

**Resources for Wounded Veterans  
D14 Symposium on Worship 2009**

**Some books:**

1. Terri Tanielian and Lisa H. Jaycox, editors. Invisible Wounds of War: Psychological and Cognitive Injuries, their Consequences, and Services to Assist Recovery. Rand, Center for Military Health Policy Research, 2008.
2. Jonathon Shay, Achilles in Vietnam: Combat Trauma and the Undoing of Character. Scribner, 1994.
3. Bill Gaventa and Wendy Berk, editors. Brain Injury: When the call Comes: A Congregational Resource, The Elizabeth Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities, 2001. Website: <http://rwjma.umdj.edu/boggscenter>
4. Department of the Army. Ministering to Families Affected by Military Deployment: Deployment Resources for America's Clergy. 2007  
[richard.poinexter@us.army.mil](mailto:richard.poinexter@us.army.mil)

**Some web Sites:**

The two from Calvin Institute of Christian Worship have extensive bibliographies and web sites.

1. Calvin Institute of Christian Worship. Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Veterans. <http://www.calvin.edu/worship/resources/ptsd/index.php>
2. Calvin Institute of Christian Worship. Becoming a Veteran-friendly Church: Pacifists can do this too.  
<http://www.calvin.edu/worship/stories/veterans.php?source=hiliter>
3. MilitaryOneSource hotline 1-800-342-9647
4. The US Army War College [www.carlisle.army.mil](http://www.carlisle.army.mil)

## AN ORDER FOR BLESSING SERVICE MEMBERS DEPLOYING FOR WAR

The pastor calls the service member forward together with his/her family.

Pastor to congregation:

Scripture calls all Christians to pray for those in authority, to honor them and to be subject to them as they support those who do what is good, reprimand those who do wrong and provide for a just ordering of society. Those who are called to military service act as instruments of these authorities. Today we recognize \_\_\_\_\_ (Job title/rank/name) as he/she departs to serve in \_\_\_\_\_. (Theater of Operation)

The pastor may briefly describe the assignment that the military service member is departing to fulfill.

The service member may kneel or stand as the pastor and the family members/loved ones lay hands on him/her.

Pastor to service member:

\_\_\_\_\_, (First name) on behalf of this congregation, I pray God's blessing be upon you as you journey into harm's way. While you are serving in \_\_\_\_\_ (Theater of Operation) we promise to remember you in prayer, uphold you with encouraging communications and surround your loved ones, who remain at home, with a community of care and support. As you deploy in service to our country, may the Lord be the stronghold of your life. May you rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation and be constant in prayer. May the Holy Spirit guide and sustain you through every experience and may the peace of God which passes all understanding keep your heart and mind in Christ Jesus, Our Lord.

Let us pray:

The pastor and the congregation pray together:

Almighty God, we commend to your love and care, \_\_\_\_\_. (Full Name) Be with him/her now as he/she prepares to face the challenges of deployment and the uncertainties of war. Grant him/her wisdom and courage so that he/she may discharge his/her duties with integrity and faithfulness. Help him/her to endure hardship with grace and humor. Fill him/her with compassion for those who go the journey with him/her. Protect him/her from all danger, O God, and comfort him/her in moments of distress. During this time of separation, be for his/her loved ones a source of hope and strength and hasten the day when peace may finally come. Amen.

## AN ORDER FOR WELCOMING SERVICE MEMBERS RETURNING FROM WAR

The pastor calls the service member forward together with his/her family.

Pastor to congregation:

In 1749, Charles Wesley wrote these words:

“And are we yet alive, and see each other’s face?

Glory and thanks to Jesus give for his almighty grace!”

It is with joy and thanksgiving that we this day welcome \_\_\_\_\_ (Job title/rank/name) as he/she returns from service in \_\_\_\_\_. (Theater of Operation)

The pastor may briefly describe the assignment that the military service member has just completed.

\_\_\_\_\_ (first name), on behalf of our congregation, I want to thank you for your service to our country and thank your family for their many sacrifices during your deployment.

The pastor may briefly describe any family events of significance that occurred during the family member’s absence (births, deaths, graduations, etc.)

