

# Attention to Spirituality in Cognitive-Behavioral Frameworks

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# Clinical Perspective

- Holistic bio-psycho-social-spiritual approach to health
  - Biological – physical impact on bodily processes
  - Psychological – mental processes
  - Social – relational processes
  - Spiritual – the connection to the transcendent

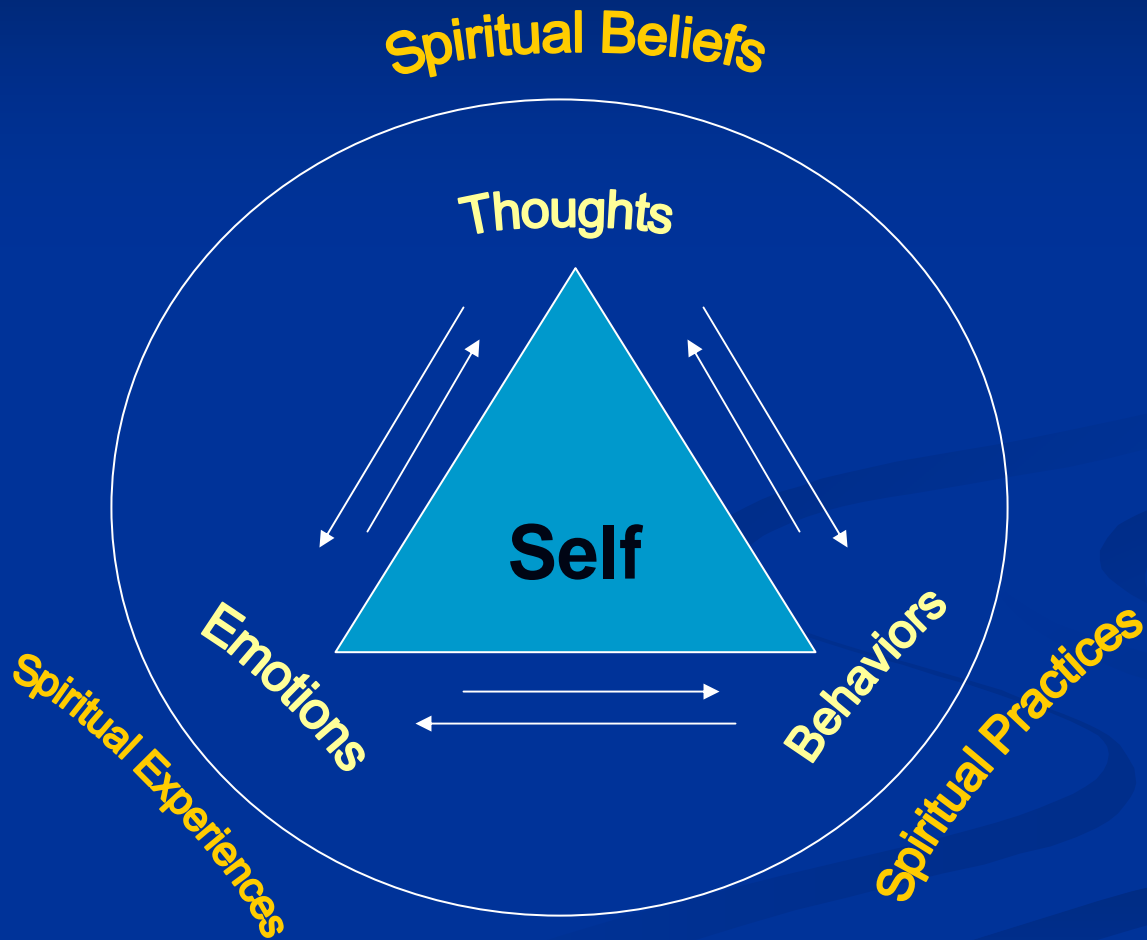
# Clergy & Mental Health

- 4 of 10 individuals with mental health problems seek counseling from clergy. This is greater than the number that seek help from mental health providers.
  - Weaver, A. J., Samford, J. A., Kline, A. E., Lucas, L. A., Larson, D. B., & Koenig, H. G. (1997). What do psychologists know about working with the clergy? An analysis of eight APA journals: 1991-1994. *Professional Psychology - Research & Practice*, 28(5), 471-474.
- Mental health providers tend to differ from their patients in spirituality
  - 93% of general population “believe in God”, while only 40-45% of psychologists / psychiatrists.
  - Few mental health providers receive training in how to address spirituality with clients
  - Clergy are generally poorly trained with regard to mental health

