forward to ask for help—and therefore he also worried about his ability to maintain his place on the team. He also expressed his



concern about having to come clean with his family members, from whom he had borrowed money. And he was very agitated about the idea that his daughter would ever find out (Chaplain Faust knows well that SFC Jameson is divorced, with a teenage daughter who lives with her mother). “Chaplain,” he said, “is there a way that you can help me to get over this addiction, just keeping the whole thing between you and me?”

Chaplain Faust took a deep breath, and then he let it out very slowly. “Look, Steve,” he said, “you know that nothing you say to me in a setting like this will ever get out into the open without your permission—that’s RST 101.” SFC Jameson nodded. “But I’ve got to be honest with you: I’m no addictions expert, and I definitely don’t know much about gambling addiction. Let me think about it, okay?” They talked some more about the spiritual implications of the situation, and then Chaplain Faust prayed with SFC Jameson. Afterwards Chaplain Faust noticed that SFC Jameson seemed much less agitated than when he had arrived—in fact, he seemed slightly relieved and more than slightly exhausted. They made plans to meet the next day, over lunch, to follow up.

Chaplain Faust spent time online that night researching the dangers of working alone to help someone with an addiction. It didn’t take long for his initial reluctance to grow. In the morning he called a contact at Fort Carson’s Behavioral Health Addiction Medicine (BHAM) office, and afterwards called a contact at the USSOCOM POTFF Psychological Performance Domain (PPP) office. Speaking carefully and hypothetically, and without disclosing any of the contents of the particular encounter with SFC Jameson, he gathered a couple of important pieces of advice about becoming involved in the work of addictions care. He let his Religious Affairs NCO know that he had lunch plans, and headed out. At lunch, after checking in about how the night and



morning had passed, Chaplain Faust said, “Steve, I’ve thought it over, and I’ve gotten some advice—without breaking your trust, of course. I wonder if you’ll let me help you find the right professional to work with. We’ve got a few options, and some of them are anonymous. But if I can level with you, all of the best options are going to include people who work closely with SOF forces and who know the culture and understand some of your realities. I’m the wrong choice to be your only guy here, but I’m not planning to disappear on you. Also, I know our senior leaders pretty well, and you know that if comes down to it, I will advocate for you in any way that I can.”



In this example, Chaplain Faust demonstrated the key leadership traits of:

- | **Protecting Confidentiality,**
- | **Assessing,**
- | **Advising Leadership,** and
- | **Leveraging Resources.**

He assessed SFC Jameson's needs carefully while recognizing his own limitations with humility and clarity. In order to explore whether he could offer care in the manner requested, he sought advice from SMEs familiar with military addictions treatment and SOF psychological health—while carefully protecting the confidential communications between himself and his Soldier. He accepted input from these professionals, and he decided he could not offer care in the manner requested. Continuing contact with SFC Jameson, he attempted to influence him towards being open to involving another professional familiar with SOF realities. He then assured SFC Jameson of his continuing care and advocacies.

Composite Case Study IDS-2: “Can a Chaplain Help Someone Like Her?”

Just as your marriage enrichment event is coming to a close, a senior SOF leader asks you if you have a moment to talk. You take care of a few final details, say a few final goodbyes, and then sit down with him over in the café of the hotel that has hosted your event as your NCO is cleaning up. You ask how you can help.



“Chaplain, you know that Pam and I are pretty traditional people when it comes to faith, and lifestyle, and all the rest. That’s not to say we don’t try to be open to certain changes in society. Our general approach is to live and let live, but we really weren’t prepared for this latest wrinkle in our family. Our youngest daughter, Jillian, just told us last night that she feels she might be transgender.” You settle in for a long conversation, and there is an indeed quite a bit of backstory. At first you think that this leader and his wife want you to talk to Jillian about gender and sexuality—from your own



religious perspective, or to at least give them advice on how to do the same. However, this isn’t precisely the subject of their request. “So, Chaplain,” he says, “the thing is, she has talked to one of her teachers at school, and this teacher has told her that her religion

could be ‘a problem’ as she explores her changing identity. Jillian is now not sure whether to come with us to worship any more. Pam and I are wondering: Are you willing to speak with her? You are not exactly our minister, but you are a minister, assigned to our unit, and I know you care about our people.”