Pastor to service member:

\_\_\_\_\_ (first name), you have been to war and you have survived. We recognize that there is a deeply personal cost for being a warrior that few of us will ever fully understand.

The gospels tell us about a man who had been living among the tombs, and who called himself Legion because he was haunted by so many disturbing spirits. When Jesus saw him, he had compassion on him and gave him release from his demons. As you return to us today, we want you to have the opportunity to leave behind what is past and accept for yourself the healing and comfort that God alone can provide.

The service member responds:

I have returned from war – help me continue my journey home.

The service member may kneel or stand.

Pastor to congregation:

Let us be in prayer:

The pastor and the congregation pray together:

Almighty and merciful God, we lift up to you this day our brother/sister \_\_\_\_\_ who through your great love has been returned to us. For your protection, guidance and sustaining presence while he/she was in harm's way, we give you profound thanks.

With \_\_\_\_\_ (first name), we mourn the loss of all those who did not return home and pray for all those who have been wounded in body and spirit. We pray also for their loved ones, that in you they might find a source of hope and strength.

Silence may be kept for the remembrance of names or specific individuals may be named aloud.

Remembering that even your son Jesus still had scars after he was resurrected, we pray that you will continue to uphold \_\_\_\_\_ (first name) as he/she seeks healing for the wounds that inflict the spirit of all who endure a struggle. Help him/her to let go of painful memories. Help him/her to reconnect with those who love him/her. Help him/her to know that he/she no longer needs to be quite so vigilant, for you have the watch over his/her life. In Jesus name, we pray. Amen

Pastor to service member and congregation:

In the Epistle to the Romans, the apostle Paul asked, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?"

And then he answered the question with these words:

"For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Pastor to service member:

\_\_\_\_\_ (first name), in service to your country, you may have been required to act in ways that are outside the parameters of civilized behavior. Reflecting on these memories may be painful and discomfoting. I ask you now, in the presence of this community of faith, to offer up a silent prayer for all that you have experienced that grieves your spirit and weighs heavily on your heart.

A moment for silent prayer will be observed.

Hear now these comforting words from the Scripture:

“Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens and I will give you rest.” (Matthew 11: 28)

A moment for silent prayer will be observed.

The service member turns and faces the congregation.

The pastor and congregation proclaim:

\_\_\_\_\_ (First name), may the peace of God be with you.

The service member responds:

And also with you.

Pastor to congregation:

Members of the household of faith, I commend to your love and care our brother/sister \_\_\_\_\_ (first name). Do all in your power to continue to uphold him/her so that one day, by the renewing power of the Holy Spirit, true peace may again dawn in his/her life.

Pastor to service member and congregation:

Now may the blessing of God be with all of us as we look toward that glorious day described by the prophet Isaiah who said: “They shall beat their swords into plowshares, And their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, Neither shall they learn war anymore.”

# SPIRITUAL JOURNEYS OF SHALOM

## BACKGROUND

The United Methodist Church deploys chaplains and pastoral counselors in a variety of settings both in the continental United States and around the world. John Wesley's best known affirmation, "The World Is My Parish" has been a driving force for persons in ministry since the beginning of the Methodist movement. This is especially true for those in extension ministries.

As in the past, endorsed United Methodist military chaplains exercise their vows of Word, Sacrament and Service in the frontlines of war. Today they are in Iraq and Afghanistan. Our chaplains face very complex challenges as well as opportunities in these environments of violence, pain and fear. They bring the healing words of the Gospel to members of the military who often have to give up their lives for the sake of the Nation.

United Methodist military chaplains journey with their soldiers through multiple deployments and untold dangers while their families and friends anxiously wait for their safe return. Then, one day, they return home and they are not the same. They bring in their hearts and souls the pains of war and the vivid memories of a world that few could comprehend. At the same time, their communities have changed, their families have changed and their children have grown. The excitement of the homecoming can become a nightmare unless the healing power of a caring church and community is activated. Therefore, we face a challenge as the United Methodist Church to unleash the powerful forces of the endorsed community to bring hope, comfort and support to our chaplains and families. **The United Methodist Teams to Facilitate the Spiritual Journey of Shalom** emerged as a result of the emotional and spiritual crisis of war. The opportunities for and the experiences in our endorsed community are extraordinary for use in this venture.

