

## **Military Children Religion & Resilience**

Choose 1 for an additional 0.5 CLP

- 1. Stay for the panel discussion on the needs of & supports for Military Community.**
- 2. *Keep a Journal for 7 days. On each day read either the Jewish Passover narrative or the Christian Passion narrative. Each day answer: What are the crises and blessings in this story? What are the crises and blessings in your story?***
- 3. *Make a Power Point Slide that uses words and pictures to answer the question, "What do you want your next congregation/community to know about you as a Military Child/Adult?"***
- 4. *Describe 5 activities to build Social Scaffolding while you are socially isolated. Don't use computer/video. Do include beliefs/practices from your religion.***

Send your answers to [rebecca.a.powell16.civ@mail.mil](mailto:rebecca.a.powell16.civ@mail.mil)

Make a note about these activities. You will get an additional 0.5 CLP for submitting one.

Guests to invite for panel:

- Mary Wertsch
- Donna Musil
- Paulette Bethel
- Ann Baker Cotrell
- Ruth Van Reken
- Grace Clifton
- Anne Copeland
- Lois Bushong
- Kathleen McNear Smith
- Abby Thornton
- Debra Miller
- Mark Moitoza

Handouts for chat room and USACHCS:

- Volunteer Academy Brochure
- Bibliography
- Lesson Plan

# Resilience in the Lives of Military Children:

*The Effect of Relationships within Religious Organizations*



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Dr. Becky Powell  
Religious Education Program Director  
US Army IMCOM-Europe

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Good morning my name is Dr Becky Powell, Religious Education Program Director for the United States Army, in Europe.

Please make sure that you have signed in on the chat area. This will allow us to record your training and to provide you with a certificate of completion.

If this is your first Volunteer Academy class, then send your mailing address for a Volunteer Academy Journal. An overall skill we build in all Volunteer Academy classes is journaling as a spiritual discipline. Use your journal to make notes of today's lesson. Link the thoughts of this hour with other Volunteer Academy classes, other religious education, worship, and personal devotions.

(Introduce yourself and your military and international relocation experience.)

We have several people assisting today's class.

Our 'Virtual Ushers' are

- Sue Nishimura – DRE Ansbach – accepting people into the room and managing mute buttons
- Maribel Juarbe & Trey Roberts – taking attendance. They will be private messaging each person to make sure that we have names and email addresses for each attendee. This is an extra measure of security AND to make sure that you get your certificates of completion.

Haley Turner is going to manage our chat area – she will make sure that you each get your comments and questions heard and addressed.

Maddie Dunckhorst will be writing a newspaper article about today's event.

Martha Strong will moderate our Panel Discussion which begins at 45 minute after the hour. This is one of the optional activities that you can choose for an additional 0.5CLP. We will take attendance again for these certificates.

Our guest panellists are Mark Moitoza, Paulette Bethel, and \_\_\_\_\_. They have are leaders in research and support for Military and other Highly Mobile Populations.

This class is an opportunity for your experiences to help us all learn more about resilience in the lives of military children.

This training is the result of Dr. Becky Powell's research into the lives and situations of highly mobile international populations. A full report can be found in "Resilience in the Lives of Service Children" which was first presented at Oxford University, Department of Education, and is pending publication by Service Children Support Network. Copies are available from Dr. Powell.

## Resilience in the Lives of Military Children

- **INTRODUCTION:** Relationships are significant in the resilience of all children. However, relocations and deployments interrupt the significant relationships of Military Children. This presentation explores the ways in which relationships within religious organizations can supplement and support Military Children in resilience and development.

3

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This training examines military Children, including British Regimental Attached Travellers (BRATs) and provides an understanding of the effect of relationships within religious organizations. Relocations and deployments interrupt the significant relationships of military Children. We will explore the ways in which relationships in congregations can supplement and support BRATs in resilience and development. The research is embedded in developmental psychology, practical theology, and practical research done with the US Army.

## Resilience in the Lives of Military Children

# Objectives

- *Military Children are part of a larger international culture.*
- *Participation in religious organisations also plays a role in a child's resilience during normal times as well as through trauma.*
- *Relocation (repeated or one time, long distance or local) interrupts a child's religious participation.*
- *Social Scaffolding is the network of relationships that supports resilience.*

4

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Beginning with developmental psychology, this class demonstrates the role of the parent relationship on all aspects of child development. During the times of deployment, the trust intensity of the parental relationship is disrupted. However, research also shows that participation in religious organizations also plays a role in a child's resilience at all times, even relocation and deployment. It is part of larger work for understanding and supporting the world's Military BRATs. The research findings indicate an adult's desire to learn is a key element in the ability to support children.

Based on the US Department of Defense definitions, child means any person aged 0-18 years old who has not completed secondary education and is still a dependent of a parent or guardian. This is the definition of child that is used through out this training.

## Resilience in the Lives of Military Children

### BRAT

- History
- Acronym
- Sociology
- Organizations & Resources
  - Mary Wertsch – *Military BRATS*
  - Donna Musil – *BRATS Our Journey Home*
  - US Army Chaplain Corps

5

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British Regimental Attached Traveller (BRAT) is the term preferred by many military children around the world because of the cultural identity that it provides. Therefore, it is used in this training to refer to the children of all military service personnel.

Dr. Grace Clifton has led the research into the earliest origins of the term BRAT. Her finding of the usage in 1707 is a breakthrough in academic support for a historic understanding of the term so popular with Military Children. The next steps needed in research on BRAT historicity will be comparison studies of the children of the Roman Legionaries 2,000 years ago to the children of today's military. The emerging theory is that matching cultural markers will be found in both groups in spite of the centuries that have passed. BRAT is a subpopulation of a larger intercultural group, BRATs are raised at an intersection of cultures, that of their parent's home and that of the military and other communities where they are stationed.

There are additional resources and organizations listed on this slide.

## Resilience in the Lives of Military Children

### Cultural Definitions

- Culture
- Monoculture
- Third Culture



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Culture is the customs, institutions, and identity of a particular nation, people, or social group.

Monoculture refers to people who are from 1 place and that place has low mobility.