Over the next few minutes you gain a little more context for the request. It seems clear that this SOF leader and his wife are asking you to speak with their daughter about how to remain connected with God even though she is going through major changes in her outlook or identity (and is unsure what God might think of these changes). You understand



the request, and also understand their concern. However, you still recognize this as a delicate and complicated request for support.

How might you approach the process of responding to this request? Should you perhaps consult your endorser, or another leader from your religious organization, before responding? Who else might you need to consult before you give this leader an answer, and why? If you decide that, for any reason, you will have difficulty saying yes, would you consider referring? If so, to whom might you refer?

Looking Inward

Pause to consider how your previous experiences in ministry might shape your intuition about how to respond to the scenario above. Could any of your initial ideas be unhelpful, if acted upon too quickly or without proper discernment?

Widening the Aperture

Here you can situate your reflections from the “Looking Inward” block (above) within the widest context possible, taking into account the needs and expectations of all of your leaders and team members, their family members, other SOF support staff members, your RST peers and supervisors, your faith group leadership, and the larger SOF community.

Reaching Out

Can you now consider any peers, supervisors, or subject-matter experts with whom you might consult in order to better understand the scenario (either as a whole or in any of its facets)?



Course(s) of Action 1

Now you can develop a primary action plan in response to the scenario questions, which are once again stated here:

How might you approach the process of sharpening your professional identity for service in this scenario? More specifically, how might you establish an engaged presence among the leaders and members of this team—one that is aligned with your personality, particular strengths, and sense of calling? How might you address any barriers to rapport that you sense are present in the scenario?

Course(s) of Action 2

If you wish, you can also develop a second action plan in response to the scenario questions. Is there a way you can imagine addressing this situation in ministry that is completely different than your first action plan?



Opening Up

You can take this opportunity to solicit and incorporate feedback on your courses of action, in order to enrich and strengthen your perspective on ministry to SOF and their families.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCE: THE SOCOM SPIRITUAL FITNESS SCALE

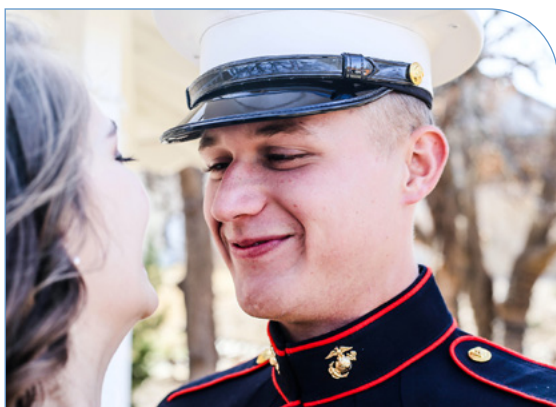
Throughout the process of developing and completing this workbook project, it became clear to the research team that many SOF chaplains, SOF RST members, and SOF leaders consider the leveraging of performance metrics to be critical to the future of SOF chaplaincy. In order to support this consideration, the research team has included here a brief overview of one additional resource developed at CHAMP for USSOCOM, which is now available to SOF RSTs.

In the Fall of 2019, the CHAMP Spirituality & Performance (S&P) Research Team completed a multi-year quantitative metrics product (titled the SOCOM Spiritual Fitness Scale, or SSFS) designed to aid SOF leaders in measuring the Spiritual Performance of their constituents according to the CJCSI definition. Thousands of participants were enlisted in the study over 6 phases, and three related subscales for measuring the CJCSI definition of spiritual fitness emerged over the iterations—each of which has been conclusively shown to contain a remarkably high degree of internal validity. (Using the Cronbach Alpha, our external validators at the



University of Tennessee Chattanooga found the subscales to each far exceed the minimum for reliability—at 0.974, 0.929, and 0.865, respectively.) The three subscales each address a particular dimension of spirituality, with “Subscale A” measuring Personal Connection with a Higher Power (PCHP), “Subscale B” measuring the Pursuit of Meaning, Purpose, and Values (PMPV), and “Subscale C” measuring the impulse towards Service and Sacrifice for the Greater Good (SSGG).