## CONCEPT

The Teams will bring together endorsed pastoral counselors, spiritual directors, active/retired military chaplains as well as local church volunteers. These persons will work together with small groups of families to facilitate the spiritual journey of chaplains and their families as they return from war, negotiate the shoals of reentry, say hello, and, in some cases, say goodbye yet again. The term **SHALOM** is used because it incorporates hello, goodbye, and peace.

## **THE WORK OF THE TEAMS**

### **MISSION**

The Teams will assist returning chaplains and their spouses to reintegrate, to face the inevitable changes, and to accept these changes as common.

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

#### **The Culture of the Military**

- The military community is unlike any other community
- Only military communities are asked to give up certain rights for the benefit of the nation, e.g., freedom of speech
- Military people tend to bond very quickly
- At the same time, military people tend to fear getting too close for fear of loss
- Military families are asked to make frequent sacrifices
- Military families make frequent moves, often without the financial help provided for corporate moves
- Spouses in the military have to re-establish with each move
- Military people face frequent and prolonged separations from family
- Military communities are closed societies with loose boundaries between work and social life. They live and work within the “gates”
- Military communities are a blending of races and regional cultures unknown in other communities
- Military communities have a great diversity of faith groups
- The military culture is a youth culture
- Military members often have some difficulty understanding how civilian communities work. “Who’s in charge here?”
- Military people have an ethos of “taking care of our own”
- The military consciously provides resources for families during deployment
- The military has an excellent record of mentoring
- Military people have their own language
- Military communities have a common purpose/mission
- The military spirit is a warrior spirit
- Military people are sometimes placed in harms way
- Even in peacetime, military work is inherently dangerous
- Civilians always make the decisions about the deployment of the military
- The military is very hierarchical
- The military is very competitive. Up or out, (Promotion or discharge) is the norm
- Even the spouses of the military member tend to be rank conscious
- Everyone in the military immediately knows his/her position in relation to others. The insignia of rank, branch and unit patches defines this.

## **What the returning chaplain may be experiencing**

It is important here to understand that PTS (Post Traumatic Stress) and PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) are on a continuum. Persons can experience symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress without having the disorder. The difference lies in the level of normal functioning. It is safe to say, however, that no one escapes some impact from exposure to traumatic events. Therefore, the returning chaplain may experience any or all of the following:

- Intrusive thoughts and memories. The uninvited and unbidden experience of sudden thoughts and memories of the traumatic event or events
- Flashbacks. A more serious occurrence of the above in which the person actually relives the event as if it were in the present
- Hyper-vigilance. A state of being on guard to threats of danger.
- Exaggerated startle response, e.g., flinching, jumping or falling to the ground when loud noises occur
- Difficulty falling or staying asleep
- Nightmares
- Outbursts of anger
- Efforts to avoid thoughts, feelings or conversations related to the trauma(s)
- Efforts to avoid situations that arouse memories of the trauma(s)
- Withdrawal from normal activities
- Feelings of detachment
- Blocking memories of all or parts of the traumatic event(s)
- Difficulty concentrating
- Difficulty expressing feelings
- Restricted range of affect, e.g., inability to have loving feelings
- More subtle reactions to certain odors, sounds or sights

It is very important for both the chaplain and the spouse to know that the above reactions are common and usually normal. The highest estimates of veterans who suffer from PTSD are around 30%. To be diagnosed with the actual disorder, the above symptoms must be in a cluster, must significantly interfere with optimal functioning, and must persist for an extended period of time. The DSM IV defines PTSD as acute if the symptoms persist for up to three months and chronic if they last more than three months. One or two symptoms are not considered a disorder but only a cluster of several. However, even in the war veterans who do not suffer from PTSD some symptoms may persist for decades. This is particularly true of intrusive thoughts and memories. The memories cannot be erased and often will return when least expected. Virtually all persons exposed to the trauma of combat have some form of PTS.