Third Culture we will unpack now.

## TCK

*"A third culture kid is an individual who, having spent a significant part of their developmental years in a culture other than their parents' home culture, develops a sense of relationship to all of the cultures, while not having full ownership in any. Elements from each culture are incorporated into the life experience, but the sense of belonging is in relationship to others of similar experience."*



THIRD CULTURE KIDS by Ruth van Reken & David Pollock

The military community is one part of what is called the third culture. Third Culture Kid (TCK) refers to those individuals who are raised in a synthesis of cultures. The first culture and second culture are the host and home cultures whereas the third culture is the resulting synthesis of the two. The cultural markers of these individuals contain characteristics of both cultures but are no longer fully either.

The term for all populations remains third culture regardless of the number of places an individual might have lived or the number of ethnicities/cultures that the family brings together. An increasing percentage of the world today does not have one single home culture shared by both parents. Many households include multiple ethnicities, multiple religious traditions, and multiple places where the family *could* call home. There are also many members of the third culture population who have lived in multiple locations. Third culture is a quick way to understand the blending of many cultures. The accepted definition of TCK was copyrighted by Dr. David Pollock. His description of the population is in terms of significance, relationship, culture, and belonging. These are facets of life that are addressed for the BRAT culture.

## Resilience in the Lives of Military Children



## Resilience

- Architecture
- Psychology

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Resilience is the ability make a rapid recovery from adversity. However, before its use in psychology, the term was long used in architecture meaning the ability of a structure to maintain functional integrity. The other keyword that to understand is risk, the possibility of harm occurring. Danger is a synonym of risk.

Before going further, it is important to understand that all people need resilience and all people experience risk and crisis. This is not a situation exclusive to the military community. Everyone hurts. Everyone struggles. Everyone has times of discontent. Everyone needs support. This is true of all communities, whether or not they are military. In talking about resilience issues, one UK chaplain says "... not just the Soldiers who are dealing with this. Their children are dealing with this".



## Resilience in the Lives of Military Children Developmental Psychology

- Jean Piaget
  - James Fowler
- Lev Vygotsky
  - Reuven Feuerstein



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9

There are few religious educators focusing on the distinct needs of BRATs and other TCKs. *A Friend Who Teaches Me* was the first PhD thesis to look explicitly at this situation. As of 2020, there are still less than 15 practical theologians focusing on this issue.

BRATs' resilience and development begins with developmental psychology.

Lev Vygotsky looked at relationality in development. Vygotsky's research of the mother-child relationship found that the better this attachment, the better the capacity of the mother to transmit language to the child. Similarly the mother's understanding of the language directly correlates to the developing fluency in the child. Recognizing the influences of both relationship and content (fluency), it is easy to see the disruption that deployment or relocation can have on a child's development. Applying this to the resilience of BRATs, a parent's absence effects his/her influence. A parent's own resilience affects the resilience of the child.

Israeli Psychologist, Reuven Feuerstein included Vygotsky's mediated learning experiences (MLEs) and demonstrated that non-parental adults are influential for adolescents.

With MLEs, trauma can be overcome for health and development. In successful transformation, the adults know the capacities of the child. They also understand the child's needs.

There are identifiable methods behind MLEs; the careful introduction of new concepts prior to the child's ability to fully grasp them.

This is also related to ancient religious understandings of community and religion. This presentation will continue to examine the idea of adults who can influence resilience by their presence in the religious organizations that a BRAT might attend.

## Resilience in the Lives of Military Children

- **Relationships are important and require intention.**
- **Shared traditions and opinions make shared identity even when perceived identity is separate.**
- **Third Culture is different from Monoculture but difference does not make a barricade to relationship**

10

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It is important to remember the significance of relationships.

Even in risk, there is opportunity to support resilience.

Many military families experience a sense of despair at the thought of disruptions.

But we will also discuss the interventions effective for influential relationships.

The experiences that BRATs have are not barricades to relationship nor to resilience.

## Resilience in the Lives of Military Children

# Hidden Diversity

- Dr. Paulette Bethel  
– <http://hidden-diversity.blogspot.com/>

Look like	Think like	Look like	Think different
Look different	Think like	Look different	Think different

11

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In the blended culture and disrupted relationships, BRATs and other TCKs often feel a sense of “hidden diversity” even in their home towns where their extended family lives. They might look and sound like everyone else, but they think differently because of their experiences (Bethel, 2003).

In small scale studies of American congregations that are located far from military installations or metropolitan areas, there are more than 25% of congregation members have had significant cross-cultural experiences. In such a “normal” place TCKs are tempted to hide their experiences to be able to be accepted.

If you are about to relocation, then the Power Point Slide activity would be REALLY helpful for you. It is something that even youngest children can do in a family.

Make a Power Point Slide that uses words and pictures to answer the question, “What do you want your next congregation/community to know about you as a Military Child/Adult?”

TRANSITION MODEL	Involvement	Leaving	Transition	Entering	Re-Engagement
Social Status	Belonging Part of "in" group Reputation Position Known Friends – confide, listen	Separating Closure Recognition / Attention Farewells / Celebration Withdrawal / Exclusion	Unknown Statusless Structureless Clueless Special knowledge without use	Marginal Superficiality Tentative Acceptance Uncertain of placement and use Misinterpret behavior / signals Temporary relationships Searching "mentors"	Belonging Part of "in" group Reputation Position Known Friends – confide, listen
Social Posture	Commitment Responsive Responsible Friend	Disengaging Relinquish Roles Distance Criticism Loosen ties / conflict New relationships Closure *RAFT	Chaos Exaggerated problems Misunderstanding / Ambiguity Self Centered Isolation Must initiate relationships	Introducing Marginal Observing Risk Taking Errors in response Exaggerated behavior Searching for "mentor" Trust issues	Commitment Responsive Responsible Friend
Psychological Experience	Intimacy Affirmed Secure Safe	Denial Rejection Resentment Grief / Sadness Expectations	Anxiety Loss of self esteem Loss of continuity with past (sacred objects) in present (schedule, job description, duties, care) Grief Disappointment	Vulnerable Easily offended Fearful Ambivalent Psychosomatic problems Depression	Intimacy Affirmed Secure Safe
Time	Present	Future/Temporary	Future	Temporary / Present	Present
<b>Transitions Model – See THIRD CULTURE KIDS by Ruth van Reken &amp; David Pollock</b>					

Relocation and deployment are experiences that disrupt relationships. David Pollock & Ruth van Reken developed a transitions model as a tool for use in assisting TCKs to have a language for discussing their experiences during relocation. This tool is also easily used for Soldiers and their families during times of deployment to talk about the disruptions.

