

United States Special Operations Command



Initiatives for Suicide Prevention: Two Case Examples

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Agenda

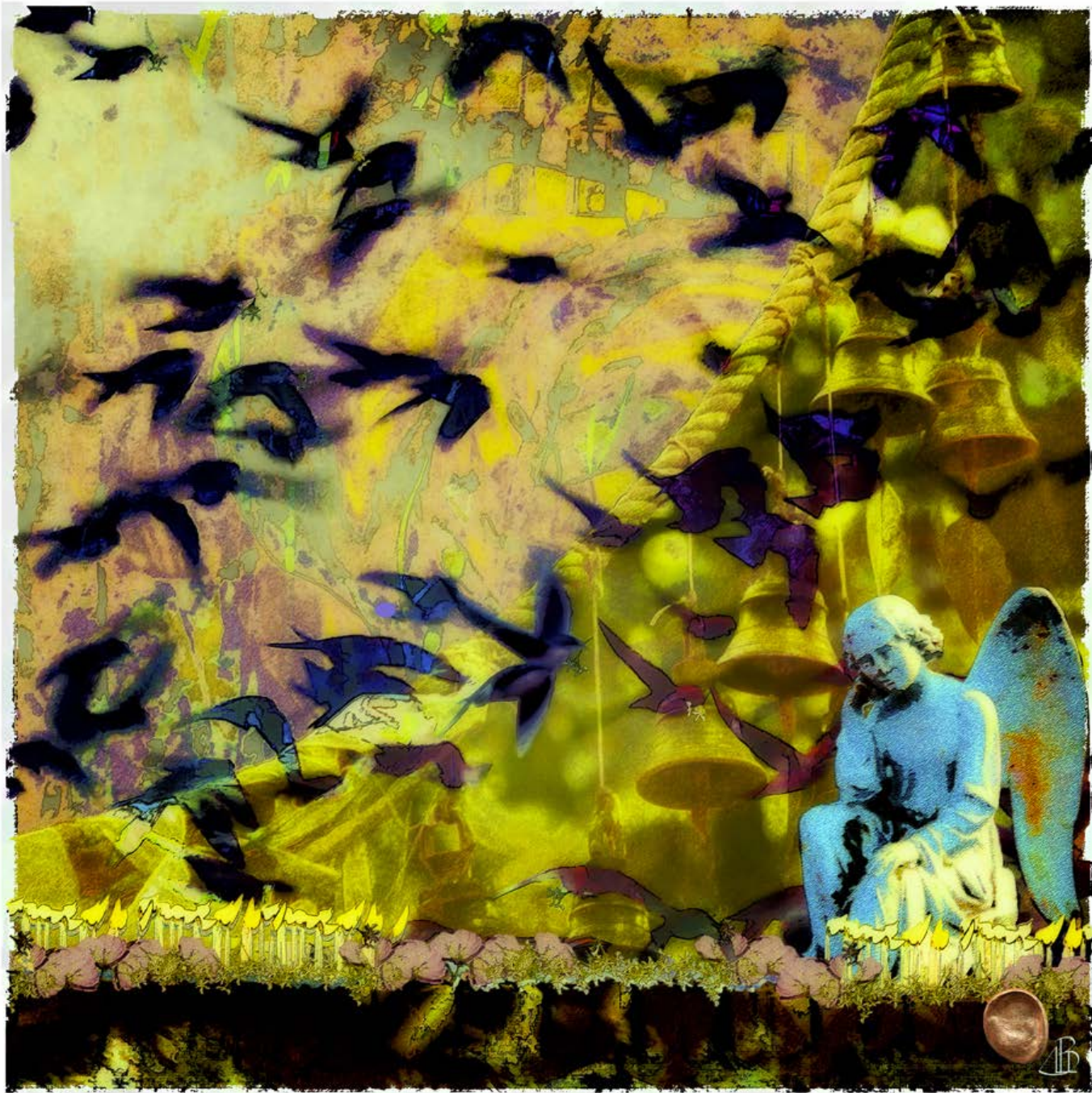
- 1) Disclaimer/Acknowledgements**
- 2) Preservation of the Force and Family (POTFF)**
- 3) Suicide Prevention in US Special Operations**
- 4) Case Example 1: Suicide Prevention Workbook**
- 5) Case Example 2: Cognitive Agility Training**
- 6) Concluding Remarks**



The views expressed in this presentation are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the United States Special Operations Command, Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, Department of Defense, nor the United States Government.

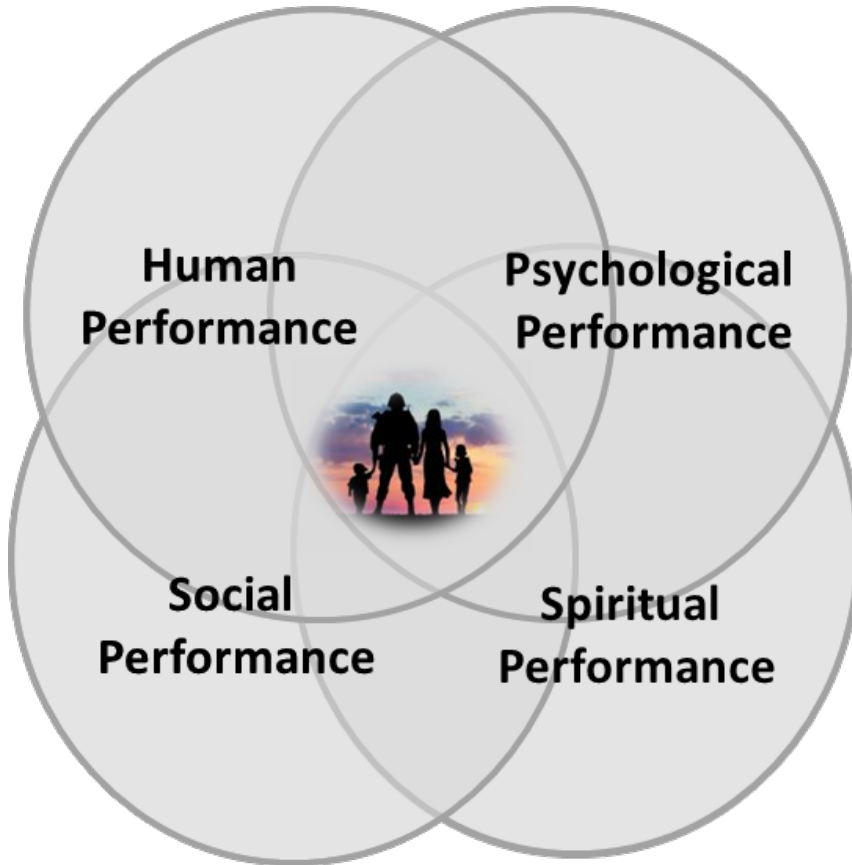
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Preservation of the Force and Family



