

Love Thinks Program Research

Prepared Aug 2013



The following report summarizes the research on the PICK a Partner, Marriage LINKS, Our Home Runs, Ultimate Spiritual Resiliency & Relationships, and Pastoral Counseling with the RAM courses offered by Love Thinks, LLC. Additionally this report summarizes the research conducted on the Relationship Attachment Model (RAM).



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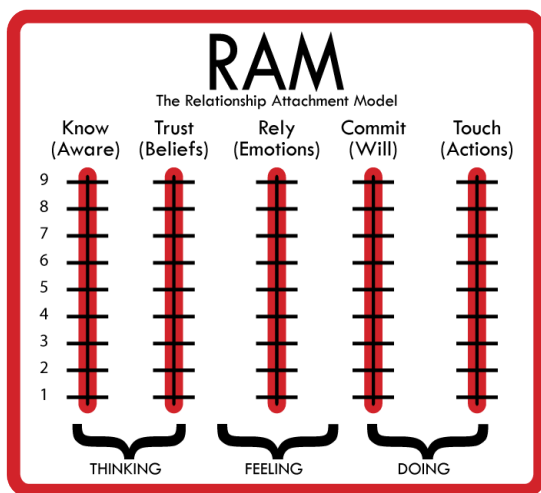
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Overview of the Courses that teach the RAM

The Relationship Attachment Model™ (RAM) is an easy-to-understand, interactive model that provides a framework for integrating the basic systems



of the self, the connections in relationships, and the major psychological theories. First, this model proposes that there are five distinct and inter-related systems of self: a sensory system, a cognitive system, an affective/emotional system, a volitional system, and a tactile/sexual system. Second, each system contributes a unique connection to the overall experience of relationships: the sensory system contributes awareness within the self with the connection of knowing others; the cognitive system contributes beliefs within the self with the connection of trusting others; the affective/emotional system produces emotions within the self with the connection of relying on others; the volitional system produces a will within the self with the connection of commitments to others; and the tactile/sexual system contributes actions/expressions within the self with the contribution of touching others. The first two dynamics relate mostly to thinking processes (sensory integration theory, cognitive theory,

attachment theory, object relations theory); the third to feeling or affective processes (social exchange theory, emotionally-focused theory); and the last two relate mostly to behavioral processes (behavioral Theories, sexual theories).

The RAM can explain the connections in four key relationships of life: how one relates with oneself, others, circumstances and spirituality. These four domains capture most life experiences.

PASTORAL COUNSELING WITH THE RAM

This course explains counseling theory and research integrated and supported by the RAM. It uses the RAM to provide a framework for understanding the Chaplain's relationship with a client/constituent in counseling and then a framework to understand the constituent's relationships with others, self, circumstances and spirituality. In the case of the former, the course teaches key areas to explore with a client (KNOW), ways to develop a therapeutic alliance and trust while formulating an accurate conceptualization of the client (TRUST); ways to determine the competency of the chaplain to meet the needs of the client (RELY); ways to determine the plan to help the client (COMMIT) and follow-up with the client (TOUCH) to ensure that treatment/support/referrals are effective in constituent's life.

PICK (Premarital Interpersonal Choices & Knowledge)

This course applies the RAM to singles' romantic relationships with emphasizing healthy relationship development (each level should not exceed a previous level in developing relationships) and five crucial areas to explore to accurately KNOW a partner (family background, maturity of conscience, patterns

from other relationships, compatibility potential and relationship skills).

LINKS (Lasting Intimacy through Nurturing, Knowledge & Skills)

This course applies the RAM to couples' relationships with emphasizing that the balance of the RAM connections will naturally fluctuate. The key is that couples regularly balance their imbalances by strengthening and setting goals with each of the five dynamics of the RAM in weekly "huddles."

OUR HOME RUNS (Families stepping up to the plate)

This course applies the RAM to family relationships to strengthen the ways that families communicate, respect, work and play together, support and build family resilience, and express affection and affirmation. Our Home Runs, like the LINKS course, also teaches a practical format using the RAM but in this case, for family meetings: Catch Up (know), Patch Up (trust/respect), Dream Up (rely through working and playing together), Back Up (commit & support), and Build Up (expressing affection & affirmations).

