

Creative Activities to Support Connection in a Time of Social Distancing

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THE BESTSELLING PHENOMENON THAT HAS INSPIRED READERS AROUND THE WORLD

The Invisible String

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Icebreaker Activity

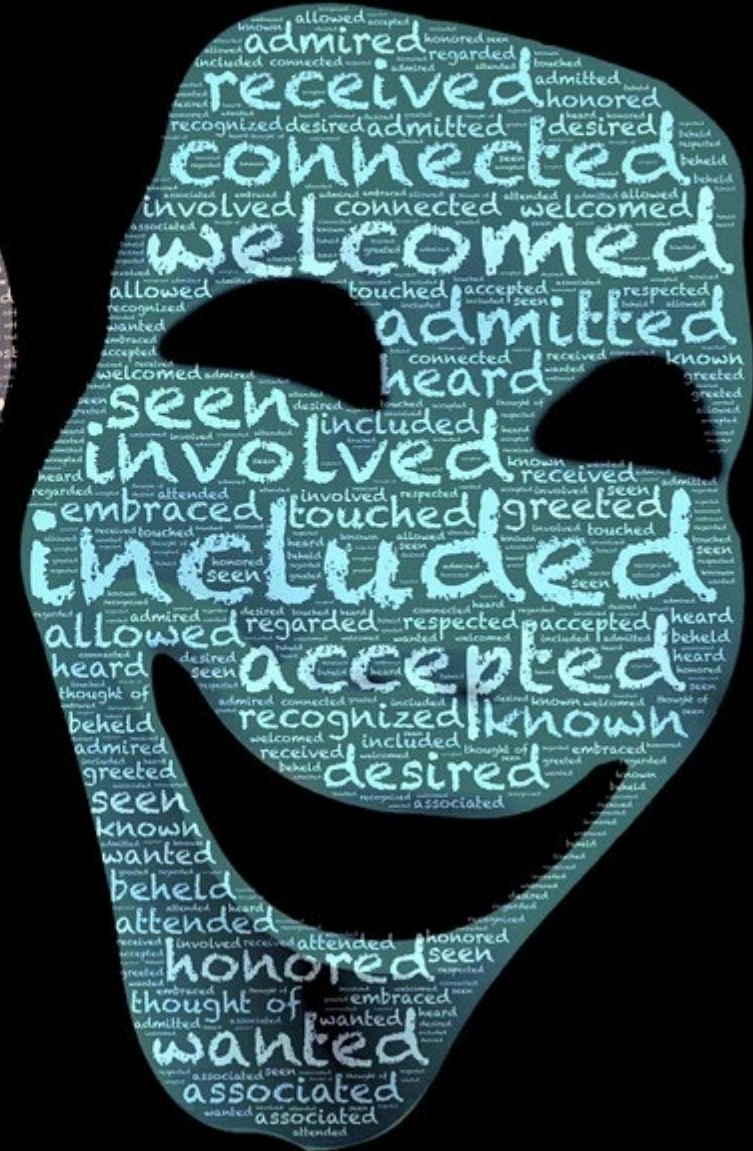
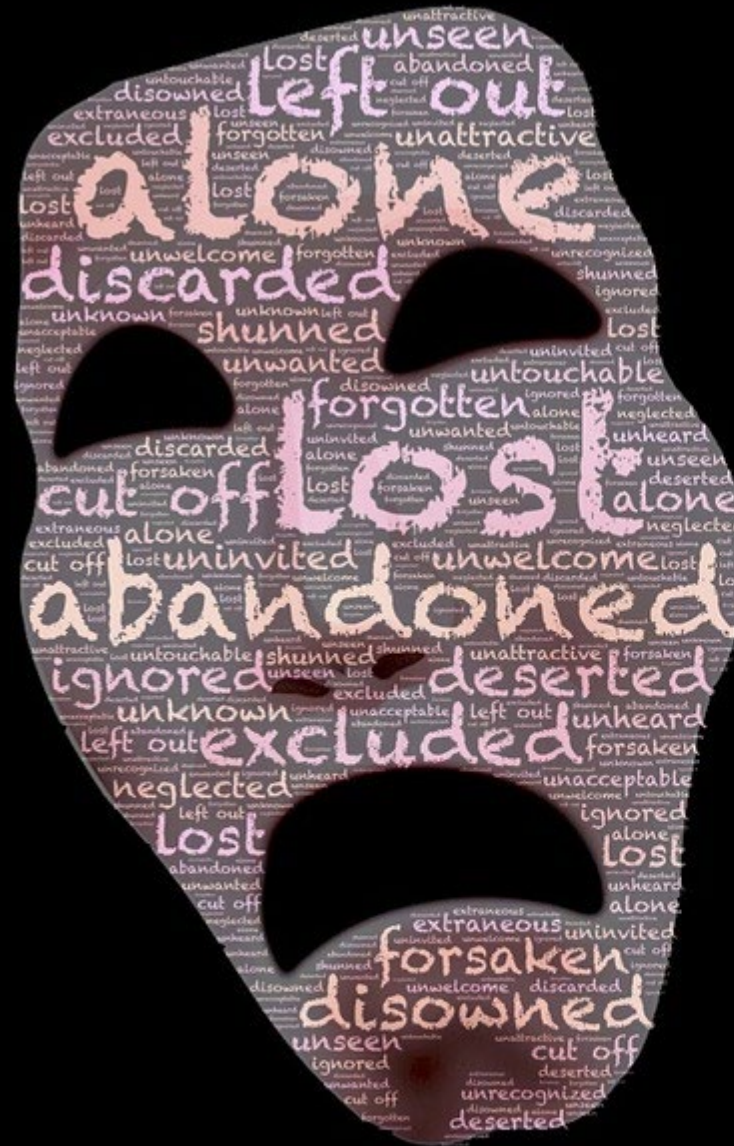


