Military Suicide: A Brief Bibliography of Scholarly Resources

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NPS RESEARCH


Abstract: One of the central spiritual issues alcoholics deal with today is a sense of meaninglessness. This thesis will show how the use of three spiritual resources can bring about wholeness in the lives of alcoholics: First is the resource of healing of memories with a primary focus on forgiveness, second is the resource of prayer and meditation, and third is pastoral counseling utilizing narrative theory. These three resources can be transformative interventions for the pastoral care of alcoholics. Through these spiritual resources the alcoholic can rediscover a deeper sense of meaning. When a person has meaning in their life, this means they are connected with three relationships. These three relationships are: 1) the relationship with God; 2) the relationship with society and community; and 3) the relationship with herself or himself. When the spiritual resources in this thesis are implemented into pastoral counseling, these relationships can be reconnected. This then results in a rediscovery of personal meaning. By the time alcoholics determine that their lives are unmanageable they have perhaps ruined their lives and health, and quite possibly the lives of the persons dearest to them. Someone must intervene if lives are to be saved and if people are to become self-respecting, productive citizens again.


Abstract: A Human Systems Integration (HSI) analysis of the Army Suicide Prevention Program (ASPP) was conducted to gain feedback from soldiers and leaders. The scope of this study limited analysis to the prevention activities associated with the ASPP system. A retrospective analysis of Army suicide statistics from 2008-2011 was conducted prior to data collection. During 24 in-person interviews, soldiers assessed the importance of the four user needs, the usefulness of the systems interfaces, and overall effectiveness of the system. The research team drew conclusions about two of the four research questions. The study determined there were mismatches between the needs of the users and the system resources and concluded the stigma associated with seeking help is a hindrance to help-seeking behaviors. The system mismatches were translated into four system gaps and eight recommendations. The diversity and feedback of the participants was noteworthy and provided vital insight into the suicide issue within the military and the Army’s effort to address
the problem. Recommendations for future research are: including poor sleep quality as a risk factor for suicide, including self-awareness as a protective factor for suicide, implementing more evidence-based approaches to care, and leveraging lessons learned from college-based suicide prevention.

Abstract: This thesis examines the administrative separation process and attrition documentation as well as the characteristics of recruits who attrite from the U.S. Navy's Recruit Training Command (RTC). A random sample of 754 "retained files" from Customer Service Desk RTC was examined for attrition documentation and the information obtained was compared with attrition documentation contained in the Corporate Enterprise Training Activity Resource System (CETARS). The comparison is used to determine the accuracy of CETARS in documenting the reasons for medical and psychiatric attrition and its relationship to Separation Program Codes (SPD) listed on the DD 214 discharge form. The results indicate that CETARS is 95.2 percent accurate in documenting medical reasons for attrition and 94.2 percent accurate for psychiatric reasons. It was unclear whether a relationship existed between SPD codes and CETARS in documenting attrition. The specific reasons for psychiatric attrition include the following: Personality Disorder, Adjustment Disorder, Borderline Personality Disorder, and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. In addition to the analysis of attrition documentation, we analyzed data on 216,028 recruits entering RTC between fiscal year 2000 and 2004 to determine the predictors of non-psychiatric attrites versus psychiatric attrites. Logit regression found that the predictors of both types of attrition were similar.

Abstract: The Department of Defense has scarce resources and must continually make decisions on what new programs to fund and what obsolete/unnecessary programs to eliminate or modify. With regard to manpower issues, there are many jobs within the military that could be outsourced or restructured for a financial savings without a reduction in quality. One of these potential jobs is that of the U.S. Navy chaplain. This paper investigates (1) whether or not this function must necessarily be performed by a commissioned officer and (2) whether a substantial savings could be realized to the United States taxpayer without sacrificing any of the rights of religious freedom. Overall, an argument is made for the divestiture of permanent shipboard and most shore-based chaplains. This is done on the basis of economic savings (potentially $69 million/year) and the lack of a demonstrated necessity for religious representation in areas which provide sufficient opportunities for worship. Outsourcing is presented as another avenue to obtain financial savings (potentially $37.5 million/year) due to the demonstrated lack of difference between the duties of military chaplains and civilian clergy. However, outsourcing is shown to be an inferior approach. Additionally, the logic behind the preservation of the Chaplain Corps is explored.