The PCHP subscale can be said to measure a vertical dimension of spirituality, since it is clearly preoccupied with a person’s connection to a transcendent Higher Power. The SSGG subscale can be said to measure a horizontal dimension of spirituality, since it is preoccupied



with a humanitarian connection between people. The PMPV subscale can be said to occupy a middle ground between vertical and horizontal dimensions of spirituality, since the pursuit of meaning, purpose, and values can—according to a person’s

outlook—either remain closely oriented to a Higher Power or remain closely oriented to humanitarian commitments (or both). The metrics product therefore allows for a wide range of spiritual commitments and beliefs to be captured along three continua (and for very different Spiritual Fitness profiles to emerge).

The SSFS is (aside from being demonstrably reliable and psychometrically sound) concise without being narrow, sensitive to many belief



systems without being universalist in nature, and capable of easy correlation with many other scales used in behavioral health and Total Force Fitness. Most people can respond to the SSFS's 18 items in about 5 minutes. At the operational level, professional military chaplains use the SSFS not as a "spiritual needs assessment," but as a primer and catalyst for field research, tools development, and program evaluation. Bottom line: Innovative chaplains working in sophisticated multi-disciplinary environments (which tend to demand evidence for any claims of program efficacy) will use the SSFS to authoritatively demonstrate success and impact.

Since the development of the SSFS, USSOCOM has further utilized the scale in the Wave VI survey. While the results of the survey were not enough to be considered a representative sample, the results further validated the SSEF within the SOF community.

To obtain an exhaustive description of the Spiritual Fitness Metrics product, please contact the USSOCOM Spiritual Performance Domain (813-826-3530 or 4560) and request a copy of the POTFF Spiritual Fitness Metrics Report produced by CHAMP for USSOCOM in September of 2019. For more information on how this product can aid program development and evaluation for spiritual fitness or spiritual performance initiatives, please contact CDR David Alexander, Ph.D., CHC, USN (david.alexander@usuhs.edu; 301-295-3193), CHAMP's S&P Research Program Manager.

How To Use the SSFS

The SSFS can be used to generate individual or group baseline profiles related to spirituality and to assess trends over time. RST members observing changes in an individual's responses from one assessment to the next can bridge such observations into opportunities for



tailored spiritual coaching. The SSFS can also be used to evaluate the effectiveness of programs designed to support and enhance an individual's or a group's commitment to altruism and to stay aligned with transcendent principles. These subscales should not be used to find and fix problems. They measure underlying traits that are subject to intra-individual movement, particularly during times of stress, personal maturation, and change.

Administer the scale within two-item blocks (block 1: PMPV and SSGG; block 2: PCHP). To avoid any priming effect, we recommend administering the horizontal subscales (PMPV and SSGG) before the vertical subscale (PCHP). When administering the scale using an electronic system, the order of the items within each item-block can be randomized. When administering the scale using paper and pencil, consider using the version of the scale provided here (this item sequence will minimize likely order-effects).

Caution

Rigid cutoffs to classify people as “high” or “low” for each subscale are arbitrary for non-clinical traits that exist along a continuum. Each subscale is designed to be part of a composite view. For nontheists, base their profile on PMPV and SSGG. For theists, base their profile on PMPV, SSGG, and PCHP.



Scoring

All subscales should be scored by first coding the response options, such that:

- Strongly disagree = 0
- Disagree = 1
- Neutral = 2
- Agree = 3
- Strongly agree = 4

Items should be averaged to produce scale scores.

- PMPV items (1, 3, 4, 6, 10) and SSGG items (2, 5, 7, 8, 9) should be averaged separately.
- PCHP items (12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18) **should** be scored if respondents indicate they do believe in God.
- PCHP items should not be scored if respondents indicate they do not believe in God.
- PCHP also should not be scored if respondents use the option “The assumptions behind this question are not consistent with my world views” on two or more items.

