

www.CareForTheTroops.org

Addressing The Invisible Wounds of War

Date 06/01/2010

Mission: ... facilitating the spiritual and psychological care of returning war veterans and their extended families

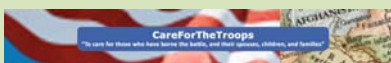
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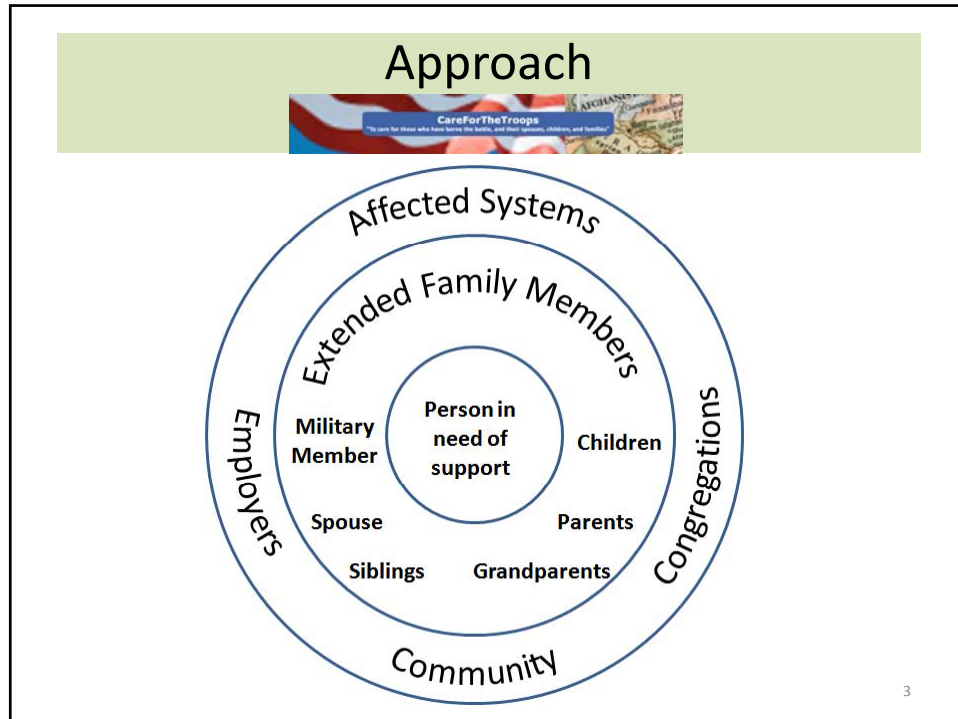
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Causes for Concern



1. Multiple deployments are common causing stress and family attachment issues
2. An April '08 Rand Study reported 37% have either PTSD, TBI, or significant Mental Stress (5% all 3). Some estimate >50% return with some form of mental distress
3. Suicide, alcoholism, domestic abuse and violent crimes rates are rising. Suicide is 33% higher in '07 over '06, 50% higher in '08, and almost equal to '08 by May of '09
4. Military Sexual Trauma (MST) is running at 16%-23%
5. In 2008, military children and teens sought outpatient mental health care 2 million times, a 20% increase from '08 and double from the start of the Iraq war ('03)
6. DoD and VA facilities are stretched ... the Aug 2009 VA claims backlog is 900,000
7. Many more Reservists & Guard than previous wars (54% as of mid '08) and they and families are more distant from DoD and VA support facilities
8. Other mental health, marriage, and family problems often occur with or leading up to PTSD requiring attention so they don't get worse
9. Rand Study estimates that PTSD and depression among service members will cost the nation up to \$6.2 billion in the two years after deployment. The study concludes that investing in proper treatment would actually save \$2 billion within two years

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Why Congregations

- “...With research consistently showing that clergy - not psychologists or other mental health experts - are the most common source of help sought in times of psychological distress...” based on a Baylor University study Oct 2008 *The results were published in Mental Health, Religion and Culture.*
- Congregations already know their local community which is important if we are to address the needs across the entire State (and Nation).
- Often they already belong to a local interfaith community, e.g. the local Covenant Churches of East Cobb
- There is the opportunity to access the existing “networks” within the larger faith communities, e.g. the Catholic Archdiocese of Atlanta with the help of the Catholic Charities Atlanta network.

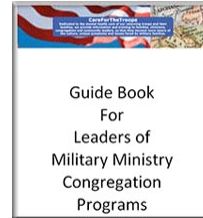
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Military Ministry



Purpose

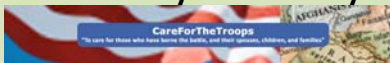
The ministry approach is intended to address the entire extended family members associated with the person that is or has been in the military. The ministry has the following goals:



- Help the congregation members maintain an **awareness** of the existence and needs of those sacrificing their time and effort to support our country
- Create an **environment of acceptance** within the congregation for any extended family member who worships or visits the congregation; acceptance of their needs (physical, material, and spiritual), and a willingness to join in their struggles, whatever they might be

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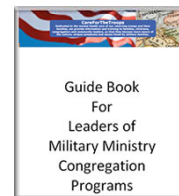
Military Ministry



Each Congregation Can Act on Their Own

The way this is setup:

- no faith has to act in any way like another faith
- no congregation has to act like another congregation
- no congregation has to have a Ministry like any other congregation
- every Military Ministry is completely customizable to each congregation's desire to act



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Veteran Friendly Congregation (VFC)



www.CareForTheTroops.org/about_programs.php

Program Requirements

Any congregation that meets the following criteria qualifies on an annual basis. Once qualified, a certificate will be sent to the Congregation Leader which is suitable for framing and should be displayed in a prominent location such that it can be seen by visitors, members, and leaders of the congregation alike.

Annual Criteria

- Agree to adopt or implement one or more Military Ministry Programs.
- Agree to advertise the existence of the Military Ministry Program(s) in one or more of your congregation's publications (service bulletins, newsletters, etc) at least twice a month, all year long so that their existence is easily visible to visitors, members, and leadership of the congregation.
- Annually, renew your agreement with the provisions above by sending a letter to the CareForTheTroops office address shown on the web.

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NEXT STEPS ...

- Gain Agreement from the Congregation's Leadership for the Ministry
- Assign a Ministry Leader
- Recruit and Form a Core "team", "group", "committee"
- Decide which Programs to begin and/or enhance
- Sign-up as a CFTT VFC* – connect with the Lead Congregation
- Consider being a Lead Congregation and work with CFTT

* A VFC is a Veteran Friendly Congregation

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