

OXYGEN

RELATIONAL READINESS TRAINING SERIES

STRONGER FAMILIES®
Oxygen for Your Relationships

BRIDGING THE GAP

Understand how the job impacts you, the relationships you have, AND what to do about it.

Facilitator Guide

Pre-Event Checklist:

- Make sure everyone has a Study Guide on Bridging The Gap from Stronger Families
- Check your Tech: Computer, Slide Deck, Audio, Music, etc.
- Greet participants as they arrive,

Learning Objectives:

1. Students will explore how emotional weight from their professional experiences accumulates over time.
2. Students will reflect on how these emotions impact both their personal and professional lives.
3. Students will engage in activities aimed at enhancing self-awareness, emotional intelligence, and stress decompression and regulation.

Facilitation Insight:

Deeper ideas for the Facilitator to consider. EX "After doing this exercise, many participants will need a break from the tension. Sharing a breathing exercise, or taking a moment for people to journal their feelings will help release the tension and stress."

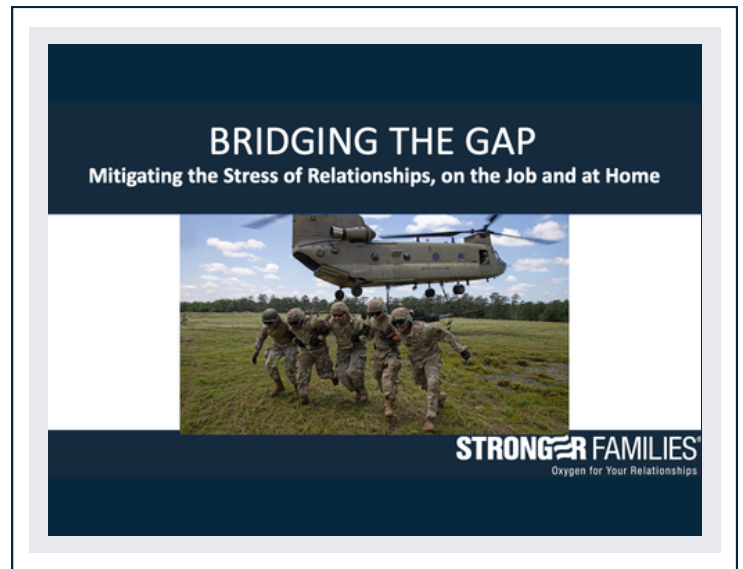
Instruction:

Specific instructions for the Facilitator: EX "Advance to the next slide and ask the following question"

Script:

"This is language the Facilitator may consider using to make sure all essential elements of the curriculum are covered."

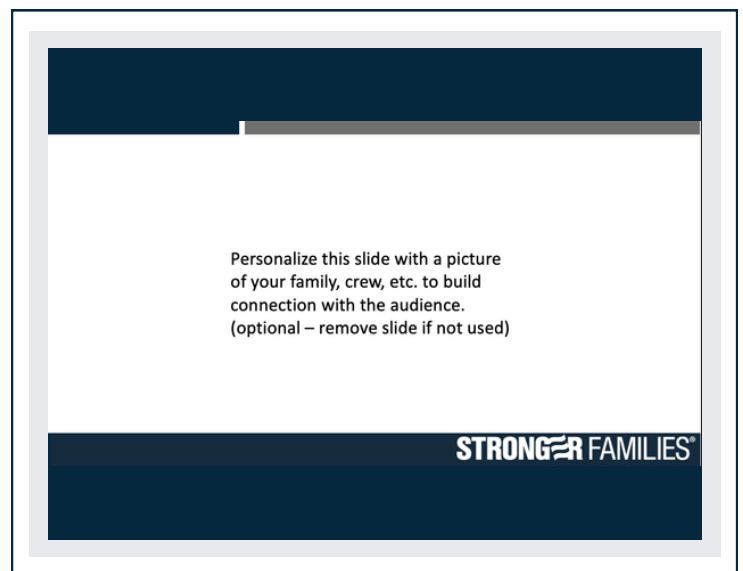
Put up the Title Slide as the attendees are arriving. Make sure that you greet them, introduce yourself (if you don't already know them, ask about their day so far, how their training is going, anything that will begin to form a connection).



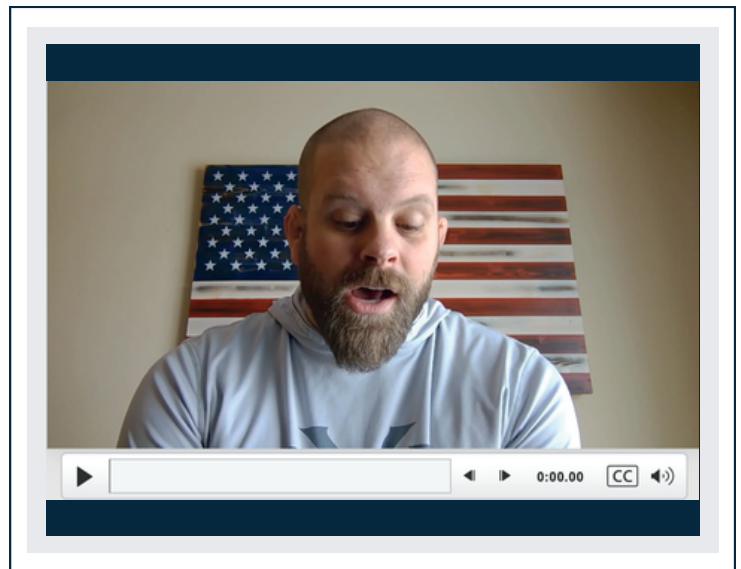
"Welcome to today's training. We will be using the Study Guide from Stronger Families on the topic of Bridging the Gap. For those of you who don't know, my name is -----."

Advance to your family or work picture slide (optional to form connection with students).

**Note: Facilitators are encouraged to personalize their slide deck, allowing a chance for introductions, personal experiences, etc. however, the curriculum and overall content should not be changed.*



You'll want to set up the next slide which is a video segment of Nick, a former police officer sharing his story. He gave Stronger Families permission to share his story of almost taking his life in an attempted suicide.



Two things you need to know about this video of Nick. First, the person who called Nick moments before he was going to take his life was a Peer Support member of his department. That detail is important, because the respect and trust Nick had for that individual was enough to stop him from ending his life.

Secondly, much of what led Nick to that decision was the accumulation of stress over the years as a police officer. He had tried EAP and counseling but never really addressed the deeper issues that ultimately pushed him to the edge. Stress for those who serve is very real, and for Nick, it nearly cost him his life.

As chaplains in the military, this lesson is vital. While you may not serve in a formal peer support role, you are often the person service members turn to in moments of crisis. Your presence, your spiritual care, and the respect they have for you can be the difference between life and death. It's crucial to help them recognize and process the ongoing stress of military life—whether from deployment cycles, family strain, or the weight of command—so those hidden burdens don't become overwhelming.