ULTIMATE SPIRITUAL RESILIENCY & RELATIONSHIPS (R&R)

The last course applies the RAM to the development of spirituality. This secular-spiritual course encourages individual exploration and small group interaction while emphasizing that spirituality is resilient to the proportion that it is a positive source of strength to the three other relationships of life: how one relates with him/herself, others, and the circumstances of life. Although all humans are spiritual beings, spirituality can also be developed and the RAM provides a practical framework for understanding this journey. This process begins with one's awareness of spirituality (KNOW) and his/her own spiritual values/beliefs (TRUST); the process of developing and deepening spirituality requires that these values and beliefs also become sources of strength (RELY) in how circumstances and emotions are managed; and finally, priorities and decisions (COMMIT), and relationships with others (TOUCH) need to be consistent with these spiritual values and beliefs.

CH-BOLC

Pastoral Counseling with the RAM is taught in Phase Two of the Basic Course. Chaplains are instructed in counseling theory and marriage and family relationship research in the first half of this course. Then they are taught how to conduct an initial counseling interview, form a conceptualization and simple treatment plan for a client/constituent, and determine competency, need for referral, follow-up and pastoral care.

Three certification courses are taught in Phase Three that apply the RAM to three key relationships: PICK for premarital romantic relationships; LINKS for couple relationships; and Our Home Runs for family relationships.

The use of the RAM provides a CONTINUITY of training in both pastoral care and the practical courses taught in Strong Bonds to help singles, couples and families build healthier and more resilient relationships.

C-4

PICK and LINKS have been taught to C-4 classes when it was determined that the majority of students have not received certification in these courses. If student-chaplains have been trained then updates of materials are provided and reviewed.

The Ultimate Spiritual R&R course is also taught to C-4 classes to provide chaplains with a course that is consistent with principles in the Comprehensive Soldier Fitness resiliency training and able to be taught in pluralistic settings.

REVIEW AND RESERACH

The following research reports summarize the data collected on PICK, LINKS, Our Home Runs, Ultimate Spiritual Resiliency & Relationships, and Pastoral Counseling with the RAM.



Healthy Relationships & the Military

The United States has been a country at war for over a decade now, which has increased demands and stress on the families and marriages of soldiers. Many military personnel are serving multiple deployments and dual-military marriages may even be suffering back to back deployments, prolonging the amount of time spouses spend apart. Because of these increased demands and stressors, the United States military has taken a vested interest in the status of the marriages and families of their soldiers. This interest is further driven by previous research that suggested that soldier retention rates, performance, overall satisfaction with military life, and healthy coping methods are all affected by a soldier's marital and family life satisfaction (Drummet, Coleman, & Cable, 2003; Albano, 1994; Rosen & Durand, 1995). Orthner and Bowen (1982) stated that "it has been found that the extent to which people are satisfied with their family life is reflected in their job performance and ultimately tied to the decision to stay in the military." Retention is especially important because training costs are very high given the military's specialized technologies. In addition, virtually all military members are hired at entry level positions and therefore all promotions come from within, thus losing potential candidates for promotions and higher ranks comes at a considerable cost to the military (Wadsworth & Southwell, 2010).

Research has also found that the military offers incentives that encourage soldiers to marry (Zax & Flueck, 2003; Hogan & Seifert, 2010). While military members who are married are granted supports that may stabilize their marriages such as: steady paychecks, healthcare, and educational programs that promote healthy marriages, the military also offers a number of financial supports to married members that are not available to singles. These financial benefits may

ultimately influence some young service members to marry earlier or to be less discerning when choosing a partner than they may have otherwise (Hogan & Seifert, 2010; Karney & Crown, 2007). Research has consistently shown that individuals in the military marry at higher rates than the civilian population; however among those serving only females have been shown to dissolve their marriages at higher rates (Hogan & Seifert; Pollard, Karney, & Loughran, 2007).

Benefits of Relationship Education

- Silliman (2003) argued, "Today's adolescents face personal and social conditions that place them at risk for dating and marital problems and offer little incentive or assistance in developing healthy relationships. Much of the effort is concentrated at marriage preparation, enrichment, and therapeutic divorce preparation and recovery, greater emphasis is needed in building healthy relationships beginning with dating competencies" (p.278)
- Gardner, Giese, and Parrott (2004) argued that many relationship attitudes and behavior patterns are developed well before adulthood and engagement, when most couples attend premarital prevention programs.
- Studies evaluating the effectiveness premarital enrichment programs and courses have reported that participation is highly effective and that couples who participate are typically better off than those who do not (Cole & Cole, 1999).