Abstract: When Soldiers deploy into any theater of operation, they encounter a sustained series of stressors unlike any they would encounter at home station. To mitigate the cumulative effect of these stressors on their units and individual Soldiers, leaders must be able to assist service members in learning strategies to effectively cope with stress under the most arduous of conditions. These strategies can improve the effectiveness and sustainability of our Soldiers in combat. The central purpose of this project is to identify how leaders can build, foster, and sustain resiliency in their organizations at the unit level. Researchers Sutcliffe and Vogus define resilience is defined as "the capacity for adaptability, positive functioning, or competence following chronic stress or prolonged trauma." Put simply, it allows an individual
or organization to draw on internal and external resources to positively adjust to current adversities and strengthens their ability to cope with future adversities. Building resilience is critical to mission accomplishment, longevity and sustainability of Soldiers in combat. However, in order for units to properly do so for the long-term, they must contain the following characteristics of resilience: concerted leadership, adequate resources, enhancement of organizational learning, flexibility/adaptability in the face of adversity, and goal oriented.

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Abstract: This study models DoD suicides as a Poisson process to detect departures from usual variation using a self-starting control chart scheme. Methods are implemented in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet with Visual Basic macros for ease of use. Persistent shifts in the process mean are detected in the following months for each service component. Army: August 1985 (increase), September 1987 (decrease), April 1991 (increase), November 1997 (decrease), and September 2001 (decrease). Navy: December 1990 (decrease), January 1993 (increase), May 1994 (decrease), July 1995 (increase), and March 1996 (decrease). Marine Corps: January 1993 (increase) and March 1998 (decrease). Air Force: January 1988 (increase), April 1990 (decrease), November 1994 (increase), November 1998 (decrease), and April 1999 (decrease).

http://hdl.handle.net/10945/1643
Abstract: As the Department of the Navy and Marine Corps looks for efficiencies in Force End Strength Management and improvement to Sailor and Marine quality of life, Semper Fit may provide some answers. This research specifically focuses on the Marine Corps Body Composition Program (BCP) and Remedial Physical Conditioning Program (RPCP). The purpose is to qualitatively analyze a program for Marines who are overfat or on remedial physical training (PT) programs, focusing on the feasibility of Marines obtaining professional assistance from Semper Fit. The scope of this research evaluates existing programs and analyzes their beneficial affects in improving retention and attrition of RPCP Marines. The research shows that Semper Fit professionals would provide overfat and poorly conditioned Marines by USMC standards a consistent program through mandatory training in health, nutrition, and fitness. Semper Fit would directly support unit commanders with classes in nutrition, health, and fitness tailored for each RPCP Marine. Furthermore, this study validates the newly established Department of Defense Physical Readiness Test Standards recently adapted by the Department of the Navy as highly accurate. This study recommends the Marine Corps further expand Semper FIts role in support of the Marine and unit commander.

http://hdl.handle.net/10945/653
Abstract: When service men and women deploy into a theater of operation, they encounter a sustained series of stressors unlike any they would encounter elsewhere. To mitigate the cumulative effect of these stressors on their units and individuals, leaders and unit members must be able to assist one another to effectively cope under stressful conditions. We believe that resilience and coping strategies improve the effectiveness and sustainability for those in service. The central purpose of this project is to examine the factors of small unit organizational resilience. Assessments such as these intend to inform how leaders might build, foster, and sustain resiliency in their organizations. Resilience is defined as the capacity for adaptability, positive functioning, or competence following chronic stress or prolonged trauma (Sutcliffe & Vogus, 2003, p. 96). Put simply, it allows an individual or organization to draw on internal and external resources to positively adjust to current adversities and strengthens their
ability to cope with future setbacks. We offer four core domains of resilience that units may use to assess their ability to deal with operational stress: concerted leadership, adequate resources, enhancement of organizational learning, and flexibility and adaptability in the face of adversity.

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Abstract: The U.S. military suffered more casualties from suicide than from combat last year. A staggering 349 service members took their own lives in 2012 according to a Pentagon report on active duty suicides. These numbers, when compared to 229 troops killed in combat over the same period from the Washington Post’s tally, compelled U.S. Navy Lt. Darryl Diptee to seek out the underlying causes of military suicides and, ultimately, to develop a solution of his own to assist in combating the problem.
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