Looking at the social status row of Pollock’s transitions model, mediation of trusted adults can occur through persistence during separation. Transitions are marked by the events that occur, such as moving trucks, airlines, and real estate agents.

However there are also aspects of transition that are tied into individual behaviour, choices, and perceptions, psychological experience, and social problems. When relationships are disrupted, adults can give children an opportunity to develop relationships and receive support.

The involvement and re-engagement columns are those in which a person is known and has connections. The transition and entering phases are times of heightened chaos. The strain of the disruption spills over into wider psycho-social experiences. The emergence into re-engagement can take as little as three months, but it occurs by intentional actions from the child and surrounding community. When there are exacerbating circumstances or even personal choices, re-engagement might take years or might never occur. Re-engagement becomes the involvement phase as a person looks toward the next move, the next leaving phase. Note that when re-engagement does not occur, the process of the next transition is impaired.

Broken and healed relationships, hellos and goodbyes, are normal experiences. People seek relationships that endure even amidst goodbyes. Life is spent seeking to be known and to be seen and to belong, but lives are filled with divided relationships and inevitably end in goodbye. As we move into the religious organizations that might have an effect on the lives of BRATs, keep in mind these transitions and the opportunities for relationship in all phases.

## Resilience in the Lives of Military Children

- Deployment and relocations are negatively significant in a child's resilience. However, positive support can be given to enhance the religiosity and the resilience of Military Children.



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13

Interventions are crucial for the individual TCK. Relocations and disrupted relationships are clearly a cause for concern and an opportunity for parents, extended family, and community members to provide care and support. Providing support to TCKs provides an ongoing measure of support for the people that these "children" encounter in their daily lives and throughout adulthood.

Research demonstrates that religious participation can be a factor in preventing critical incidents. The relationships can be built with families and across communities, supporting resilience.

Those of you who have been in my other Volunteer Academy classes are noticing the themes from Ushers, Active Threat, Children's Church, WatchCare, Faith at Home, Parenting in the Pew, and Pew Pals.

The trick is that relocation can interrupt religious practice. Examining mobility in Australia, DeVaus did not look so much at intercultural transition but only on the impact that a single relocation has on religious practice. His study included relocations which were only between homes ten miles apart. His results indicate that while mobility has no influence on overall religiosity, it does correlate with decreased worship attendance.

Tonight begins Passover.

Sunday is Easter.

For Christians and Jews this week is a GREAT one to stop and think about trauma/relocation/religion/resilience.

I hope that you will take time to do the journaling activity even if not for this class.

***Keep a Journal for 7 days. On each day read either the Jewish Passover narrative or the Christian Passion narrative. Each day answer: What are the crises and blessings in this story? What are the crises and blessings in your story?***

## Resilience in the Lives of Military Children

### The significance of Formal and Fictive family relationships

#### Formal

- Family of orientation, family of procreation
- Nuclear family, extended family



#### Fictive

- Affiliated family “Most individuals and families are not isolated, but exist in a rich network of kin, friends, and neighbors who give them strength.” (p.14, The Marriage and Family Experience, B. Strong & C DeVault eds.)
- Affiliated Family (Aunties, Like-sisters, virtual-grandparents)

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For more detail about Fictive Kin, join us in the Parenting in the Pew and Pew Pal classes.

To explore the influence that relationships can have for BRATs and all TCKs, it is helpful to understand the word faith.

Religious organizations deal with faith in a particular god, but faith can also be also a response to and reliance upon other individuals. This is faith as reliance or trust.

Developmental psychology indicates that capacity for responding to others is a skill that can be developed. Religious Education always includes training in the tenets of the religious group.

However as TCKs receive religious education the chapel can also maximize religious faith development when it is combined with reliable relationships.

As young people experience the reliability of the people that they can see, they glimpse the reliability of the divine that they cannot see.

## Resilience in the Lives of Military Children

### Belonging Perceptions and Realities

#### Individuality

I feel different from them

#### Exclusion

I am abandoned.

#### Similarity

I feel like them

#### Belonging

I am connected.



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There are very few studies that look explicitly at religion and TCKs. Alumkal examined Korean-American young adults at a Korean congregation in New York. Most of the participants feel more distinct from the American culture by their traditional Christian religious values than by their language or ethnicity. That study's participants found belonging in religious connections even when they were attending a non-Korean congregation. Relational influence and resilience are by shared faith more than by language and ethnicity.

For BRATs and all TCKs, belonging is a facet of intentionality – their own and that of the people in their lives. It is true, as Mary Wertsch said “that it is very important to understand that [BRATs] are from this military culture. It shapes us, and you don't stop being a military BRAT at age 18 - it affects you your whole life through”. However, fitting in and finding acceptance is not exclusively a function of shared ethnicity, point of origin, or shared culture.

TCKs withdraw in times of high stress; over 40% of adult TCKs struggle with continued intimacy issues.

A stronger resilience does not come by avoiding struggle but by learning to manage issues. Many TCKs experience extreme stress and repeated disruptions in childhood. As they grow into adulthood, the difference between functionality and continued problems lies in relationships with positively influential adults.

The body of TCK research indicates that TCKs struggle with relationship issues in all areas of their life. The work of adult-child relationships in the congregational context provides assistance for these relational issues.

## Resilience in the Lives of Military Children

### Physical Scaffolding



16

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Vygotsky's research is permeated with the concept of social scaffolding. To understand the theory, it is good to reflect on physical scaffolds that might be found today. The National Cathedral in Washington D.C. has had scaffolding to protect visitors since the 2011 earthquake loosened stones. Similarly, supportive relationships in congregations can provide healing for disrupted lives, encouragement for development, and new opportunities.