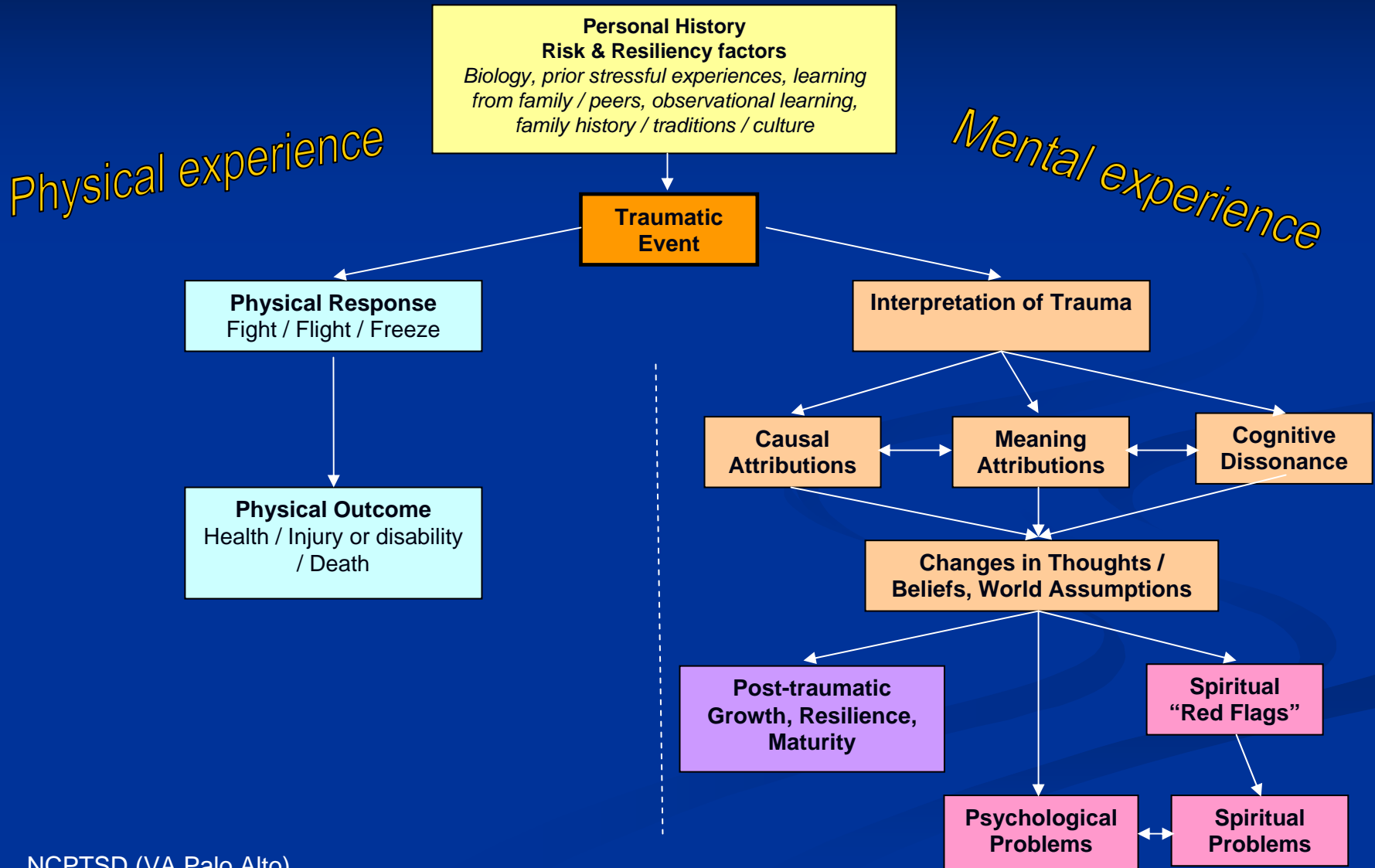
# Why discuss spirituality and combat stress?

- Spirituality is an area of disconnection between health providers and patients – an under researched area
- A growing body of evidence indicates that trauma exposure and spirituality interact
  - Trauma seems to affect spirituality in both positive and negative ways
    - Post-traumatic growth / resiliency
    - Loss of faith / negative faith changes
  - Spirituality may affect recovery from trauma – also in positive and negative ways
- We are only beginning to examine mental health interventions that address these issues

# CBT Model & Spirituality



# Model for Understanding the Impact of Traumatic Events



# Interpreting Trauma

Causal Attributions	Meaning Attributions	Cognitive Dissonance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <i>WHY</i> did the event happen?</li> <li>■ Who is to blame?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Self / others / God</li> <li>■ If event is random                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ ↓ perceived control</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Did my reactions help or hurt situation</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Is the event Fair, Right, Just?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Can I trust people?</li> <li>■ Am I still safe?</li> <li>■ What does this mean about me?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Do I control my future?</li> <li>■ Am I worthwhile?</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ What are my lessons learned?</li> <li>■ What does this mean for my future?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ How does this event fit with my previous view of the world?</li> <li>■ Can I hold the event alongside my core assumptions without tension</li> <li>■ Since I can't change the trauma - how do my thoughts / beliefs have to change?</li> </ul>
<p>Potential Distortions / Errors (especially w/o feedback)</p>		