- Gardener (2001) also found that when high school students participated in a premarital education program they were less likely to see divorce as a good option and were slightly more favorable toward marriage preparation and counseling. Amato and Rogers (1999) argued that these shifts in divorce attitudes are essential because they found that individuals who adopted more favorable attitudes toward divorce tended to experience declines in relationship quality, whereas those who adopted less favorable attitudes toward divorce tended to experience improvements in relationship quality.
 - Research has supported that couples which are better acquainted before marriage have significantly higher rates of marital quality (Birtchnell and Kennard, 1984; Grover, Russell, Schumm and Paff-Bergen, 1985; Kurdek, 1991,1993), and experience fewer problems when they face the inevitable difficulties of marriage (Grover et al, 1985).
 - Stanley (2003) argued that one of the primary reasons premarital education has value is because it slows couples down and fosters greater deliberation. Singles need a plan in order to have a conscious, intentional approach to dating and mate selection
 - Educating singles about healthy dating and marital choices in a framework of pacing the development of their relationship hold tremendous promise for the prevention of future marital problems and divorce (Van Epp, et al., 2008).
- ratings by their supervisors than single soldiers (Orthner, et al., 1992), were promoted faster (Raiha, 1986) and had fewer job-related problems over the past four decades (Burnam, et al., 1992).

Benefits of Healthy Marriage to the Military

- Married soldiers were more likely to remain on active duty than single ones (Raiha, 1986).
- Marriage increased the retention rates for males, especially if they were happily married (Schumm, et al., 1996).
- Married soldiers served longer than single soldiers and tended to have a higher commitment to the Army (Burnam, et al., 1992).
- Happily married soldiers were given higher



Female Soldier Research

Background

The marriages of female soldiers are at an increased risk for dissolution when compared to the marriages of male soldiers. This is of critical importance to the military because being married has been shown to serve as a protective factor against homelessness and suicide for women (Washington, et al., 2010; Zoyora, 2011). Additionally, research suggested that soldier retention rates, performance, overall satisfaction with military life, and healthy coping methods are all affected by a soldier's marital and family life satisfaction (Drummet, Coleman, & Cable, 2003; Albano, 1994; Rosen & Durand, 1995). Female soldiers also face unique challenges in military service due to merely being female in a historically male environment (Jebo, 2005). While much is still unknown about military marriages and keeping them intact, it is crucial to examine, more closely, the effects of military service on the marriages of enlisted females. In order to help reduce the high proportion of marital dissolution among female personnel, it is essential that the needs of these marriages be examined so that programs and interventions may be developed and tailored to best serve these female personnel and their marriages. The aim of this project is to take a closer look at the marriages of female military personnel.

Evaluation Approach

Females were recruited to volunteer for this survey through email. Military personnel were contacted by PSA in solicitation of their help to disseminate the survey. These military personnel disseminated the link to the survey to individuals at FORSCOM, Army National Guard, Ft. Benning, Ft. Leonardwood, Ft. Eustis, Ft. Carson, Ft. Bragg, Ft. Lewis, Ft. Campbell, Ft. Lee, Ft. Bliss, Ft. Irwin, Ft. Leavenworth and others. The individuals at these locations then distributed the survey link to any married or divorced females to whom they had access. These females received an email letter from the researcher explaining the confidential and voluntary

nature of the study and then chose to either participate in the study or decline participation. If females chose to participate they clicked the link to the appropriate survey (i.e. currently married or currently divorced) which directed them to the online Survey Monkey site. Here participants were again informed of the voluntary and confidential nature of the study as well as the researchers contact information for questions or concerns.

The Female Soldiers

Overall, 463 female soldiers: 157 divorced females and 306 married females were included in the study. The sample consisted of 60% Army and 40% National Guard females. Respondents were on average 36 years old at the time of the survey, and 21 years old when they enlisted. On average, females had spent 15 years in military service and married 7 years after joining the military. The majority of females were white and 67% had either attended or completed college. Analyses that compared the married and divorced females found that divorced females marriage, on average, younger than married females; that a higher percentage of married females had a total household income of 81k and above; and that a higher percentage of divorced females attended marital counseling at some point while married.