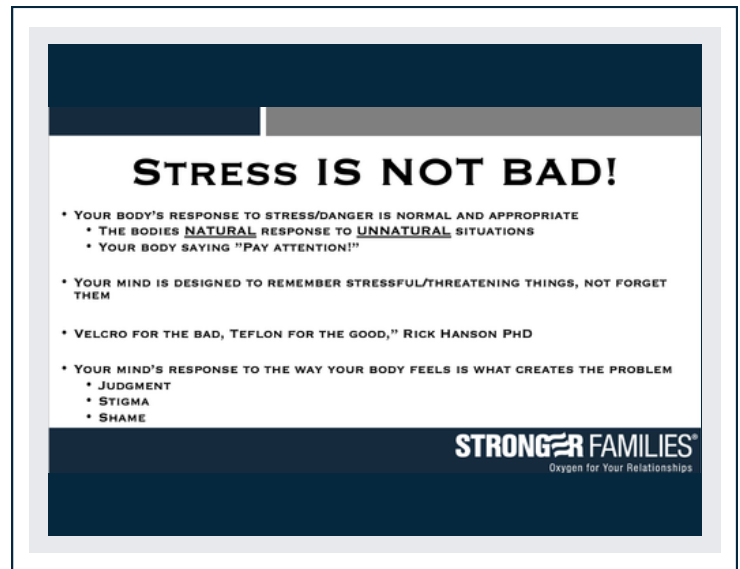
The question becomes: is stress always a bad thing? Not necessarily. But unless it is understood and addressed, it can take a devastating toll. As chaplains, you play a unique and sacred role in guiding service members to find hope, meaning, and resilience in the midst of that stress.

Stress for the Military personnel looks different than the normal person (i.e., civilian). A typical day for you is dealing with life-and-death decisions, witnessing human suffering, intense workload, separation from family. What are some other ways you see stress show up differently for you than the average civilian?

**STRESS IN THE MILITARY
LOOKS DIFFERENT**

- LIFE-AND-DEATH DECISIONS
- WITNESSING HUMAN SUFFERING
- INTENSE WORKLOADS
- RISK OF PERSONAL HARM
- DEPLOYMENTS AND SEPARATION FROM FAMILY

STRONGER FAMILIES
Oxygen for Your Relationships



You don't have to use the story listed above to make the point about how we remember the bad over the good. Feel free to come up with your own story to illustrate this idea of how our minds retain the bad over the good.

Use a real world scenario to illustrate how we get stuck on "The bad". For example:

When we are doing a critical incident debrief, we talk about all the things that went on during the incident. The good, and the bad. What is it that you remember about the debrief when you get home? All the things that you knocked out of the park, or that one point someone brought up, where you missed the mark?

Stress is not BAD! It is your body's NATURAL response to UNNATURAL situations. It is your body saying 'Pay Attention.' Our brains are hardwired to remember stressful/threatening events.

Rick Hanson, a PhD, said, 'our minds are a lot like Velcro for the bad, Teflon for the good.' You've probably found this to be true. Think about a moment where you received a handful of complimentary praises for the work you are doing, but just as you are about to sign off, your boss sends a scathing email about something you did. Which one do you pay attention to?

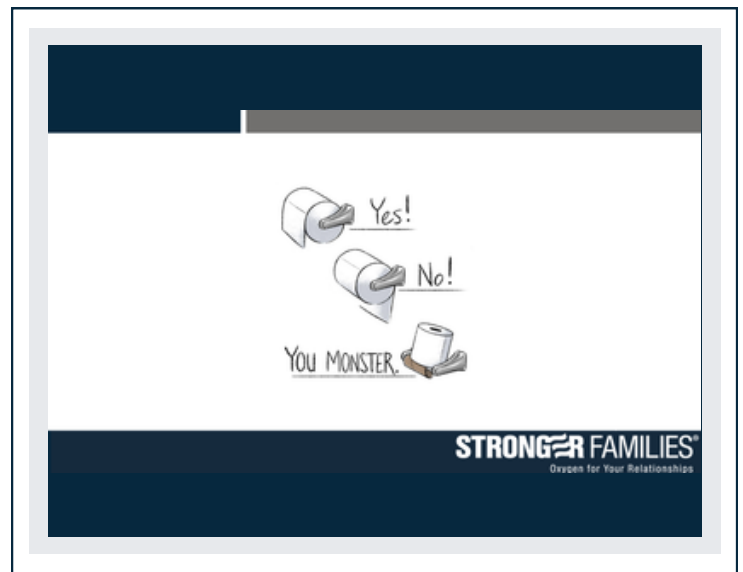
The issue is not whether stress is bad or good, but rather, your mind's response to the way your body feels is what creates the problem.

Each of us in this room handles stress differently. Some of us are stuffers, others of us avengers, some of us seek distractions, and some of us turn to close friends or family for support. Let's take a moment, and see just how different we are in this room.

Our first stop is the bathroom. How many of you would say the world hangs in the balance, based on the direction the toilet paper is hanging? How many of you would say, 'as long as the toilet paper is in the general vicinity, we are ok?' And in a room of this size, there is always one person who becomes the monster.

The next slides are intended to illustrate personality Differences. Something as simple as which direction the toilet paper hangs draws wide Differences between people. Now imagine what differences you would see with something like, conflict, or communicating. Use the humor to draw the attendees in. Make it fun

Advance to the toilet paper slide when you introduce the monster in your presentation.



When you ask the questions above, make sure to ask for a show of hands. This will allow the audience to see how different the room is when it comes to these examples.

Advance to the Speed Limit slide.



Moving on to our next example. How many of you drove to our training today? As you passed the speed limit signs on your drive, how many of you thought those signs were a suggestion. Raise your hands. How many of you when it says 65 mph, it means you only go 65 mph and not a mile over the speed limit.

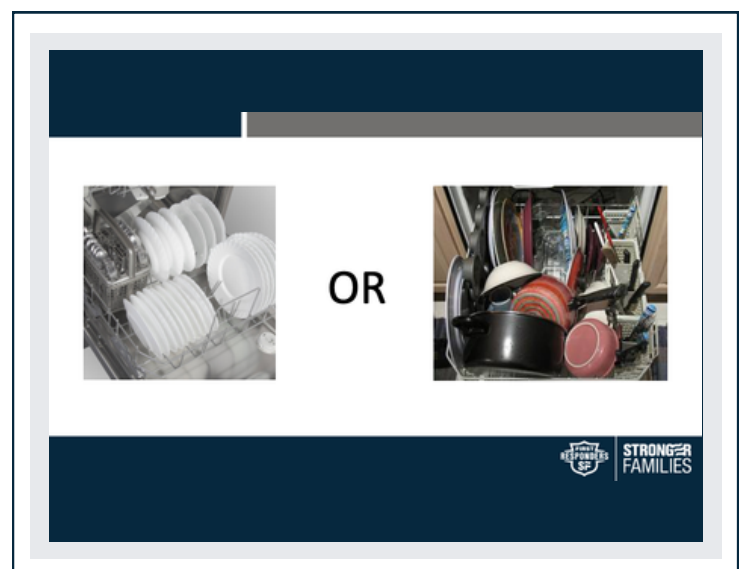
Advance to dishwasher slide.



Only advance to the first image of the dishwasher to create a compare and contrast with the example below.

Our final stop is in the kitchen. How many of you believe there is an organized system to placing dishes in the dishwasher? How many of you look at this picture and it is cathartic?

Advance to dishwasher slide of both images.