Holistic approach

Innovative, valuable solutions

Improve well-being

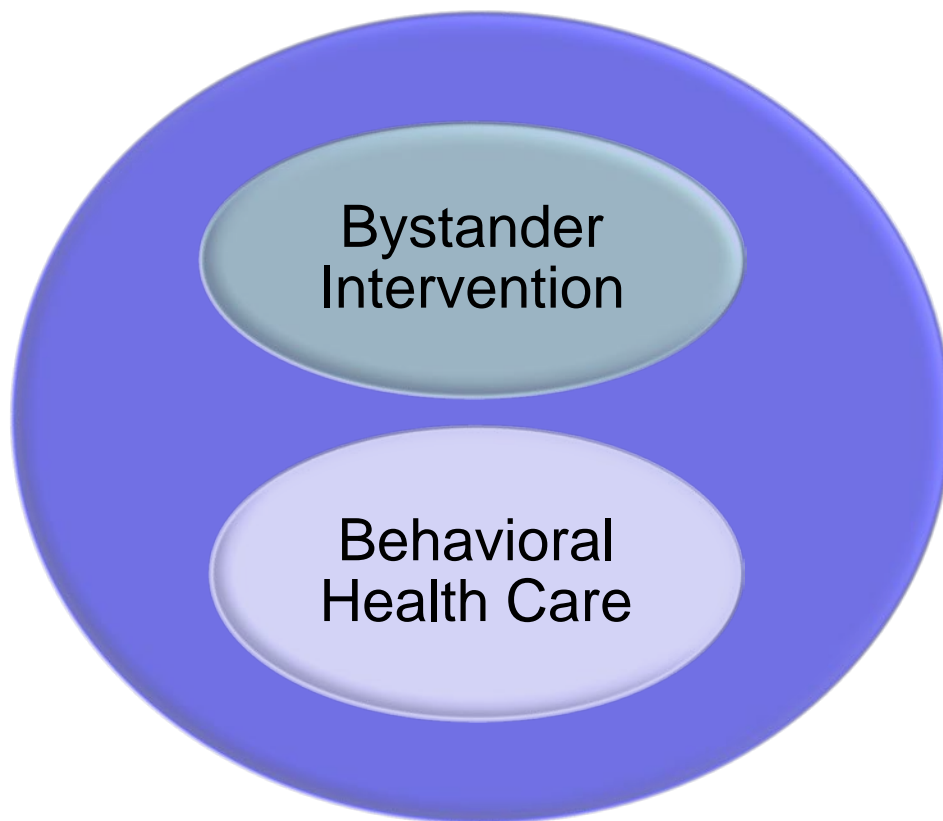


Priorities

1. Enhance Special Operations Forces (SOF) ***readiness***
2. Build force ***resiliency*** and optimize SOF ***performance***
3. Coordinate and ***collaborate*** with Services and Academia
4. Provide ***innovative*** solutions to hard problems
5. Advocate for ***policy*** change
6. Achieve necessary ***authorities***
7. Program ***evaluation***
8. Reduce stigma associated with seeking ***care***



Current Suicide Prevention in SOF





Two Evidence-Based Projects

Suicide Prevention Workbook for SOF Chaplaincy

Improve SOF Chaplaincy members' knowledge, skills and comfort level with all phases of suicidality

Improve non-chaplain care team and leadership understanding of chaplain-provided care

Special Operations Cognitive Agility Training (SOCAT) Program: Enhancing Adaptive Thinking and Overall Mental Fitness among SOF and Families

Improve individual SOF members' rational and adaptive thinking



Chaplaincy Project Emerging Themes

Prevention: Most have received training (ASIST) but not specific to chaplain role. Expanded training desired.

Intervention: No formal training to guide them in providing support, pastoral counseling and crisis care to members of the SOF community at risk for suicide.

Postvention: Commanders rely on them to advise and provide bereavement and other pastoral services to organizations and individuals following a suicide; dialogue and guidance needed for these interactions.

Personal exposure: Most reported either a personal history of suicide ideation/attempt and/or a personal history of exposure to familial suicide; unresolved issues require addressing in relation to vicarious traumatization and self-care.



SOCAT Project Aims

Develop an interactive, culturally-relevant, and evidence-informed educational program, packaged as an introductory course and a train-the-trainer course.

Design a questionnaire to evaluate cognitive agility among SOF community members in preparation for a program evaluation phase following, curriculum development.

Train SOF (and families) to apply cognitive agility – skills they may already know and use in the profession of arms – to their personal and emotional lives.



Future Suicide Prevention in SOF