The Findings

Six themes were evident in the findings of this study:

- Married and divorce females were similar to one another on most demographic and relationship history variables. The majority of females in this study were also married to men with a history of military service; 72% married and 70% divorced. Importantly, married and divorced females did not differ from one another in their overall resiliency scores indicating that they are equally equipped to deal with life and military stressors.
- Perceptions of (ex) husbands did differ between the married and divorced female

soldiers. Divorced females viewed their (ex) husbands as less supportive, less able to see their perspective, less satisfied with military life, and less comfortable being the husband of a female soldier than married females. Divorced females also indicated that their (ex) husbands used significantly fewer military-provided supports than the husbands of married females. Divorced females, who were deployed, reported that their husbands had a serious problem coping more often than married females who were deployed.

- Support was the most prevalent theme throughout the study. Satisfaction with a husband's support was the most powerful predictor of being married among deployed female soldiers; specifically, females who were satisfied with the support provided by their (ex) husbands had over two times higher odds of being married. When predicting the odds of being married (versus being divorced) for all females, regardless of deployment history, the four most powerful predictors of being married were related to satisfaction with (ex) husband support, (ex) husband's use of military supports, social support, and overall higher scores of reliance on the Relationship Attachment Model (RAM; Van Epp, 1985).
- Stressors were another common theme throughout this study. Overall, divorced females indicated that they experienced more overall stress than married females and that deployment was a major contributing factor to their divorce. However, when divorced females were compared to one another on marital problems, no group differences were observed between those who deployed and those who did not. Similarly, when married females were compared on marital problems, no group differences were observed

between those who deployed and those who did not in the number of marital problems reported. These findings suggested that the quality of the marital relationship may protect marriages from the negative effects of deployment, and that there may be something inherently different about the divorced females' marriages that made them more at risk for divorce above and beyond just the effects of deployment.

- Infidelity was a common theme throughout this study. Over 51% of divorced females indicated that infidelity was a contributing factor in their divorce.
- The final theme observed throughout this study was partner selection. Partner selection had to do with choosing a partner poorly, too quickly, or marrying too young. This theme was closely related to the selection hypothesis described below by Karney and Crown (2007),

Military marriages may be at increased risk of dissolving because the military tends to recruit people from relatively high risk populations and provides incentives that encourage them to marry. This perspective suggests that...some service members may enter marriages that they might not have entered otherwise, and these marriages are at greater risk regardless of the stress they experience.... When the threshold for marrying a current partner is lowered by changes in the relative benefits of being married, more vulnerable couples get married. (p. xxviii)

First, evidence for partner selection was found in the differences between the divorced and the married females' ages at marriage; specifically, the divorced females married significantly younger than the married females. Second, partner selection was cited most frequently by the divorced females as the one reason

why their marriages ended. In particular, marrying too young and having a partner that turned out to be different than what she thought he was like before marriage were the two most common themes in the partner selection category. Finally, many of the findings discussed under the other headings could be related to partner section. For instance, the married females perceived their husbands as providing more support, and these husbands also demonstrated support by attending more military-provided support programs than did the (ex) husbands of the divorced females. This may reflect a lack of interpersonal skills; but it is also possible that the married females chose to marry men who had more supportive personality/character traits than the men who had been married to the divorced females. In other words, the married females may have picked their spouses more discerningly than the females who divorced.

Conclusion

Overall, the female's perception of her husband's supportiveness was the most influential predictor of a female soldier not being divorced. This study found that divorced female soldiers perceived their (ex) husbands as less supportive than how the married females perceived their husbands. Also, divorced females felt that their (ex) husbands were less satisfied with military life and less comfortable being the spouse of a female soldier when compared to how married females felt about their husbands. The (ex) husbands of divorced females also used less military-provided supports than the husbands of married females. It is plausible that some married females chose partners with different characteristics than the partners of the divorced females, and that these characteristics helped to enhance the quality of their relationship and ultimately buffer their marriage from the stresses of deployment. Finally, analyses revealed that the quality of the marriages of married females seemed to serve as a protective factor against the stresses of deployment, while the inherent vulnerabilities in the divorced females' marriages contributed to making their marriages more susceptible to the stresses of deployment. The findings of this study were used to form the recommendations for improving the marriages of female soldiers. Programmatic interventions and future research recommendations were suggested and discussed.