In addition to the above responses to the trauma of war, there are other common reactions

- The chaplain may feel some reluctance to reconnect because of the threat of quick redeployment. “Why should I say hello when I may have to say goodbye?”
- The transition from the war zone to the American town can be disconcerting in itself.
- The chaplain may feel “survivor’s guilt” particularly if he/she was involved in a mass casualty event
- The chaplain may feel disconnected spiritually
- The chaplain may feel at odds with the roots of his/her faith
- The chaplain will probably feel joy at being home
- The chaplain will probably feel relief at making it home
- The chaplain will discover that exposure to combat forever changes one’s understanding of self and world.
- The chaplain may miss the adrenaline rush of combat
- If the chaplain is a reserve or national guard chaplain he/she may face issues of re-appointment within the home conference and re-integration with the local church
- Chaplains may have difficulty determining where to go for help
- There may be privacy issues associated with counseling

Of course, this list is not exhaustive. It would be impossible to list all of the possible reactions.

### **What the spouse may be experiencing**

The spouse has also been through the pain of separation and his /her own trials and may be feeling uncomfortable reactions to the reunion. Common reactions include the following:

- Joy
- Relief
- Unexplained anger
- Arguing with minimal stimulus
- Feelings of being displaced. While the chaplain has been away, the spouse has often learned a new sense of independence. Giving this up for the team’s sake is often difficult.
- Fear and concern for the reactions being displayed by the chaplain
- New issues in parenting. The spouse has lived through the changes and growth in the children. The chaplain has not.
- Difficulty sharing decision making, especially concerning the children
- Unrealistic expectations that things will be as they were before deployment
- The opposite of the above in expecting the worst

- The spouse may feel distrust of the chaplain because of the possibility of unfaithfulness during the deployment
- Fear that he/she will no longer be loved
- Fear that they are no longer connected spiritually
- The spouse may also feel reluctant to reconnect for fear of rapid redeployment
- The spouse may have suffered from anticipatory grief and will face the dissolution of those symptoms
- The spouse may experience anger if the chaplain volunteered for deployment
- If the chaplain is a reservist or national guard chaplain the spouse may experience difficulty resuming the role of pastor's spouse

Again, this list is not exhaustive.

### **Tasks facing the couple**

- Reestablishing open communications
- Sharing their concerns, fears, and joys with one another
- Respecting the differences in their experiences
- Renegotiating the division of labor in the home
- Renegotiating the sharing of parental decision making
- Helping the children deal with their own responses to the many changes in their world
- Rewriting the rules of the household
- Active listening
- Putting one another first
- Rebuilding their love
- Rebuilding their trust
- Reclaiming the romance of their relationship
- Getting to know one another again in view of the inevitable changes to self
- Rebuilding their common faith
- Finding help if needed

## **GROUP FACILITATION SKILLS**

Team members are all skilled in group facilitation since this is a prerequisite for being a team member. These skills are listed here as a reminder only. No doubt you will think of more.

- Establish and preserve confidentiality
- Set and keep boundaries concerning group membership, time, safety, and participation
- Make a contract with the participants to attend all the sessions of the group
- Speak in the first person

- Avoid dominating the conversation or allowing another to dominate
- Do team building at outset
- Build trust
- Discourage interrupting
- Discourage interruptions from the outside
- Be aware of countertransference
- Model desired behaviors
- Establish a non-judgmental atmosphere
- Encourage the telling of stories
- Don't be afraid of silence (it lowers defenses because it raises tension)
- Avoid the language of healing (our task is to ease the journey, not to treat pathology)
- Encourage the accepting of feelings as common
- Stress the commonality of their experiences
- Be an active listener
- Keep the small groups as small groups (6 to 8 members including leaders)  
Groups larger than eight are no longer small groups and do not have the same dynamics

## **THE SEMINARS**

There is great flexibility in how, when, where, and for how long the seminars are conducted. A suggested format is attached, but it is not to be taken as gospel. The following are suggestions:

- Enlist local United Methodist Churches for facilities and logistical support when possible. It's their ministry too. (Note: several of the couples in the experimental seminar felt local churches were not the right setting. Too many of them felt injured by the local church)
- Make sure you have the materials you need. At a minimum you'll want an easel with newsprint, markers, pads or file cards, and pencils for the participants.
- Meet with chaplains and their spouses together to facilitate their hellos.
- If you determine that the emotional content of their stories are too powerful for them to share them with their spouses just yet you might want to consider separating them into two sub-groups. This will probably not be necessary.
- Keep your eye out for the need for further professional intervention and make appropriate referrals if warranted. .
- Make sure there is free time in your plan.
- Begin and end the seminars with worship. Closing with the Eucharist is usually appropriate.