# Evidence for relevance of spirituality & combat stress recovery

# Evidence for relationship of spirituality to physical / mental health

- Association between spirituality and physical and mental health
  - Strong well-replicated finding associating spirituality with longevity
    - Powell, L. H., Shahabi, L., & Thoresen, C. E. (2003). Religion and spirituality: Linkages to physical health. *American Psychologist*, 58(1), 36-52.
  - Positive association with mental health (i.e. depression, substance use, quality of life)
    - Less depression / substance abuse

# How Could Spirituality Help?

## Possible Healing Pathways

- Spirituality may improve health / well-being through:
  - Supportive healthy social network
  - Cognitive processing – new ways of thinking
  - Making meaning from the event
    - McIntosh, Silver, & Wortman (1993) Religion's role in adjustment to a negative life event: coping with the loss of a child. *J Pers Soc Psychol*

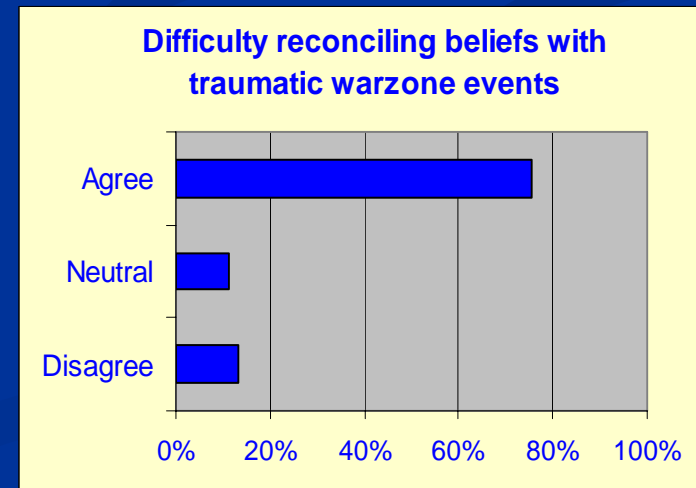
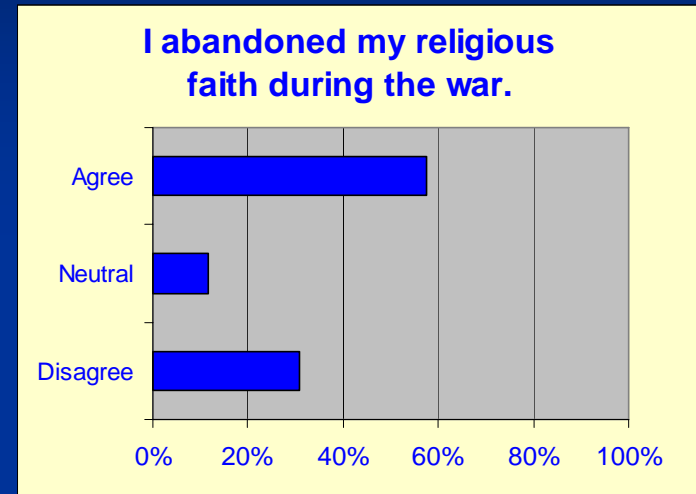
# Loss of Faith Following Warzone Trauma

- Warzone events associated with guilt and loss of faith
  - Death of a friend
  - Killing enemy
- Association of faith loss & guilt with increased utilization of VA mental health services

Fontana, A., & Rosenheck, R. (2004). Trauma, change in strength of religious faith, and mental health service use among veterans treated for PTSD. *J Nerv Ment Dis*, 192(9), 579-584

# Loss of Faith among PTSD veterans

- Loss of faith during / following combat stress
- Difficulty reconciling faith with combat experiences
- *N=100 Vietnam veterans in PTSD treatment*



# Forgiveness problems following warzone trauma

- Lack of forgiveness associated with more severe PTSD, more severe depression
  - Witvliet, C. V. O., Phillips, K. A., Feldman, M. E., & Beckham, J. C. (2004). Posttraumatic mental and physical health correlates of forgiveness and religious coping in military veterans. *Journal of Traumatic Stress, 17*(3), 269-273
  - Drescher, K.D. Ramirez, G., Romesser, J., Rosen, C. S., Foy, D.W. (Unpublished manuscript). Spirituality in veterans with PTSD: Comparison with a national representative sample
- Forgiveness directions
  - Self / Others / God
- Reexperiencing symptoms (memories / nightmares) may be seen as “proving” that forgiveness “doesn’t work” or that they are incapable

# PTSD symptoms vs. Spirituality

<u>PTSD Symptoms</u>	<u>Spirituality</u>
Reexperiencing / self-focus	Balanced internal / external focus
Isolation / disconnection	Connection / building community
Numbness / foreshortened future	Meaning / purpose / hope
Anxiety/ hypervigilance / sleep	Relaxation / peace of mind
Anger / hostility	Compassion / forgiveness
Loss of concentration	Focused attention / meditation
Guilt / self-blame	Self-worth / forgiveness