Scaffolding does not necessarily indicate a problem. It could provide various functions like decorating the Rockefeller Center Christmas Tree. Similarly social scaffolding in the life of a BRAT does not mean necessarily that there is pathology. Resilience can always be enhanced and developed. The following slides review specific components of relationships in religious organizations, relationships which may be as positive an experience for military families as physical scaffolding is for a building.



## Resilience in the Lives of Military Children



### Social Scaffolding



17

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Ongoing work in US Army chapels shows that the interruptions of parental relationships in deployment are mitigated by the religious practice itself and the relationships found within the religious organization.

Before looking at the factors that make up the social scaffolding, it is good to consider some specific examples of times and places that families have already seen social scaffolding at work. At the time of a military funeral there are rituals and symbols that provide immediate care and place the grief in the context of the larger military community.

Another example of visible social scaffolding is the handhold that a parent or grandparent might have on a small child in public, particularly in crowds or with strangers.

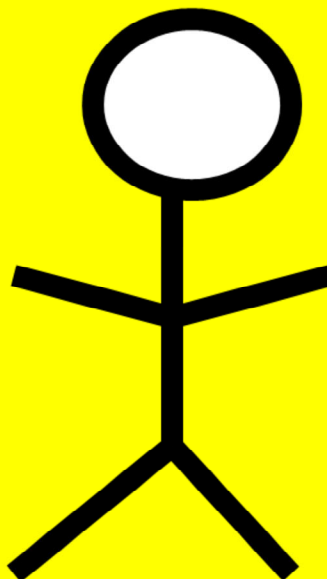
The social scaffolding that is provided by members of congregations is distinct from military funerals or parental handholding.

Just as with physical scaffolding, there are various secondary goals that can be met in social scaffolding as provided by congregations. The primary goal of relationships between adults and TCKs might be for social, faith, physical, or cognitive development. As congregations recruit and train volunteers to lead children, these aspects of development are important to talk about and train.

There are construction teams that specialize in designing and setting up physical scaffolding for specific locations. So also are there specific ways that relationships in chapels can provide influence on resilience. The descriptions that follow are of the ways social scaffolding is constructed for the specific needs of BRATs and other TCKs.

## Resilience in the Lives of Military Children

### Social Scaffolding



18

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#### *Context of Social Scaffolding*

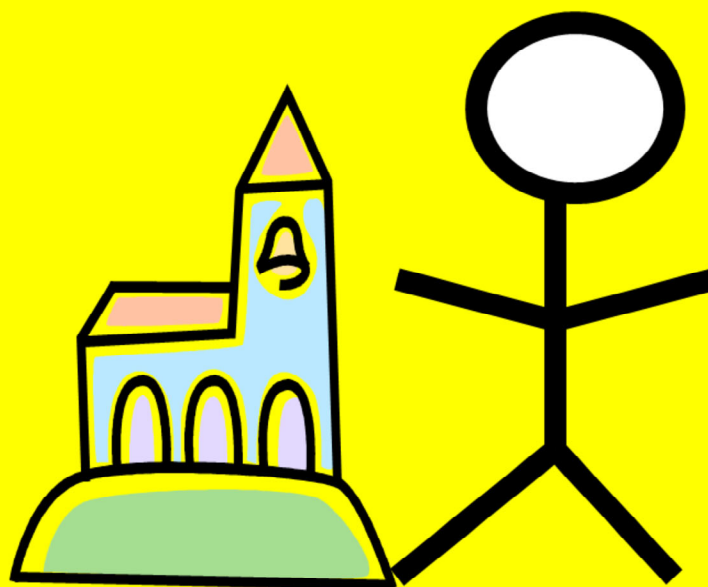
When a person enters a new military installation they feel alone. Their experience might be like a sense of the formless and void that begins the creation narrative of Genesis chapter one. They are not sure where to find friends or where to find resources.

In this time of global trauma, social scaffolding is REALLY important.

As we go through the next slides, make a note in your journal about **5 activities to build Social Scaffolding while you are socially isolated. Don't plan activities that are computer/video. Do include beliefs/practices from your religion.**

- *Social Scaffolding is by intention.*
- *Think about what you need and what you can provide.*

## Resilience in the Lives of Military Children



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19

As they arrive and begin formally working through the entry phase of transition, they begin to notice the people and resources that surround them. For example, in many installations, they cannot help but see the chapel with its unique architecture.