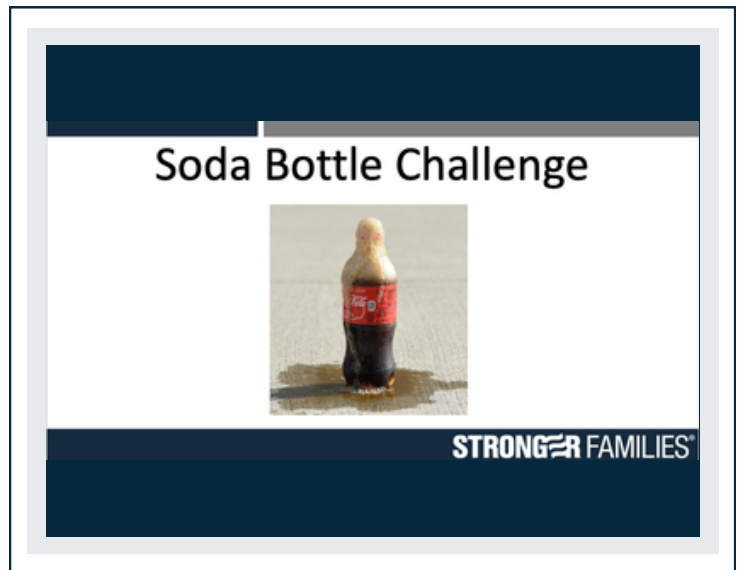


How many would argue that the goal of the dishwasher is to cram as many dishes as possible into the dishwasher, slam the door shut, and hope it still runs?

As you can see, within this room, there are many different responses to the same common daily activities. The same is true of the stress we deal with daily. Each of us has a different way to manage that stress.

For some of us, the differences we experience when managing stress is a lot like this soda can. In fact, the more time I spend with soldiers, the more I think this Soda Can Challenge illustrates many of your lives under stress. It represents what many of you are facing daily.

You'll want to pass out the soda cans for each table to begin shaking based on the stress they are dealing with.



I want you to think about your last deployment or training. What type of stress did you experience. Was there an incident or did someone say something that triggered you. For others, think about the last week at home. How stressful was it at home with your spouse or kids? Take the soda can and begin to shake it. This is your chance to take your stress out on the bottle instead of your co-worker or family.

The "Soda Bottle Exercise" is used to illustrate how the stress, trauma, and challenges of military life can build up over time. The bottle itself represents a service member. When you shake the bottle, it represents the emotional and physical strain that military personnel experience. It could be the effects of deployment, the weight of leadership responsibility, family separation, the loss of a fellow service member, or even the daily grind of military life.

The pressure inside continues to build, but on the outside, you can't always see it. The bottle's wrapper—just like a service member in uniform—may look squared away, sharp, and composed. Everything appears fine. Yet beneath the surface, the pressure is mounting. Eventually, that pressure can become too much and explode—often leaving those around them saying, "I never saw it coming."

The moment you crack the lid, the soda bursts out. And it doesn't just affect the service member (the bottle itself); it spills over onto everyone around them—their spouse, children, friends, unit members, and community.

Ignoring the pressure inside doesn't make it disappear. Just "waiting until retirement" or "trying not to think about it" doesn't resolve the buildup. Without healthy ways to process stress and release the pressure safely, the risk of an emotional or relational explosion only grows.

The question becomes, how do we manage the pressure contained in the soda bottle? How do you manage the stress and weight you are carrying—both while serving and at home? Each of you picked up a rucksack the day you said yes to military service. And that rucksack has been filling with experiences and emotions ever since.

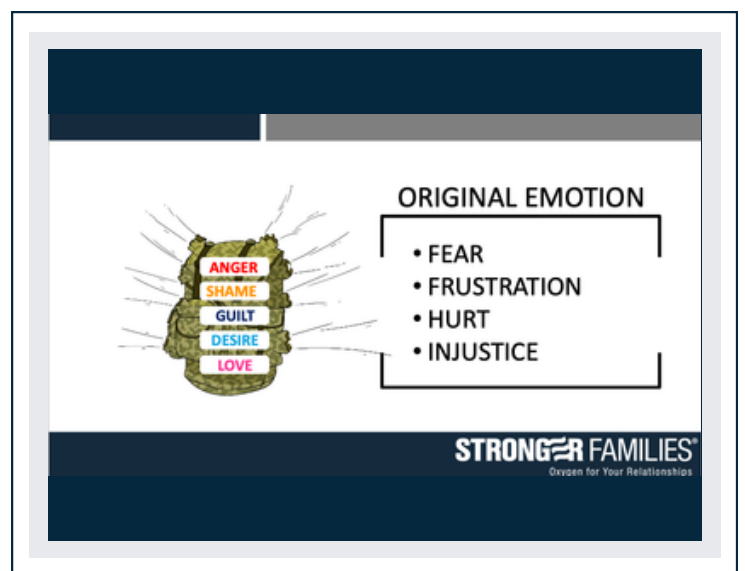
Some of those things you've been carrying since childhood—you just didn't realize you were packing them into your rucksack along the way.

Advance to Rucksack slide.



Many of us have positive feelings at the bottom of our rucksack – feelings of love, joy, desire, and contentment. The challenge is that over time, negative feelings can begin to push those positive feelings down, and they are not readily available to us. We lose sight of those positive feelings as they are often clouded with negative emotions like anger, guilt, shame, etc.

Advance to Rucksack slide and show the range of feelings contained in the rucksack.



Anger usually floats to the top of the rucksack and can build up. Many times leading to blow ups. Vulnerable feelings like sadness and fear are often underneath anger. Anger stands in the way of vulnerability and puts up walls. It protects us from being hurt, but in relationships it blocks us from intimacy and closeness.

For so many service members, their rucksack was filling up long before they ever put on the uniform. Childhood experiences and past traumas can often take up a significant amount of space in that rucksack. For some, it's already dangerously full. The reality is, nobody truly knows how heavy someone else's rucksack is—or when it might come apart at the seams. Each person carries it differently.

Over the course of a military career, service members are exposed to combat stress, repeated deployments, high operational tempo, loss, and the weight of responsibility. Layer upon layer, it takes a toll. The purpose of this exercise is to create space to begin unpacking some of the emotions that have been stuffed deep into the rucksack—so they don't stay hidden, silently adding to the weight.

Direct participants to take out their study guide and turn to the page with rucksack. Have them write down a few negative feelings they've recently carried in their rucksack.

Advance to the Unpacking Your Rucksack Breakout Slide.



