Resilience and Adaptation

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Background

- 27 year Veteran of the US Army
- Two combat tours of Operation Iraqi Freedom 05-07 and 08-09
- In a WTU following my second deployment
- Work full time with Veterans, family members, professional care givers and other stake holders
Some Presuppositions

- There are some incredibly resilient women and men out there
- All service members have adjustment/reintegration issues
- Those who have experienced a significant life change may have a more difficult time
- Resilient people are inspiring
Some Remarkable Folks
Expectations of Resilience

✓ America - home of pioneers, cowboys, mountain men and self-made millionaires
✓ Depression, WWII, astronauts on the moon
✓ No whiners allowed
✓ No American corner on resilience
Resilience Defined

✓ Multiple definitions
  ✓ picking oneself up by the boot straps
  ✓ positive adaptation in response to adversity (Waller, 2001)
  ✓ the ability to grow and thrive in the face of challenges and bounce back from adversity (US Army Comprehensive Soldier Fitness Program, 2010)
  ✓ your own definition
Characteristics of Resilience

- Self-efficacy - individual's *perception* of his or her skills and abilities to act effectively and competently (Bandura, 1997)
- Gratitude, hope, kindness, leadership, love, spirituality, and teamwork (Peterson and Seligman, 2003)
- Optimism, mental agility, self control, self awareness, self advocacy and connectedness (Etter, 2010)
Developing Resilience

✓ Innate or learned?
✓ We cannot make any one resilient
✓ Positive Change 30-70% of the time (Linley and Joseph, 2004)
Specific Suggestions

✓ Build the Center
✓ Adjust the Lenses
✓ Say No
✓ Establish Connections
Build the Center or Core

- Good about building walls
- We need to be about the business of the core
- Fundamental values that give shape and meaning to our world
- Self awareness
Adjust the Lenses

✓ What do you see?
Say No

✓ “Just Say No to Negativity”
Establish Connections

- Breaking the human spirit
- Leverage modern technology
- Keep eye contact
- Creative, life giving power of connectedness or knowing someone
One More Suggestion

- Genuinely listening and caring
- Treatment with dignity, respect and compassion
- “I” contact
- Opportunities for growth
What Warriors Can Do – Three Basic Rules for Life

✓ F  Forward Thinking
✓ O  Opportunities
✓ B  Build Life
Forward Thinking

✓ Life is journey
✓ “It” was a defining moment but it does not have to define the person
✓ Create plans and set goals
Opportunities

- Adversity provides opportunity
- Adversity provides growth
- Limitations are often artificial
Build Life

✓ Set, pursue and accomplish goals
✓ Achieve independence and happiness for themselves and loved ones
What Else They Needed to Know

✓ They may be overwhelmed
✓ May feel as if their life is out of control
✓ Life has changed but it is not over
✓ They are not alone
✓ Organize and prioritize the material
Summary

✓ Human beings are remarkably resilient
✓ Resilience can be learned
✓ B...A...S...E
✓ F...O...B
✓ Life has changed but it is not over
✓ There is more than one way to the summit
✓ You are limited only by your own creativity
Resilience and Adaptation

Questions?