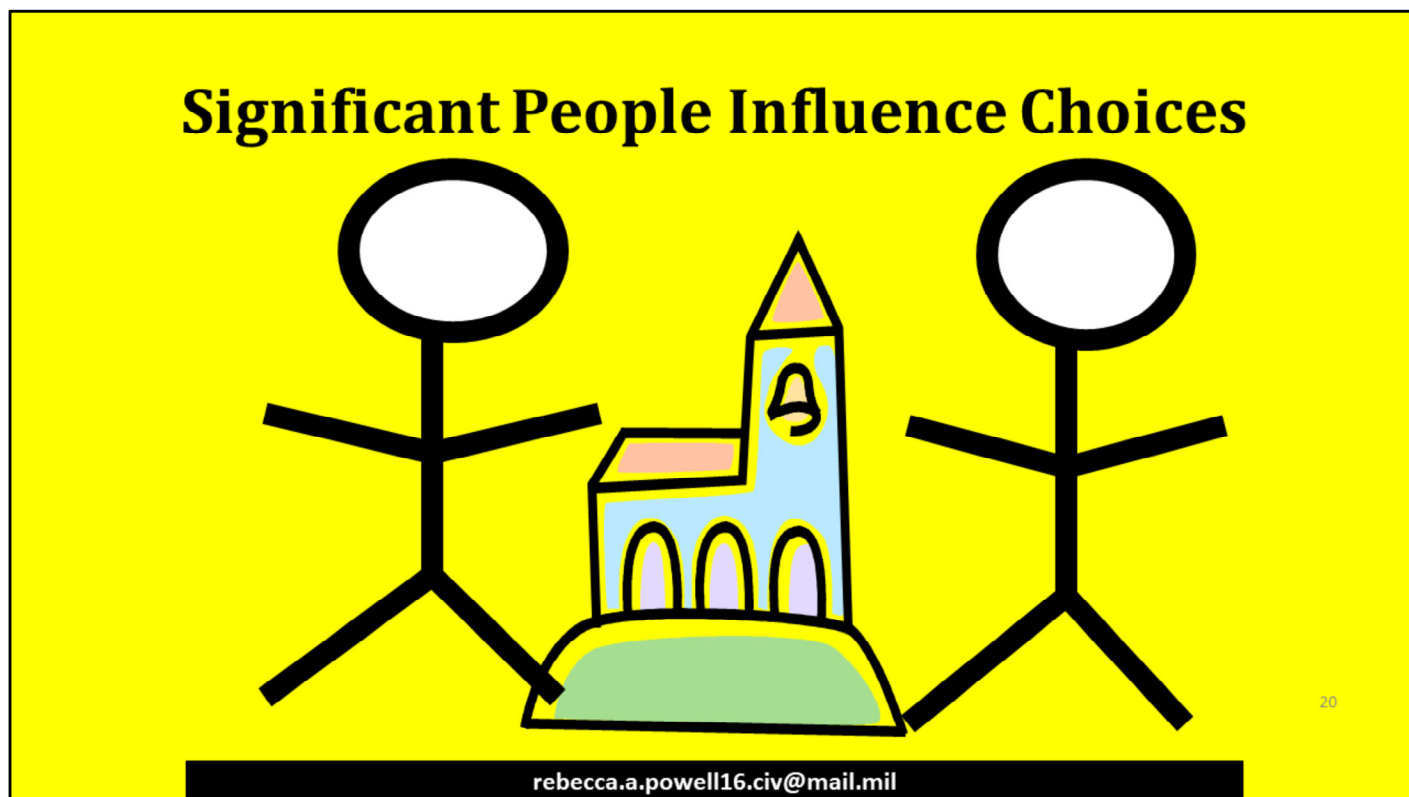
They may even notice the flyers, posters, banners and other advertising of events and plans.

There are five aspects that help understand the ways that relationship and religious organizations support the resilience and choices of BRATs.

The aspects are significance, trustworthiness, intention, self-development, and multiple-layers.

It is interesting to know that, when surveyed, children & teens do cite adults as influential on their choices and resilience.

They name these relationships with adults as significant in their life crises, even when the adults were not aware of having been a help.



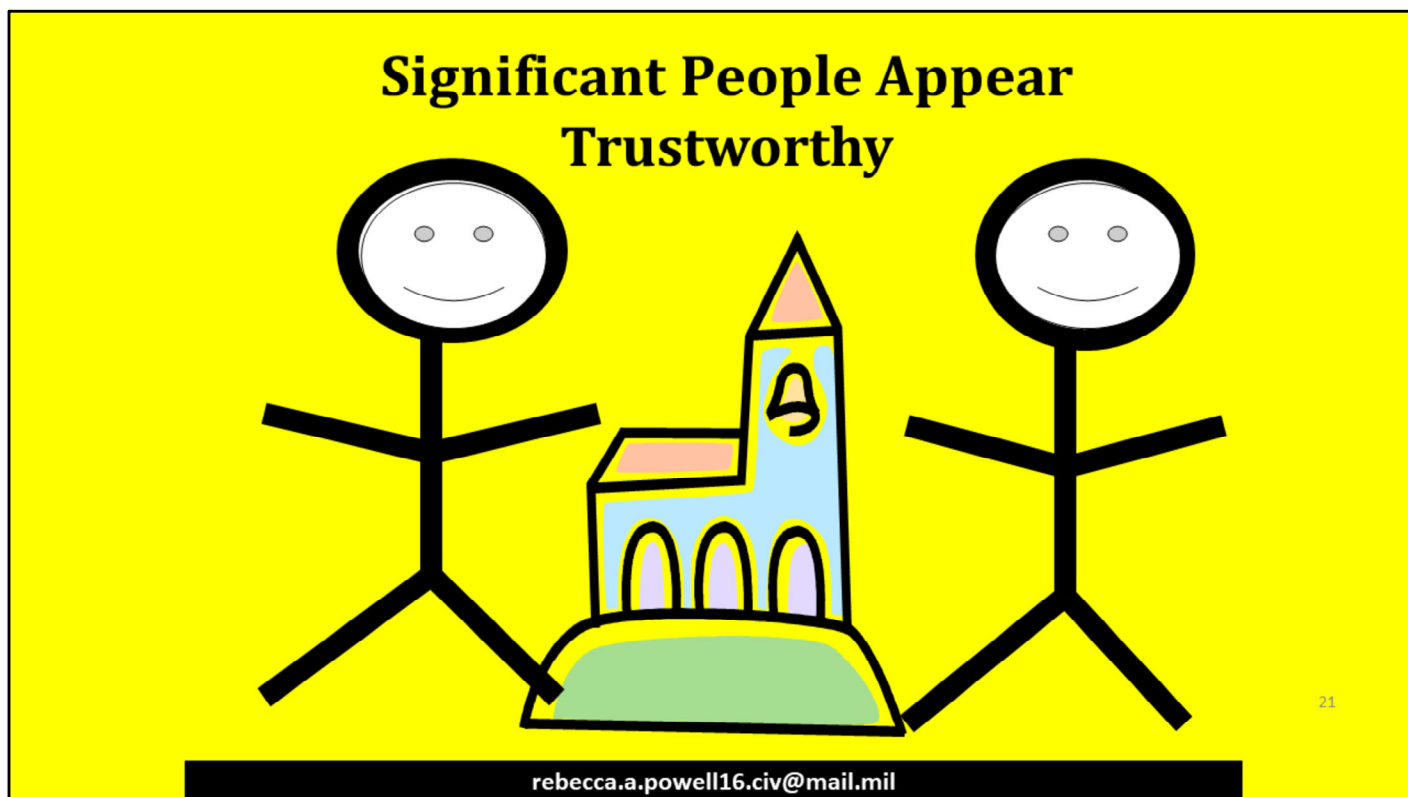
### *Significance*

For adults who want to influence positively, there is encouragement.