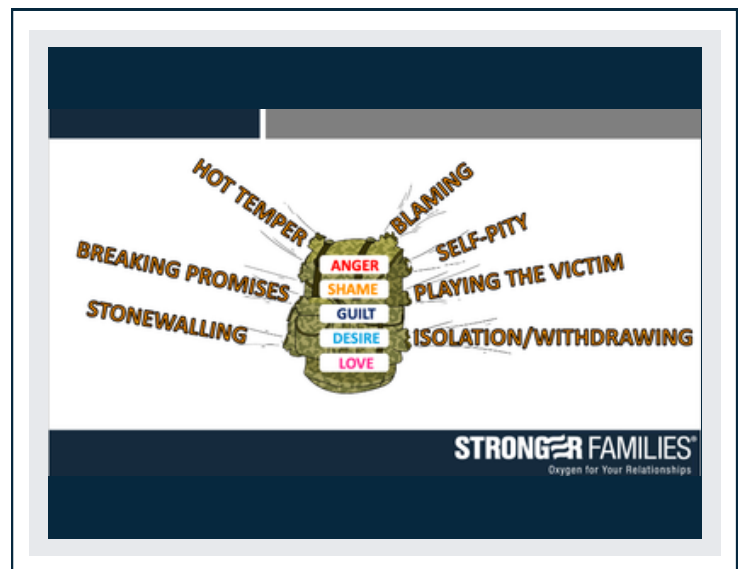
Identifying negative feelings helps connect with triggers or common emotions in your rucksack. The goal is to link them to original emotions, like Fear, Frustration, Hurt, or Injustice. Dealing with the original emotion, not the negative feeling, helps to eliminate conflicts in relationships. Don't carry the burden of negative feelings or you could end up like these individuals.

Advance to next slide of video playing the Malcom in the middle.



All of us handle conflict differently, but when we don't address the negative feelings and emotions in our rucksack, we are prone to conflicts spilling out into the relationships closest to us. These conflicts take on the form of isolation/withdrawing, self-pity, blaming, breaking promises.

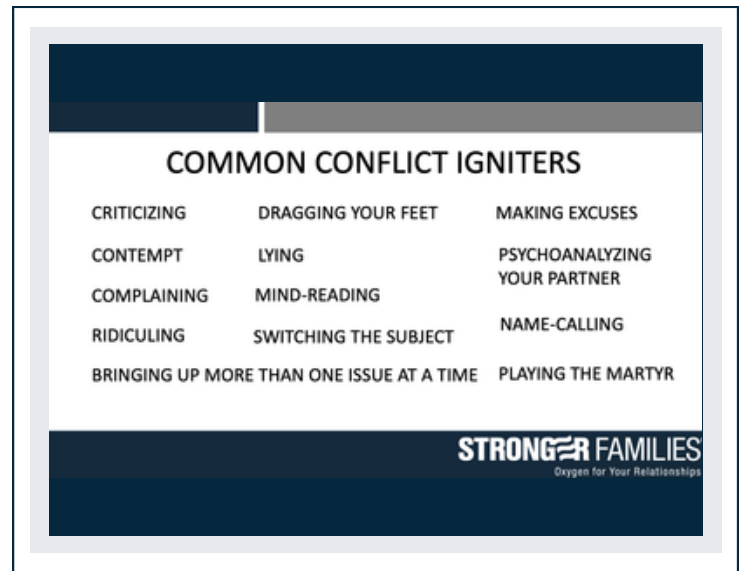
Advance to next slide of identifying conflict igniters.



Instruct the audience to write in the lines coming off their rucksack the different kinds of negative conflict that is showing up in their most important relationships. This could be with their spouse, kids, or co-workers.

Take a moment and identify what type of negative conflict igniters are showing up in your relationships because your rucksack is full.

Advance to next slide Common Conflict Igniters.

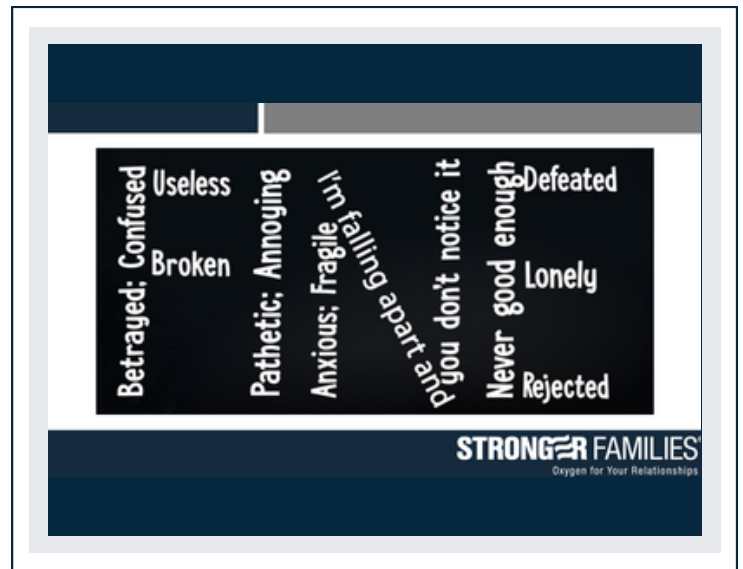


If you struggle to come up with conflict igniters that are connected to your feelings, I've included in the next slide some examples. Take a moment and see which ones apply to you.

Give the audience enough time to evaluate the connection between the negative feelings and the conflict that might be present in their relationships. Reference the feeling words on page #5 in their study guide if they need help connecting these ideas.

Advance to next slide What's Your Boiling Point? Breakout Activity.





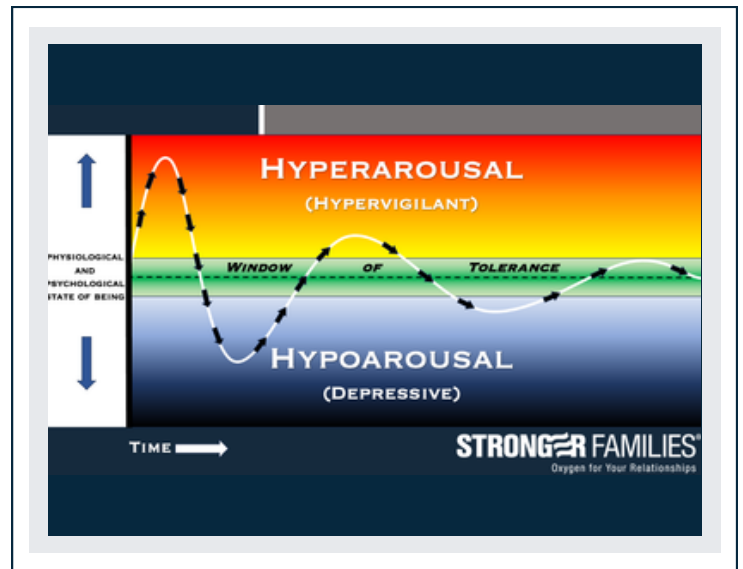
When someone asks, "How are you doing?" the most common response is: "I'm fine." But for many service members, fine doesn't mean what it sounds like. On the surface, it's a quick, safe answer that keeps people from asking more questions. But below the surface, fine often masks a storm of unspoken feelings—confusion, loneliness, rejection, anxiety, or the weight of never feeling good enough.

These hidden messages are like background noise in the subconscious. They shape how a person thinks, reacts, and connects with others—often without them even realizing it. The uniform may look squared away, the posture strong, the demeanor calm. But inside, the rucksack is filling up, and the stress is real.

As chaplains, this is where you play a critical role. When a service member says they're fine, it may be your opportunity to lean in, listen beyond the words, and create a safe space for them to unpack what's really going on.