Objectives

1. Identify 4 concerns for military families
2. Practice 4 or more activities to support creativity and connection for families who have experienced a disruption in attachment.
3. Develop a toolbox of 3 creative activities to assist children, and families in increase healthy connections.
4. Differentiate the importance of matching the right activity to the right client at the right time and properly documenting the session.
5. The participants will personally experience the activities to identify areas of comfort or weakness, identify appropriate uses of non-verbal activities with clients and learn how to safely lead into verbal process.

Attachment Review

- Secure
- Avoidant
- Anxious
- Disorganized





Flight, Fight, Freeze
Submit/Comply

Military based research about attachment

- Regardless of one parent's deployment, children with a primary caregiver who was not securely attached showed higher rates of insecure attachment styles. (Lester, et al., 2016).
- "Traumatized couples, whether they are single or dual trauma couples, often report difficulties with adjusting to the many shifts in family roles and the balancing of power in decision making." (Basham, pg. 90)
- Difficulties in attachment can arise due to length of deployment; combat vs non combat deployment; co-parenting upon return and communication between the deployed individual and the co-parent/children. (Lester & Flake, 2013).

Military specific attachment disruptions

- Family moves
- Deployment
- Length of deployment or during separations
- Return from deployment
- Reintegration to civilian life
- PTSD, medical care, substance use and other after service issues (seek a full time support with military/military family experience to guide the family through these events).

Activities for family moves

- Have all friends and families that you have connected with sign a copy of The Invisible String to take with you. (For families who move more often in order to provide more writing space, you can use a sketch book and add quotes and pictures about the invisible string with the messages).
- Establish one person to be a pen pal.
- A Piece of My Heart Puzzle (with close friends).



Activities at the time of deployment

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- A Piece of My Heart Puzzle
- The Invisible String Goes Around the World
 - Have the parent take a copy with them (you can also use a heart stress ball or a token object) have the parent give you one as well. Take pictures of your adventures showing all of the places you took the book/object. Share them through any means allowed to communicate and then create a scrap book together.
- A Map of My Strings
 - Get a large Map for the wall, put a pin in the place you are and a pin in the place the parent(s) are then tie a string around them.



Activities during Separation

- Finding hearts Everywhere
- Letters From the Heart
 - Write letters, create art, write poems to share with the person upon leave or return from duty.
- Never Alone
 - Sometimes when people we feel safe and secure with leave we feel alone or scared. How can you remember you are not alone, and they are always with you? Draw, write, and/or collage ways that you know you are not alone.
- What Travels Along my string
 - Chose a movie, a song, and a quote that reminds you of the person.



Activities upon reintegration to family: During leave and/or returning to civilian life

- The Invisible String Goes Around the World
 - Share the pictures and create the scrap book together of all the places your book/object/stress ball has gone. Take time sharing the stories.
- Do another Piece of My Heart Puzzle.
- Letters From the Heart
 - Share letters written to the person of family.
- Talk about the importance of space and time for the parent returning.

To address military service related concerns

- Remember to seek a team of professionals that understand and possible have lived experience with military life to support treatment.
- Attachment theory based therapy is a great addition to commonly used CBT oriented treatment.
- The arts can provide a great resource to create connection and process through difficult family and war related traumas without the need to verbally share.
- Appropriate assessment for individual and family services.
- Wellness Recovery Action Plan for Military Veterans, Active during and Currently transitioning individuals

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