Even when someone might have given a negative influence to an adolescent, there are opportunities for positive significance. The intersection of relationships provided by several adults or the repentance provided by the offending adult can overcome disruption or negative influence.

Knowing that adolescents desire relationships with adults and that forgiveness and transformation are possible in these relationships encourages adults in these interactions. The concepts of grace, mercy, and peace offered by the Judeo-Christian tradition are helpful for thinking about the positive influence that can be offered to a TCK.

The attitudes and experiences of TCKs in congregations particularly can be opportunities for adults to have a chance of positively influencing the lives of many of young people.



### *Trustworthiness*

The second way that adult relationships in chapels can support resilience is in the fact that the appearance of trustworthiness correlates with influence.

In other words, reputation is as important as activity. Those who influence have demonstrated a worthiness to receive faith. Influential adults are typical adults who have certain characteristics or experiences that distinguish them.

The earned trustworthy designation is visible when there are particular adults who are named by multiple people as being influential.

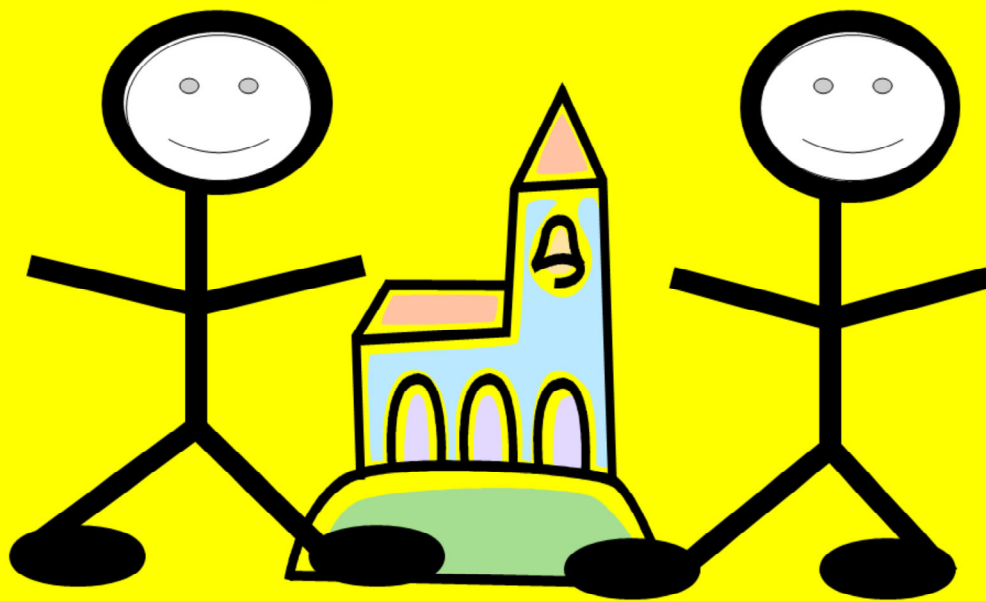
Adolescents desire relationships with adults, and they appreciate those who protect them. Child protection (training and background checks) is in community organizations and is an opportunity to gain trust. Visible trust enhancing activities are particularly critical for BRATs and other TCKs.

As part of this trust building, adults can be present to and find commonalities with adolescents. Part of the presence is a sense of similarity. Many BRATs name adults as influential when they share something in common. The words “like me” are used, but the likeness is not merely appearance but includes shared hobbies, career plans, and life experiences (such as the third culture).

Availability and commonality are part of trustworthiness. The scaffolding is formed first by the willingness of the young person to engage in relationships, and second from the trustworthiness of the adults.

Reputation, availability, and similarity make for a potential relationship which can be fully formed into one that supports resilience.

## Trusted People Relate Intentionally



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22

*Intention* - The third and perhaps most important of the ways in which relationships and congregations have the potential for influence is intention. This is the concept that a significant adult, whether they feel efficacious or not, may be intentional because of their desire to be effective. Intention is a multifaceted set of activities.

Persistence goes with intentionality. As an aspect of influence, persistence is in the long term connections between particular adults and particular adolescents and in a pattern of supporting various individuals.

--- When mentor relationships are a program, the influence is minimized. A persistent *attitude* of positive relationships is visible and significant.

Intention is evidenced in body language and including eye to eye contact. Nonverbal communication proves respect and presence. When volunteer ushers provide welcome they demonstrate intention. Intergenerational chapel events provide influence for BRATs.

Appropriate positions of responsibility offered to a child can demonstrate intent and support resilience. These might be simple tasks that are within the child's capacity. Alternately, they maybe positions of responsibility that allow an adolescent to have a peer relationship with adults. Congregations are voluntary organizations. Few tasks are done by paid professionals, and most faith groups offer full inclusion to all adolescents and adults. Allowing children to volunteer supports their resilience by reinforcing the theological lesson of their inclusion in the faith.