## **A SUGGESTED SEMINAR FORMAT**

This particular format is designed for a seminar beginning one afternoon and continuing through the following evening. It may, of course, be modified to fit the time available. Ideally, a seminar for two full days will give more time for processing the experiences and for free time to give the participants some distance from the stress. Two day seminars may prove to be prohibitively expensive.

### **First afternoon**

#### **Opening Worship**

A suggested order of worship for welcoming service members returning from war is on the GBHEM UMC Endorsing Agencies website ([gbhem.org/chaplains](http://gbhem.org/chaplains)). A copy is attached.

You may, of course, develop your own worship service.

#### **Team building – Measuring the Group**

The objective here is to introduce the group members to one another, establish a basis for trust, and initiating the group process. The suggested exercise is as follows:

Purpose: To allow participants to visually experience the demography and nature of the group. It is a bonding exercise.

Process: The group is asked to create a line that identifies from the shortest to the longest time in the military. Other factors may be measured, such as the number of children, length of time married, years spent overseas, etc.

The group is then asked to picture a map and place themselves on the map where they were born, where they are stationed now, where their favorite duty station was, etc.

The exercise ends at the discretion of the facilitator.

(You may choose to use another team building exercise)

### **Morning of second day**

#### **Devotions**

#### **Group Session #1 – Needs and expectations assessment (30 min)**

What do the participants hope to get from the seminar? (This may be recorded on newsprint and referred to at the end of the feedback and summary session #6)

#### **Group Session #2 - Telling our stories (1 hr)**

The group will be separated into two groups. One will consist of the chaplains, the other will consist of the spouses. Their experiences will be quite different. The first experienced the rigors of combat. The other experienced the hell of waiting and being

responsible for everything at home. What the facilitator is looking for are the stories that are likely to haunt them over time, the stories that are giving them the most difficulty. This process has a power all its own. As the saying goes, “Naming our ghosts takes their power away.” Whatever can be done to ease this process should be done. You might want them to note both a difficult story and a story where they felt ministry occurred. These, of course, might be one and the same. You can be quite specific about what you are looking for in terms of their stories. In this session they are simply to tell their stories. The discussion of their feelings and reactions to the stories will be covered in the next session. Allow plenty of time for support and questions of clarification as the groups interact around each story. Avoid allowing the groups to judge the stories. Everyone’s experience is uniquely his/her own.

### **Break (15 min)**

### **Group session #3 – Reflecting on our stories (1.25 hrs)**

This is in the same configuration as the previous groups and is, in fact, a continuation of the previous session. Have the participants reflect upon their feelings and reactions to the stories of session #1. Many of the stories may be of life-changing events. You can facilitate this by asking questions for reflection such as: How have these experiences, in body, mind, and spirit, changed you? What has been different for you since you experienced these events? How do you think these experiences will effect you in the future? Are there things you learned about yourself through these experiences? etc. Remember this must be non-judgmental and supportive.

### **Meal Break**

A common meal will facilitate further informal discussion.

### **Group session #4 – Sharing our needs and Finding our strengths (1 hr)**

A. The beginning of this session serves as an introduction to the couples’ dyads. The configuration is the whole small group with chaplains and spouses. The objective here is to facilitate the identification of specific needs that were uncovered in the earlier sessions. You may want to address these as emotional, relational, spiritual, and/or physical.

