

MARINES RESILIENCE TO STRESS: An Initial Exploration

**June 2007
Combat/Operational Stress Control Conference**

Ginger Gold, EdD

FACTORS INFLUENCING RESILIENCY TO STRESS

- Personality - level of hardiness; trait resilience
- Past Experiences
- Attitude
- Control
- Spirituality/Religiosity
- Commitment
- World view
- Leadership
- Interpretation/Meaning - Cognitive Appraisal Theory
- Challenge

INVENTORY OF POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGICAL ATTITUDES (IPPA)

Confidence in Life and Self
An underlying positive world view

Inventory Make-up

- Jared D. Kass, 1998, developed IPPA
- 32 item, multidimensional self-report instrument
- 7-point Likert scale
- Two formats
- Reliability of IPPA = .88 - .95
- Construct Validity = ranged from .38 to .79 (positive and negative correlations); most falling between .50 to .65
- Two subscales: control and meaning

Control Dimension Measures

SELF CONFIDENCE DURING STRESS
(SCDS)

SPECIFICALLY:

- Internal Locus of Control
- Positive Forms of External Locus of Control
- Habitually calm responses

IPPA

SCDS SAMPLE QUESTIONS:

- "When I need to stand up for myself, **I can do it quite easily** or, **I cannot do it.**" (LOC)
- "During stressful circumstances, I am **never fearful** or, **all the time fearful.**" (Calm response - security)

Meaning Dimension Measures

LIFE PURPOSE AND
SATISFACTION
(LPS)

SPECIFICALLY:

- Nonspecific Perceptions of Life Satisfaction
- Personally Constructed Forms of Meaning
- Ontologically Derived Forms of Meaning

IPPA

LPS SAMPLE QUESTIONS:

- "My daily activities are a **source of satisfaction** or, **not a source of satisfaction.**" (Nonspecific Life Satisfaction)
- "I feel that the work I am doing **is of great value** or, **is not of great value.**" (Personally Constructed Forms of Meaning)

IPPA SCORE

STRENGTH IN BOTH SUBSCALES
PROVIDES AN OPTIMAL
POSITIVE WORLD VIEW, AND
THUS, A STRONGER
RESILIENCY TO STRESS.

PURPOSE

TO PROVIDE MARINES WITH AN AWARENESS OF THEIR PERSONAL LEVEL OF RESILIENCY TO STRESS AS MEASURED BY THE IPPA ASSESSMENT TOOL, AND TO COMPARE MARINES' SCORES WITH NORMATIVE DATA.

DATA COLLECTION

- Inventory of Positive Psychological Attitudes (IPPA) - 32 items
- Two subscales:
 - Self-Confidence During Stress (SCDS - 15 items)
 - Life Purpose and Satisfaction (LPS - 17 items)
- Self-test format
- Assessed during the Physical Fitness Coordinator's Course (7) at Camp Lejeune, NC, between 2003 - 2005

SUBJECTS

- 121 Active Duty, predominantly Marines
- Approximately 95% Male
- Multi-cultural
- E-3 to E-6, i.e., LCpl - SSgt
- Age, 19 - 26 years old
- Race, predominantly white

RESULTS

IPPA

MEAN = 5.32

SD = 1.37

SCDS

MEAN = 5.21

SD = 1.35

LPS

MEAN = 5.41

SD = 1.38

MARINES vs NORMATIVE GROUP

NORMATIVE GROUP - IPPA

MEAN = 4.97

SD = .92

MARINES - IPPA

MEAN = 5.32

SD = 1.37

MARINES vs NORMATIVE GROUP

NORM

68% of subjects' scores were between 4.03 and 5.87

MARINES

68% of Marines' scores were between 3.9 and 6.7

RESULTS

SALIENT POINTS

- MARINES' MEAN SCORES FOR THE IPPA WERE HIGHER THAN THE NORMATIVE GROUP
- NORMATIVE GROUP SHOWED GREATER HOMOGENEITY THAN THE MARINES
- MARINES' SCORED HIGHER IN "LIFE PURPOSE & SATISFACTION" THAN IN "SELF-CONFIDENCE DURING STRESS"

BENEFITS & LIMITATIONS OF THE IPPA

- Not designed for clinical psychopathology purposes, BUT does offer the clinician a profile of the client's world view.
- Not designed to determine the degree to which an individual is at risk, BUT does provide a positive tool for counseling and education.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- Not a random sample - limits generalizing results.
- Self-report assessment tool.

CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

- Although standardization in combat related Marine Corps' training programs makes sense, does standardizing stress education and intervention programs hit the mark?

CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

- What type of assessment tools should be used to determine one's resiliency to stress?
- During the recruiting phase, should we be identifying each individual's level of resiliency to stress and subsequently educate and intervene accordingly?