A fully-packed rucksack will inevitably create conflicts in relationships. The following skills and techniques can help reduce conflicts and anchor you. We've all heard of 'fight or flight.' This is the body's response when it enters hyperarousal or hypoarousal states. For some of us, our natural defense to stress is to fight (hyperarousal), while others freeze, become numb, and shut down (hypoarousal). Both of these states move us away from connection in relationships

Advance to next slide a full rucksack.
Advance to the next slide of the illustration of hyper-vigilance/depressive



This slide illustrates the effects of high cortisol levels in service members, because of the demands of military life. Cortisol is released in response to physical or psychological stressors, such as fear, anxiety, or injury. Being in “fight or flight” mode repeatedly—whether during training, deployment, or daily operations—has negative impacts not only on a service member’s wellbeing but also on their relationships. It’s important to remember that simply reporting for duty and experiencing those repeated cortisol spikes and dumps can take a real toll over time.

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Advance to next slide Window of Tolerance.



The "window of tolerance" in psychology and neuroscience refers to the optimal range of emotional and physiological arousal for effective processing and response to situations. It's like a metaphorical window representing the emotional and sensory experiences where a person functions best.

Within this window, people handle stress, emotions, and challenges well. They problem-solve, maintain relationships, and regulate emotions. It enables clear thinking, communication, and everyday management without overwhelm.

Exceeding the upper limit leads to hyperarousal – anxiety, anger, irrationality. Falling below leads to hypoarousal – numbness, detachment, disengagement. This window isn't fixed; it varies among individuals based on experiences and well-being. Trauma or mental health issues can narrow it, causing easier overwhelm. Therapists use it to help clients understand, regulate emotions, and expand it via techniques. Goal: better stress management and well-being.

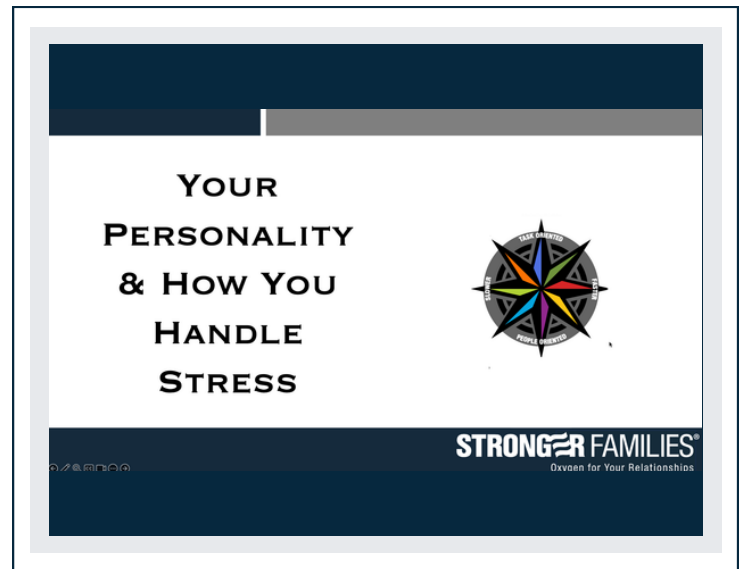
Advance to next slide From Field To Home.



Make sure to explain the concept of "Window of Tolerance" and how the activities in the "From Field To Home" document help individuals move back into a healthy window of tolerance.

The following handout, "From Field To Home" are recommended grounding techniques to use when you are leaving your shift. The techniques have been proven scientifically to move you out of a hypoarousal or hyperarousal state and back into the window of tolerance.

Advance to next slide Your Personality & How You Handle Stress.



One of the ways to avoid moving outside the window of tolerance is to understand how your personality handles stress. Each of us has a unique propensity for dealing with stress, influenced by our personality.

Let's take a moment to examine a few different profiles and consider how this might be impacting you.

Advance to next slide Your Personality - DRIVEN



Profile: DRIVEN

The first profile is the Driven. These individuals wake up in the morning with their minds focused on the tasks and to-do lists they need to accomplish throughout the day. Their favorite metaphorical vehicle is the bulldozer, which aligns with their determination to accomplish tasks efficiently. However, a relational challenge faced by those who are driven is that they might plow through obstacles, believing they have achieved a lot in a day, only to reach the day's end and realize that those closest to them have been left ran over. This often includes their co-workers, spouse, kids, and others.

It's crucial to offer appreciation to this profile as it addresses their greatest emotional need.

Take a moment and have individuals who identify with Driven profile raise their hands.

*Advance to next slide Your
Personality - RELATIONAL*



Moving on, let's delve into the Relational profile. These individuals awaken each morning with an innate desire to connect and engage socially. They tend to boast an extensive circle of around 25 best friends, finding their vigor in forging connections. Their chosen metaphorical vehicle is the acrobatic plane, symbolizing their constant craving to be the life of any gathering. However, a relational challenge that often emerges is the tendency to stretch themselves thin due to numerous social commitments. The concept of setting boundaries can be uncomfortable for them. Just as trick planes can only perform a limited number of acrobatic maneuvers before their fuel depletes, individuals of the Relational profile can similarly exceed their capacity with social obligations and the pursuit of external validation. Consequently, their emotional reservoir can swiftly drain, leaving them feeling utterly fatigued. Their greatest need is accepted and wanted.

Take a moment and have individuals who identify with Relational profile raise their hands.

Advance to next slide Your Personality - STEADY



Profile: STEADY

The next profile we'll discuss is the STEADY type. These individuals hum a special little tune every morning: "Hakuna Matata." Their go-to mantra is, "Don't Worry, Be Happy." They are dedicated to maintaining peace and often find themselves in the role of peacemakers within relationships. One remarkable trait they possess is the ability to suppress their emotions expertly – they are, in essence, professional stuffer. However, the challenge they face in their relationships is that emotions can only be contained for so long before finding a way to surface. This often results in a volcanic eruption that contradicts their typically easy-going personality.

Their preferred symbolic vehicle is a gondola. Much like setting out on calm waters in a gondola, they aspire to glide through each day with a tranquil demeanor. Yet, a common issue arises as most individuals of the Steady profile are in relationships with other types that tend to create emotional ripples, causing these emotional "waves" to spill over the boat's edge.

Their greatest need is consistency/stability and loyalty.

Take a moment and have individuals who identify with Steady profile raise their hands.

Advance to next slide Your
Personality – ACCURATE

Profile: ACCURATE

The last profile we're going to talk about is the Accurate type. These people see things in terms of right and wrong ways to do stuff. They're happy to tell you the right way. Details and finding facts matter a lot to them. They like having a plan before they make changes. They're the kind of folks who set high standards for themselves and others. They're really hard on themselves – they're their own toughest critics. This could be your evidence technicians for example.