B. The group will then break into husband/wife dyads with instructions that they use the time to share and reflect on what they need from one another and from others. It is suggested that they be asked to sit face to face and take turns addressing, without interrupting, “What I value in you,” “How are things going with us and our children now” and “What I need from you.” You may consider instructing them to use a specific amount of time for each question even if it results in periods of silence. Sometimes the silence lowers their defenses and

encourages them to say even more. For example, you might say to them, “When you are sitting facing one another, take turns without interrupting. Each take five minutes, whether you need it or not, to speak to the question. You may have some silence, but that’s OK.” If there is sufficient time they may also address: “What our mutual goals are and what we need from others.” It is very important to be specific in guiding the couples with the above questions. Their dyad should be specific and focused and not just a chance to chat. Have them pair off to nearby spaces to avoid them attending to other tasks during this time. Make sure they understand that it isn’t a break in which to make phone calls or check out the gift shop. You may want to write out what the couples are to address for each of them to use as a reference.

[Note: If there are single chaplains present, they can pair off with a facilitator to explore their own support system and how they are planning to care for themselves in the transitions. Who do they confide in? Who do they turn to when things are tough? How do they have fun?

### **Protocol for Couple Dyads (1)**

For the Spiritual Journeys of Shalom Seminar  
(adapted from a protocol by Han Van den Blink, PhD.)

Sit close together facing one another and follow the protocol below. While one person is talking, the other is to remain silent and just listen.

- Silence ( at least 45 seconds)
- Sharing by one person – “What I value in you”
- Silence (at least 30 seconds)
- Sharing by the other person – “What I value in you”
- Silence (at least 30 seconds)
- Sharing by the first person – “What I need from you”
- Silence (at least 30 seconds)
- Sharing by the second person – “What I need from you”
- Silence (at least 30 seconds)
- Sharing by the first person – “What I offer you”
- Silence (at least 30 seconds)
- Sharing by the second person – “What I offer you”
- Silence (at least one minute)

- Feedback – a conversation about the experience of sharing in this way.  
What have you heard before? What surprised you?  
What pleased you? What did you want to hear that you didn't hear?

The above guidelines are designed to foster the critically important spiritual practice of listening openly, compassionately and truthfully to self, spouse, and the Spirit. The guidelines are not hard to understand but are difficult for some to put into practice. We are not accustomed to just being in the company of another without doing something.

During the silence you can gaze wistfully into one another's eyes, stare off into space, or glare at each other depending on the prevailing atmosphere. Chances are the process will change the prevailing atmosphere.

### **Protocol for Couples Planning Dyads (2)**

For the Spiritual Journeys of Shalom  
(adapted from a protocol by Han Van den Blink, Ph.D.)

Sit close together facing one another and follow the protocol below. While one person is sharing the other is to remain silent and just listen.

- Silence (at least 45 seconds)
- Sharing by one person – “What I would like us to do to see us thru the trying times of deployment and reuniting”
- Silence (at least 30 seconds)
- Sharing by the other person – “What I would like us to do to see us thru the trying times of deployment and reuniting”
- Silence (at least 30 seconds)
- Discussion of what each person has said about a plan until a consensus is reached
- Silence (at least 30 seconds)
- Sharing by the first person – “What I can do to facilitate this”
- Silence ( at least 30 seconds)
- Sharing by the second person “What I can do to facilitate this”
- Silence (at least 30 seconds)
- Testing the consensus – a conversation about the comfort of both persons with their plan and their individual contributions toward making it work. Both persons must “own” the plan for it to be effective.

Remember that the protocol is designed to facilitate the spiritual practice of listening openly, compassionately and truthfully to self, spouse, and the Spirit.

### **Protocol for Single or Unaccompanied Chaplains Planning Dyads (1)**

For the Spiritual Journeys of Shalom  
(adapted from a protocol by Han Van den Blink, Ph.D.)

Sit close together facing one another and follow the protocol below. While one person is sharing the other is to remain silent and just listen.

- Silence (at least 45 seconds)
- Sharing by first person – “An incident of ministry that stands out as a significant experience.”
- Silence (at least 30 seconds)
- Sharing by the second person – “An incident of ministry that stands out as a significant experience.
- ”Silence (at least 30 seconds)
- Sharing by the first person – “An incident that is likely to haunt me.”
- Silence (at least 30 seconds)
- Sharing y the second person – “An incident that is likely to haunt me.”
- Silence (at least 30 seconds)
- Sharing by the first person – “Coming home for me is ...”
- Silence (at least 30 seconds)
- Sharing b the second person – “Coming home for me is ...”
- Silence (at least 60 seconds)
- Feedback – a conversation about the experience of sharing. What were you touched by? What did you identify with? What feedback can you give?