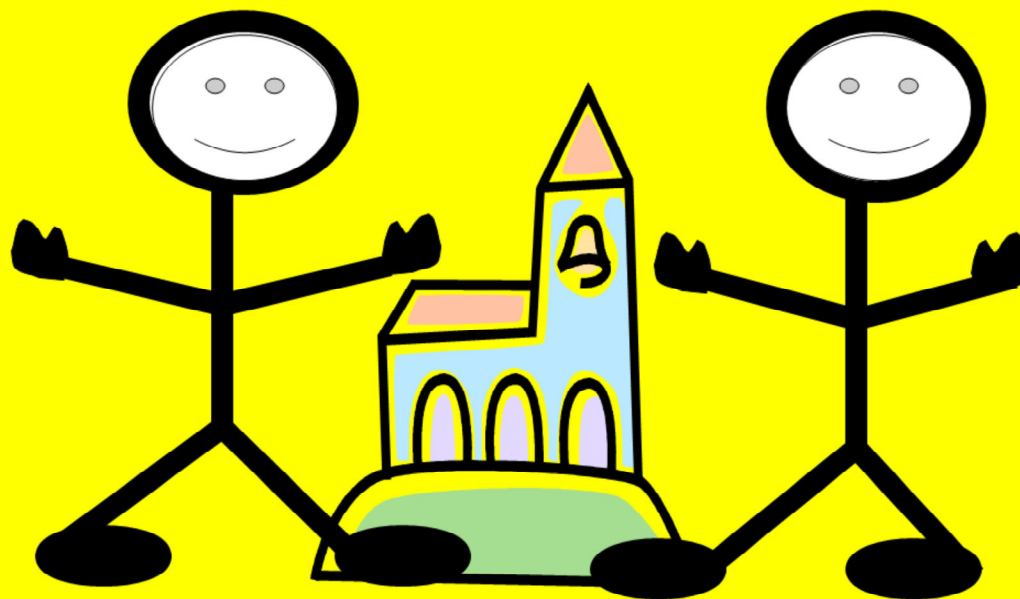
Significant relationships are evidenced in mundane ways. Eating together, intrinsic to many faith groups, is one of the most named parts of intentional relationships. The impact of food can be from snacks given as gifts or from meals together. Food is often coupled with the activity of visits which are also a piece of scaffolding. Visits include informal gatherings or long distance travel to meet after a relocation. Food and visits are authentications of stated intentions. When visits and/or food are provided during time of crisis, the efficacy of the relationship is maximized. Adult BRATs name specific visits of a trusted adult made significant difference in their own childhood.

Intentionality is seen in emails, phone calls, and mailed letters. Written and oral communications are crucial for all relationships, but handwritten notes are particularly memorable and significant in demonstrating intentionality. These show the adult's willingness to be in relationship with the child in spite of obstacles and barriers. Invariably a handwritten letter from an adult takes on an almost sacramental value for the Military BRAT.

Individual influences from particular adults are reinforced and enhanced by congregational choices. The intention of the congregation is visible in the selection of religious education curriculum, scheduling, and publicly stated priorities. However intention for positive influence is still seen in the documents of the organization. The congregation's activity and priorities are visible and influential for attendees of all ages.

Military chapels have a unique role with BRATs. Their efforts can have great significance when their presence is coupled with relational and programmatic intention. Denominational offices and civilian congregations can also demonstrate intention through coordinating support and tailoring resources for the distinct needs Military BRATs.

## Trusted People Continue Self-Development



### *Self-Development*

The most surprising aspect of adult significance might be self-development.

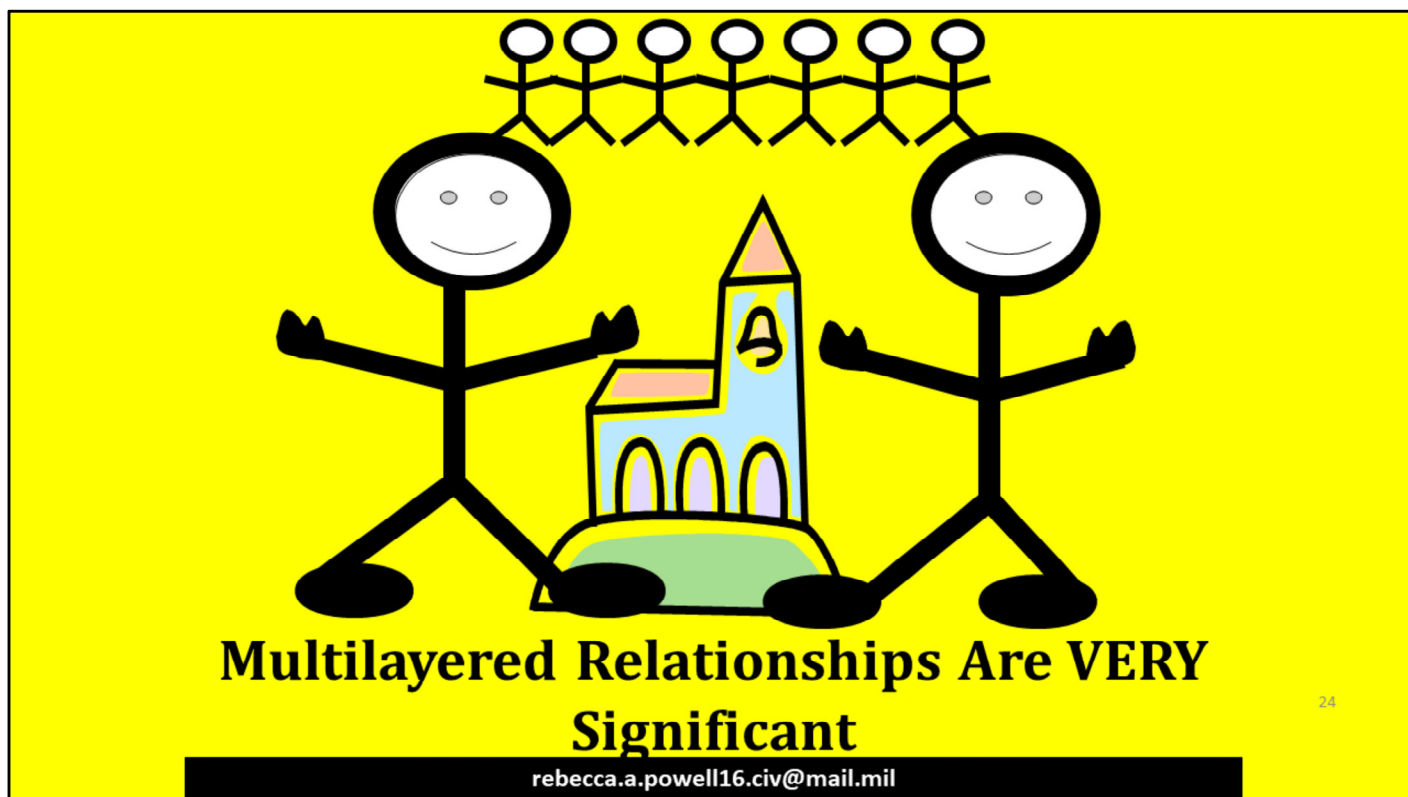
Many adults who are professional teachers, clergy, or youth workers are not named as significant. The research is clear that when an adult does not practice their own self-development their trustworthiness is denigrated.