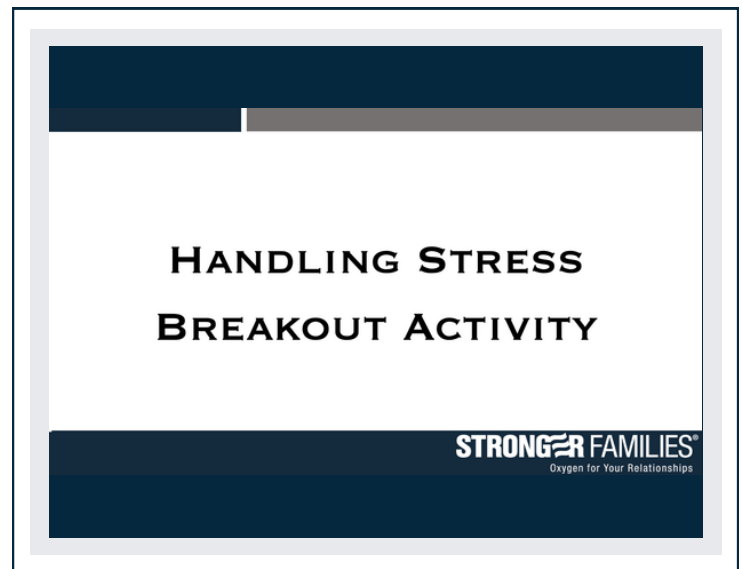
The tough part for Accurate folks is that they can sometimes seem critical or like they're talking down to others. But that's not what they intend. They'd actually say they're just trying to help by sharing the right way to do things because they care about you. They're at their best when things are consistent and have structure. They need time to think through decisions and don't like when things are rushed or thrown at them. Their biggest needs are things like having a stable routine and people they can rely on.

We've just covered the core 4 of the profiles. They represent the largest group of individuals. However, there are a total of 8 profiles, which can be a combination of the 4. It is important to keep in mind that your natural style will be highlighted in color. This is what you are most comfortable operating as an individual.



Advance to next slide "Handling Stress"
Breakout Activity

This breakout activity is done individually. Participants are NOT sharing what they write down. This is a chance for self reflection, and to focus their attention inward to reflect on how stress is actually showing up in their life, and how they are responding to it.

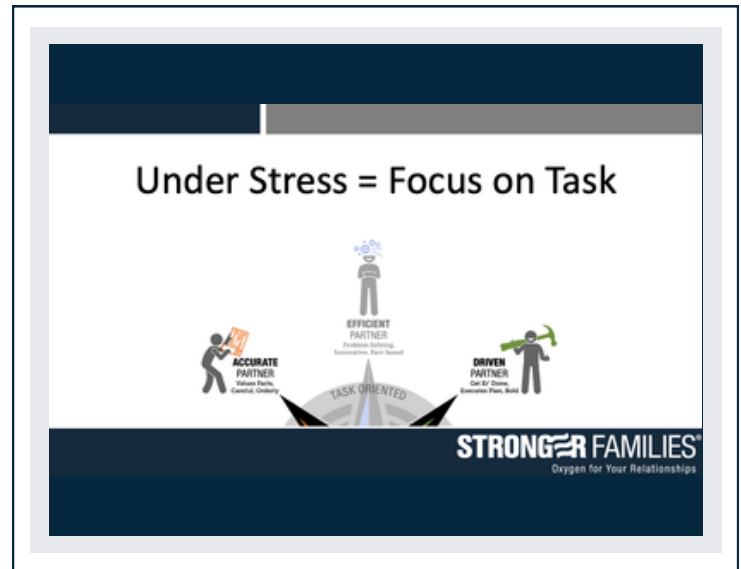


Now that we have had some discussion about all of the profiles, let's jump into the study guide. We are going to look closer at our own personalities, and how we are not only responding to it right now, but in the past as well. When doing this, be honest with yourself. Hindsight is 20/20, and there is nothing wrong with admitting that we may have mishandled stress in the past. Turn to page 9 in your study guide, and take some time to answer each of the questions on that page.

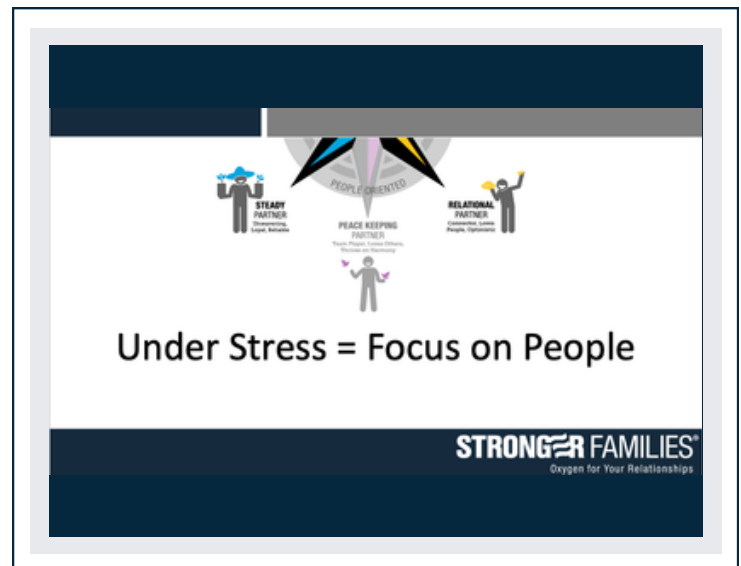
*Advance to next slide Under
Stress = Focus on Task.*

There are 2 scales at work within this compass revealing 4 personality tendencies. First, the vertical scale. At the top of the scale are the task-oriented personalities and at the bottom are the people-oriented personalities. Task-Oriented personalities will focus almost exclusively on the tasks that need to be accomplished in any given situation. The People-Oriented personalities will focus on those around them when stress enters their life.

Let's focus on the top of the scale and the dynamics that generally play out with Accurate, Efficient, and Driven personalities. When under stress, these individuals tend to turn to their task lists to alleviate and manage the built-up tension. Completing tasks helps them regain their sense of stability and composure.



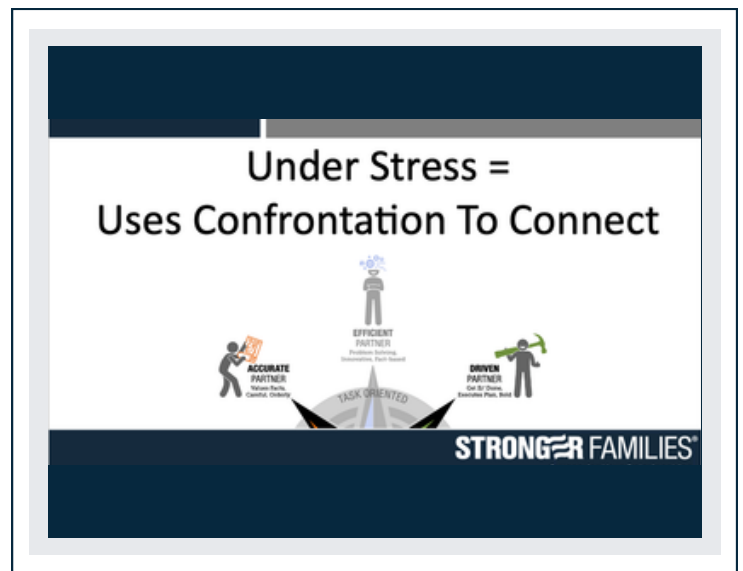
*Advance to next slide Under
Stress = Focus on People.*



On the bottom of the scale, we have Steady, Peace Keeping, and Relational. These individuals under stress will turn toward relationships to alleviate and manage the built-up tension. They are processors and need people to help process whatever is causing the stress.

It is common to find those at the bottom of the scale (Steady, Peace Keeping, Relational) seeking out those at the top of the scale (Accurate, Efficient, Driven) to process their stress. This can create issues as those who are people focused don't need someone to solve their problems but rather listen. The challenge for those who are tasked focus is that they like to over bottom-line perspective and are known as fixers.