To obtain an exhaustive description of the SSFS product, please contact the USSOCOM Spiritual Performance Domain (813-826-3530 or 4560).



USSOCOM Spiritual Fitness Scale

The set of questions below asks you about your opinions and beliefs. Please answer each question as accurately as possible.

USSOCOM Spiritual Fitness Scale

1. I know what my life is about.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

2. Human value and respect should be the greatest social value.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

3. I have been able to find a sense of meaning in my life.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

4. Looking at my life as a whole, things seem clear to me.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Neutral
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Strongly Agree
-



USSOCOM Spiritual Fitness Scale

5. I believe strongly in humanity and the power of people.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

6. I have a core of beliefs, ethics, and values that give my life a sense of meaning and purpose.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

7. I often think about a “grand plan” or process that human beings are a part of.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

8. The greatest moral decision is doing the greatest good for human beings.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

9. Being of service to others is an important source of meaning in my life.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

10. I am able to find meaning and purpose in my everyday experiences.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Neutral
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Strongly Agree
-



USSOCOM Spiritual Fitness Scale (continued)

The next set of questions is about religious and spiritual matters. Even if you do not think of yourself as a religious person, please answer each question as accurately as possible. If you believe that a question does not align with your belief-system, then select the option “The assumptions behind this question are not consistent with my world views.”

USSOCOM Spiritual Fitness Scale

11. Do you believe in a God or Gods?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

12. I feel God’s love for me.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ The assumptions behind this question are not consistent with my world views.

13. I look to God for strength, support, and guidance.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ The assumptions behind this question are not consistent with my world views.

14. I feel God’s presence.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Neutral
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Strongly Agree
 - ☐ The assumptions behind this question are not consistent with my world views.
-



USSOCOM Spiritual Fitness Scale

15. I am grateful to God for all God has done for me.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ The assumptions behind this question are not consistent with my world views.

16. God comforts and shelters me.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ The assumptions behind this question are not consistent with my world views.

17. I have decided to place my life under God's direction.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ The assumptions behind this question are not consistent with my world views.

18. Religious beliefs are what really lie behind my whole approach to life.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Neutral
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Strongly Agree
 - ☐ The assumptions behind this question are not consistent with my world views.
-



ABBREVIATIONS

Name	Acronym
Acceptance and Commitment Therapy	ACT
Air Force Special Operations Command	AFSOC
Area of Operations	AO
Behavioral Health Addiction Medicine (U.S. Army)	BHAM
Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers	BOSS
Caregiver Occupational Stress Control (U.S. Navy Bureau of Medicine)	CGOSC
Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction	CJCSI
Consortium for Health and Military Performance	CHAMP
Driving Under the Influence	DUI
Family Readiness Group	FRG
Human Performance Optimization	HPO
Human Performance Training Center	HPTC
Improvised Explosive Device	IED
Joint Base Lewis-McChord	JBLM



Name	Acronym
Joint Special Operations University	JSOU
Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command	MARSOC
MARSOC Preservation of the Force and Family	MPOTFF
Master Sergeant (U.S. Army)	MSG
Naval Special Warfare	NSF
Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge	NCOIC
Operation Enduring Freedom	OEF
Operation Inherent Resolve	OIR
Plan of Actions and Milestones	POA&M
Performance and Resiliency Program (MARSOC)	PERRES
Preservation of the Force and Family	POTFF
Religious Programs Specialist (Navy)	RP
Preservation of the Force and Family Task Force	POTFF-TF
Psychological Performance Program (POTFF)	PPP
Religious Support Team	RST



Name	Acronym
Senior Enlisted Leader	SEL
Sergeant First Class (U.S. Army)	SFC
Staff Sergeant (U.S. Air Force)	SSgt
Staff Sergeant (U.S. Army)	SSG
Special Operations Command Pacific	SOC PAC
Special Operations Forces	SOF
Subject-Matter Expert	SME
United States Army Special Operations Command	USASOC
Uniformed Services University (of the Health Sciences)	USU/ USUHS
United States Special Operations Command	USSOCOM





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