The above guidelines are designed to foster the critically important spiritual practice of listening openly, compassionately, and truthfully to self, the other, and the Spirit. The guidelines are not hard to understand, but are difficult for some to put into practice. We are not accustomed to just being in the company of another without doing something.

During the silence you can look into your partner’s eyes, gaze off into space or sit with your eyes closed. You may even glare at each other depending on the prevailing atmosphere. Chances are the process will change the prevailing atmosphere.

**Protocol for Single or Unaccompanied Chaplains Planning Dyads (2)**  
**For the Spiritual Journeys of Shalom**  
(adapted from a protocol by Han Van den Blink, Ph.D.)

Sit close together facing one another and follow the protocol below. While one person is sharing the other is to remain silent and just listen.

- Silence (at least 45 seconds)
- Sharing by one person – “What I am going to do to address the issues I have identified.”
- Silence (at least 30 seconds)
- Sharing by the other person – “What I am going to do to address the issues I have identified.”



- Silence (at least 30 seconds)
- Sharing by the first person – “What resources are available to me.”
- Silence (at least 30 seconds)
- Sharing by the second person – “What resources are available to me.”
- Silence (at least 30 seconds)
- Sharing by the first person – “How I have coped in the past.”
- Silence (at least 30 seconds)
- Sharing by the second person – “How I have coped in the past.”
- Silence (at least 30 seconds)
- Sharing by the first person – “How I can find meaning in what has happened.”
- Silence (at least 30 seconds)
- Sharing by the second person – “How I can find meaning in what has Happened.”
- Silence (at least 45 seconds)
- A conversation about each person’s plans. Give feedback and suggestions to your partner.

Remember that the protocol is designed to facilitate the spiritual practice of listening openly, compassionately, and truthfully to self, the other, and the Spirit.

## **Break**

### **Group session #5 – Moving Forward (1 hr)**

A. The whole group will reassemble for a debriefing of their time in couple dyads. Help them identify what resources are available to them and within them to address these needs, e.g., What have they used to cope in the past? How can they find meaning in what has happened? How can the couples honor each other’s experiences? The group members may put outside resources identified by the group on newsprint for retention and use. Everyone should contribute to this list including the leader(s).

B. Then they will be given instructions to again work in their couple dyads to plan what they need to do to continue on their journey. This, ideally, may be a couple’s plan but they may decide they also need individual plans. Each plan should include measurable goals to determine progress. A plan, for example, might include an agreement to sit quietly with each other once a week to check in on each other’s progress with the issues identified.

### **Group session #6 – Feedback and Summary (up to an hour)**

The couples will share their plans with the total group in so far as they are comfortable with that. The purpose of this is threefold: to get feedback, to get encouragement, and to give other couples fresh ideas. You might want to put their plans on newsprint to see the similarities and differences.

Finally ask the group to share what the experience of the seminar has meant for them. You may want to include a written evaluation. You may also wish to refer back to the list of expectations and goals from Session # 1.

**Closing Worship** (This should include communion with each couple sharing the elements with one another. In the practice session we also included a hand washing ritual which was very powerful for the participants. They were asked to wash one another's hands at a large bowl and a couple of towels placed on the altar. The participants are asked to come forward in pairs and to wash one another's hands in the bowl and dry one another's hands with the towels. This is done in silence. They return to their seats while other pairs continue with the process.)

The suggested format above is just that, suggested. You may, of course, modify it to fit the time available and to reflect your own skills and preferences in group facilitation.

## **Resources**

Tick, Edward: War and the Soul: Healing our Nations Veterans From Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome. Quest Books, Wheaton, IL. (2005)

Henderson, Kristin: While They're at War. Mariner Books, Houghton Mifflin, New York. (2006)

Yalom, Irwin D. The Theory and Practice of Group Psychotherapy, 5<sup>th</sup> ed., Basic Books, NY (2005)

Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, IV, American Psychiatric Association, Washington, DC, (1994)