*Advance to next slide Under Stress =
Uses Confrontation to Connect.*



Not only do individuals at the top of the scale tend to lean into tasks when under stress, but they also approach conflict very differently compared to those at the bottom of the compass.

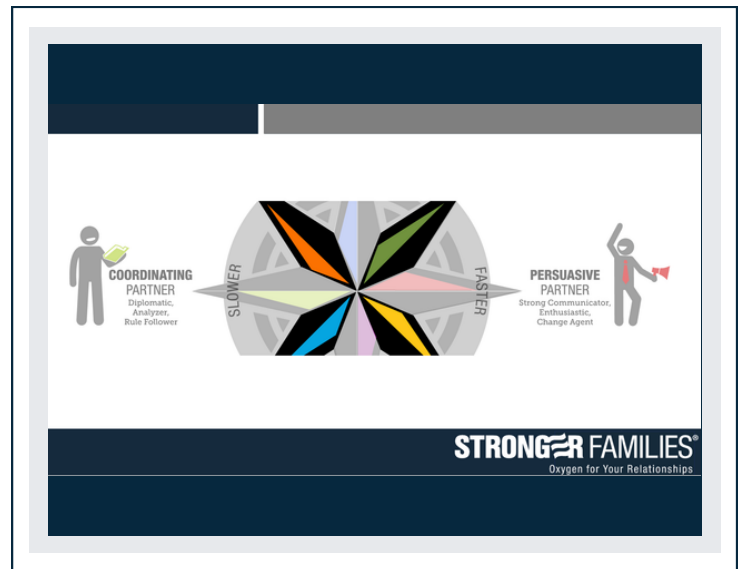
For individuals who are Accurate, Efficient, and Driven, conflict or confrontations are tools for connection. They don't shy away from conflict; instead, they view it as an opportunity to connect. Most of the time, you don't have to wonder where this person stands on issues or with you.

*Advance to next slide Under Stress =
Avoids Confrontation at ALL Cost*



For those who are Steady, Peace Keeping, and Relational they will avoid confrontation at all cost. Instead of addressing conflict head-on, they will shut down and withdrawal from perceived or actual conflict in a relationship. It's not that they don't want to resolve conflict but rather they need time to step away and process before they can come back and address the issues.

Advance to next slide Horizontal Profile.



In the room, it's likely that someone possesses a Coordinating or Persuasive Profile, and you may wonder where I fall when it comes to balancing tasks and people, avoiding confrontation, or stepping into it. These profiles can adeptly shift between the two different aspects of the compass, depending on the day and environmental factors. This group has the ability to adapt and choose the side of the compass that best suits their desired needs.

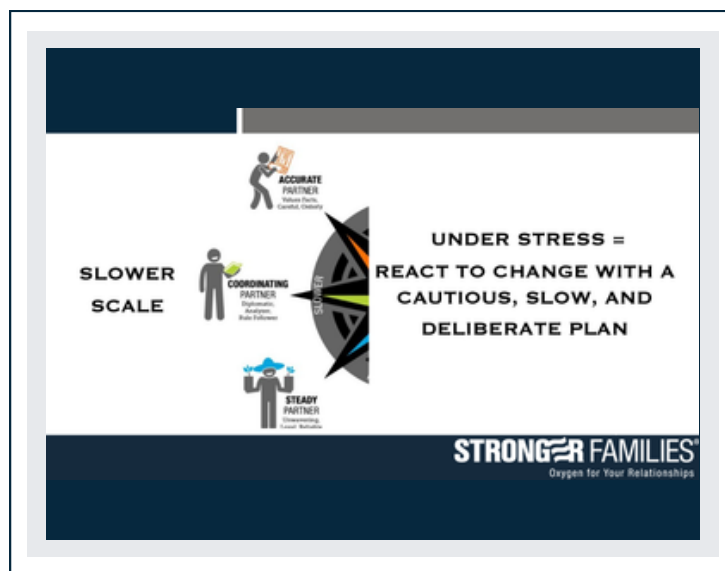
Advance to next slide Under Stress Change - Faster Scale



You will notice that the compass also in split vertically, with a "Faster" scale on the right, and a "Slower" scale on the left. The Driven, Persuasive, and Relational profiles will welcome change as an opportunity. Change doesn't scare them, and they are ready for it now. Reacting to change under stress for these profiles can sometimes be a, "Ready, Fire, Aim" style.

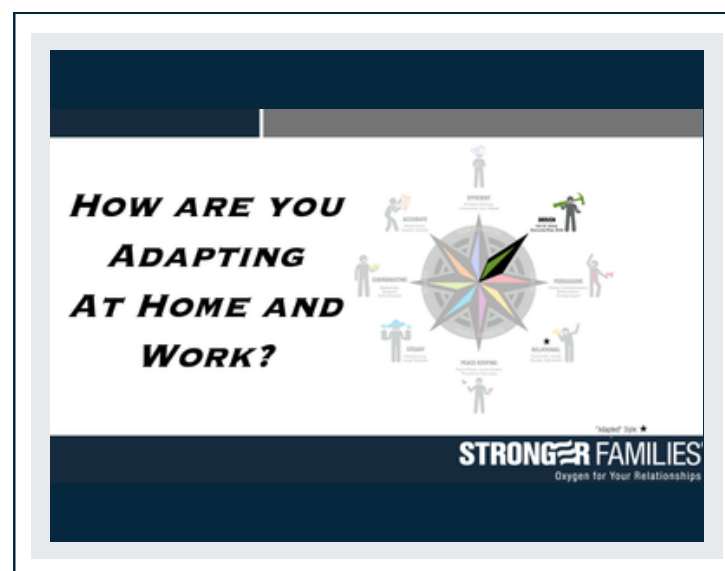
*Advance to next slide Under Stress
Change – Slower Scale*

For those who are mapping as Accurate, Coordinating, and Steady you want to slow things down under stress. These partners would rather approach things with a more of a methodical and deliberate approach. They have the mindset of, "Let's slow it down, and make sure we do it right the first time." The challenge can be for those on the right side of the compass. They may perceive them as slow to act, non-caring, and indecisive.



*Advance to "How Are You Adapting
At Home and Work?"*

One of the final parts of the OXYGEN Profile Assessment is the idea of how you are adapting. If you look at your compass on your results page, you'll find a star showing up. Some of you have the star showing up on your colored profile, others you have the star maybe showing up one profile to the left or right of your core profile.



To demonstrate the power of the star, you'll want to find someone in the audience and walk up to them, asking them to grab an object from your hand (e.g., a pen or clicker). Once they reach out and take the pen, inquire whether they used their dominant hand and if they had to think about it. Most of the time, people will respond with 'yes, I grabbed it with my dominant hand, and no, I didn't think about it; it just happened naturally.' This illustrates what the core profile represents: an automatic, subconscious response.

Now, let's bring some curiosity to the group. Who here has the star showing up next to their profile, and how many have the star on the opposite side of the compass? These questions can help us understand why this is happening. In contrast, the star represents how someone consciously reacts to the environment around them. Unlike the core profile, when someone has the star showing up outside of their core profile, they will have to consciously think about how to respond. This is why, for the star, the question becomes, 'how much energy is being used to maintain the position of the star?' For those who have the star appearing next to their core profile, very little energy is needed to sustain it. However, for someone who is mapping on the other side of the compass, it will take an enormous amount of energy to maintain that placement.