Education is a key element of the visible self-development of influential adults. This might be ongoing schooling or it could be independent study. Many of the influential adults seek to learn about the needs of young people, particularly the distinct needs of BRATs and other TCKs.

This adult self-development also includes activities that support personal resilience. Influential adults participate in personal religious practice such as worship, prayer, and scripture study. Even when the religious practices are unknown to others, this facet of self-development is a characteristic of influence. Further study on the resilience of TCKs is needed to see if this part of self-development was from a congregation being the organization studied or if this is a factor in adult influence in other settings.

Similarly, when adults want to influence resilience, then they also need to develop their own peers. These are relationships that assist the adults' own resilience. Having adult to adult friendships also provides a sense of community and might connect with activity in the congregation.

Trusted adults even learn from children & teens. They recognize competencies and provide the young people an opportunity to teach. This mutuality of adult-TCK development makes a statement about a resilience that comes from community. As adults are willing to learn from adolescents, they show a humility and full commitment to self-development.



### *Multilayered Relationships*

The final component in social scaffolding for the resilience of young military BRATs is the idea of multilayered relationships. Not only are individual adults influential on the lives of individual young people, but also these adults integrate young people into the entire faith community. This includes introductions to reliable people of all ages. A congregation is a chance for people of all ages and stations to interact as peers. The recognition that a child needs multiple relationships with other reliable adults is an act of humility like that seen in self-development. An influential adult is one who recognizes that his/her own limitations enhances reliability and connects the many pieces of society into true social scaffolding.

The trusted adults might make referrals for a young person to different adults who might be better equipped for supporting his/her distinct needs and interests. In the studied congregations, trusted adults have introduced TCKs to other adults, adolescents, and children. This connection gives extra influence.

It is important to recognize the multilayered relationships that two individuals might have together. Multiple roles occur most commonly in monoculture communities such as when the banker and baker are both neighbours and customers to each other. In the lives of TCKs, this does still occur, such as when the teacher is also the parent of a friend. With the insular nature of a military installation, BRATs are more likely to experience these overlapping roles than any other TCK population.

Influence on resilience is reinforced when the adult and the young person share multiple roles together and when they have multiple people who join together for shared influence. Few TCKs experience the intergenerational nature of overlapping relationships like those found in a monoculture community. However, in all multilayered relationships people are known at a deeper level. When coordinated, all five pieces of social scaffolding can be assembled, resulting in TCKs whose lives have significant multilayered relationships.



## Resilience in the Lives of Military Children

### Social Scaffolding

**1 – Significant People Can Influence Choices**

**2 – Significant People Appear Trustworthy**

**3 – Trusted People Relate Intentionally**

**4 – Trusted People Continue Self-Development**

**5 – Multilayered Relationships are**

**VERY Significant**

25

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Significant relationships and resilience are not automatic even in monoculture settings. The trustworthy reputation is earned. The work of relationships always requires persistent intention. Self-development demonstrates a sense of humility within any adult. Building relationships that involve multiple people and multiple roles requires daily work. Even when four out of the five parts of social scaffolding are present, the absence of one can denigrate the positive influence and impair resilience.

When adults in religious organizations intentionally work to develop positive relationships with each other and with the BRATs who live in their midst, resilience is certainly enhanced. Social scaffolding is more a description of the relationships that have worked than a checklist for a program to be implemented.

*A Friend Who Teaches Me* presents the research and findings about social scaffolding and TCKs. It analyzes adult-adolescent relationships in an English speaking congregation located in a non-English speaking land. Since its completion, its findings have been used with US Army chapels in Europe. The scaffolding theory has been confirmed in comparisons with Army research and in conversations with members of the military community.

## Resilience in the Lives of Military Children

### Objectives

- *Military Children are part of a larger international culture.*
- *Participation in religious organisations also plays a role in a child's resilience during normal times as well as through trauma.*
- *Relocation (repeated or one time, long distance or local) interrupts a child's religious participation.*
- *Social Scaffolding is the network of relationships that supports resilience.*

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26

Most chaplains and even chapel attendees understand the importance of imparting faith and enhancing resiliency. However congregations (on-post and off) normally struggle to find and enact specific methods that can be implemented to achieve such an influence. While each person and each congregation is distinct, there are ways to both increase the number of people scaffolded and the level to which their resilience is influenced.

The daily occurrences of relocation and deployment among the military community mean that crises might occur at a higher rate than other TCKs. The high need for resilience among BRATs can be mitigated by interventions in chapels and other religious organizations. More than programs, the development of positively influential relationships is paramount for resilience.

The possibility of relationships can be a great encouragement. These are issues that are being faced and addressed by military and community organizations around the world. Resilience can be enhanced through significant relationships, and religious organizations are locations well suited for supporting this process.

# Questions?

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27

Thank you for participating in today's training event.

Please contact the IMCOM-Europe Religious Education Program Directors for more information on this topic.

In the chat area and in the USACHCS Training Portal, there are brochures of other training opportunities that we provide.

Please ensure that you have signed on today's chat or by email to me. This allows us to keep record of your training, recognize you with a certificate today, and notify you of future training events.

## **Military Children Religion & Resilience**

Choose 1 for an additional 0.5 CLP

- 1. Stay for the panel discussion on the needs of & supports for Military Community.**
- 2. Keep a Journal for 7 days. On each day read either the Jewish Passover narrative or the Christian Passion narrative. Each day answer: What are the crises and blessings in this story? What are the crises and blessings in your story?**
- 3. Make a Power Point Slide that uses words and pictures to answer the question, "What do you want your next congregation/community to know about you as a Military Child/Adult?"**
- 4. Describe 5 activities to build Social Scaffolding while you are socially isolated. Don't use computer/video. Do include beliefs/practices from your religion.**

Send your answers to [rebecca.a.powell16.civ@mail.mil](mailto:rebecca.a.powell16.civ@mail.mil)

28

Make a note about these activities. You will get an additional 0.5 CLP for submitting one.