Let's turn to the page in your report where you can see the graph with blue, yellow, and red streaks. It comes after the 'How Are You Adapting' page of your report.

What we're mapping here is a more specific explanation of why and where your star is appearing on the compass. Each of the four categories—Solving Problems, Influencing Others, Reacting to Change, and Making Decisions—corresponds to a blue, yellow, or red streak.

If you only see blue, it represents no need to adapt. If you see yellow, it indicates that you may need to adapt, but it can be sustainable. For others, you'll see a red streak, representing the need to adapt, but likely, this is not sustainable.

The key questions in this portion of the report aim to better understand why you need to adapt and whether it is sustainable.

Advance to slide "Emotional Connectedness Activity."

The purpose of these "Emotional Connectedness" check-ins is to gauge where each participant is at with their relationships around them. Having a low emotional connectedness can be an indicator that some repair and healing is needed.

The image shows a presentation slide titled "BREAKOUT EXERCISE: EMOTIONAL CONNECTEDNESS" and "EMOTIONAL CONNECTEDNESS (CONT.)". It contains two identical questionnaires side-by-side. Each questionnaire has a header with a photo of a person and the title. Below the header, there are 10 numbered questions. Each question has a table with three columns: "Always or most of the time", "Sometimes", and "Rarely or never". The questions are:

1. When I feel sad, angry, hurt, or scared, I go to my partner.
2. When I feel sad, angry, hurt, or scared, I go to my partner.
3. When I feel sad, angry, hurt, or scared, I go to my partner.
4. When I feel sad, angry, hurt, or scared, I go to my partner.
5. When I feel sad, angry, hurt, or scared, I go to my partner.
6. When I feel sad, angry, hurt, or scared, I go to my partner.
7. When I feel sad, angry, hurt, or scared, I go to my partner.
8. When I feel sad, angry, hurt, or scared, I go to my partner.
9. When I feel sad, angry, hurt, or scared, I go to my partner.
10. When I feel sad, angry, hurt, or scared, I go to my partner.

At the bottom of each questionnaire, there are two lines for totals: "Total for odd numbers" and "Total for even numbers". The slide also features the "STRONGER FAMILIES" logo and the tagline "Oxygen for Your Relationships" at the bottom.

It is likely that the degree to which you are adapting is linked to the emotional connections you have with others. Identifying your emotional connections is key to understanding how grounded you are mentally. The following breakout is a questionnaire designed to rate your emotional connectedness with your significant other. If you are not in a romantic relationship, you can still fill this out based on your emotional connection to others in your life. Take a moment to answer the questions on pages 10 and 11. Then, add up your scores for both odd and even numbers and tally them at the bottom of page 12.

EMOTIONAL CONNECTEDNESS RESULTS AND REFLECTION

DO YOU TRUST YOUR PARTNER WHEN YOU ARE FEELING DOWN OR UPSET?

1-400-345-7388 We have not reported to each other for support or connection when you feel lonely. Thinking of each other in the military and discussing with others. To avoid feeling emotional connection, I would encourage to address to others in that you will share when you are in a better place. Did you feel less negative in that?

1-400-345-7388 Sometimes, I'm consistently open for support or advice to me instead. I believe my allyship isn't just about seeking support for you, but also. What do you think?

1-400-345-7388 We have never to connect others when you feel sad, or you are sad. You feel that people should just go on the support and support. What connects to that? How do you feel about that?

DO YOU TRUST OTHERS WHEN YOU ARE FEELING HAPPY OR SOMEHOW?

1-400-345-7388 We have not reported to each other for support or connection when you feel happy, and sometimes. We have not reported to others and sometimes. We have not reported to others and sometimes. To avoid feeling emotional connection, I would encourage to address to others in that you will share when you are in a better place. Did you feel less negative in that?

1-400-345-7388 Sometimes, I'm consistently open for support or advice to me instead. I believe my allyship isn't just about seeking support for you, but also. What do you think?

1-400-345-7388 We have never to connect others when you feel sad, or you are sad. You feel that people should just go on the support and support. What connects to that? How do you feel about that?

STRONGER FAMILIES®
Oxygen for Your Relationships



Emotional Connectedness Breakout Activity



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Weekly Emotional Check-In Breakout Activity

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The following breakout is designed to help you self-regulate your emotions when coming off of a shift. Instead of stuffing away the negative feelings and emotions that may happen on shift, this check-in is focused on answering questions that will create space mentally to not stuff the emotions away. The danger is not the exposure to the trauma, the danger is allowing the emotions to be pushed down and not dealt with.

For those of you who are in a romantic relationship, you'll want to answer the Relationship questions. The goal is to use "I feel" statements when sharing with your partner. Stay away from using statements like "you never" or "you always."

You'll want to provide 10-15 minutes for individuals and couples to connect with the questions in the check-in.

Action Plan

Advance to the "From Field To Home " Action Plan slide. Take a minute and explain the "why" behind the Action Plans. Talk about the importance of taking steps towards change, for the betterment of their wellbeing. Go through the instructions of the Action Plan as a group and give them time to fill out their Action Plan. Review the Facilitation Insight prior to diving into the Action Plan.

It often helps with the Action Plan activity if you use some examples of personal experience with an "ending your shift well" activity. Share what you liked, what worked, what didn't, etc.

We can see how being in the military carries a burden that weighs us down over time. What may seem to be small and manageable changes over time, can lead to the large catastrophic problems that can ruin our wellbeing and relationships. It all starts with making positive changes. This Action Plan is just that, the first step to positive change. It allows us to take some of that weight that we carry as military service members, and make it lighter. Remember that whatever you choose to do when implementing "From Field to Home", you should try to turn into habit. The goal is to change the lifestyle, and make permanent positive change.

Conclusion

Bridging the Gap has a closing that will bring "Nick's Story" full circle. You started the training with the podcast video of Nick. Now that you have covered the content of Bridging the Gap, close out the training with Nick sharing his mindset going into the fight of his life. Encourage the group to reflect on their own stories as they listen to the journal entries that Nick shares.

Leave them with the motivation to take action. Nick explains the "Spirit of the Buffalo" but feel free to share your own story at the end of the video.

Advance to slide "BTG MIL Section 9" Slide

We started this event by hearing from Nick, and I want to end with you hearing from Nick as well. His story is similar to what you've experienced during our time together. His rucksack was bursting at the seams, and he didn't have the tools to silence the voices in his head. Thankfully, he stopped short of committing suicide, but the rest of Nick's story is about his journey to heal, the demons he had to face in his past, and ultimately coming to a place where he could be at peace with his past. He did the hard work, the same hard work that can be found in the pages of your study guide, and he was vulnerable with others. Let's listen to Nick as he shares his experience at First Responder Wellness, and closes out the training.

Advance to slide "We Do Hard Things" Slide

If you have a story to share to inspire the group, share it. If you want to use the previous video as the end of the training, hide this slide and move on to the post event survey.

Advance to the "Tell Us What You Think" Slide