PICK a Partner Research

The PICK a Partner program has been taught to soldiers and Chaplains all over the world and has been used by community organizations and coalitions around the country. The following pages will review the research conducted on the PICK a Partner program with soldiers and civilians. Additionally, reviews by United States Army Chaplains of their PICK a Partner trainings will be provided.

Study One

Van Epp, M.C., Futris, T.G., Van Epp, J.C., & Campbell, K. (2008). The impact of the PICK a Partner relationship education program on single Army soldiers. *Family and Consumer Sciences Research Journal*, 36, 328-349.

Overview

This study examined whether participation in the PICK program affected single soldiers' knowledge and attitudes about relationship development and marriage. Participants were asked to complete a survey to measure their attitudes and beliefs about relationship development and marriage before and after participating in the PICK program. These results were also compared to single soldiers who did not participate in the PICK program; this group served as the control group. Soldiers from Fort Jackson and the Defense Language Institute participated in the study (n= 123 program group & n= 149 control group).

Findings

After completing the program, participants described their experience as valuable and rewarding. Among the 123 program participants:

- 95% felt more confident in their dating relationships
- 98% planned on using the information they learned
- 98% would recommend the program to others

- 97% said they were satisfied with the program and 97% also agreed the program was helpful

After completing the program and compared to the control group, program participants:

- Showed a significant increase in the importance they place on getting to know their partner in five areas research and the PICK program deemed important (FACES).
- Reported less constraining beliefs about marriage.
- Felt more knowledgeable about developing a healthy relationship that leads to a healthy marriage.
- Felt more confident in their abilities to use the skills learned from PICK to develop healthy relationships.

Implications

Based on the findings, this study suggested that the PICK program helped to educate singles about taking time in their relationships so that they may make healthy and lasting relationship decisions. This is especially important among single soldiers, because previous research has found that soldiers tend to enter into marriage quickly. This study also found that the PICK program instilled confidence in and knowledge about how to build healthy relationships.

Study Two

Manning, W.D., Trella, D., Lyons H., Gulbis, A., & du Toit, N. (2008). *Healthy relationships and healthy marriages: Final report. Center for Family and Demographic Research. Bowling Green State University. Bowling Green, Ohio.*

Overview

This study provided an overview of a multi-method assessment of the Grand Rapids Healthy Marriages Healthy Relationships (HMHR) program, PICK a

involved surveys data and two waves of 90-minute interviews (wave 1 n= 57 & wave 2 n=48) that addressed the views and experiences of program participants. The data was qualitative in nature and was collected following the completion of the program and 6 months following the program.

Findings

After completing the program participants stated that:

- They would overwhelmingly recommend the PICK program to family and friends
- They were satisfied with the program content and instruction

Findings at the 6-month follow-up

After the 6-month follow up participants stated that:

- They felt more confident and competent in setting boundaries for current or future partners.
- They raised relationship standards with current or future partners.
- They felt more able to keep “jerks” at a distance.
- They were taking more time to get to know a potential partner’s background before committing to the relationship and becoming physically intimate in the relationship .
- Felt motivated to become a good relationship role model to children and others in the community.
- The program helped them form and sustain healthy relationships and offered them the tools to break off unhealthy relationships.
- Felt prepared to avoid the same relationship mistakes they had made in the past.
- The program helped them recognize areas in themselves that would benefit from improvement.
- They felt the skills they learned in the program translated into other relationships in their life such as: friendships, family relationships, and work related relationships.
- They felt motivated to share their new relationship expertise with others.

Implications

The results of this study suggested that the PICK program had a positive impact on the low-income

individuals who participated. In particular, the PICK program was well received and liked by the participants. Additionally, at the 6-month follow-up the impact of the PICK program was still apparent and the participants were putting the lessons they learned in the program to use. Specifically, the participants were enforcing more boundaries, raising their standards, and felt empowered by the tools taught in the program to avoid unhealthy partners.

Study Three

Schumm, W.R. and Theodore, V. (2011). **A longitudinal study of the PICK a Partner program. Preliminary findings. Data is still being collected.**

Overview

Currently, a longitudinal study is being conducted on the effectiveness of the PICK a Partner program with single soldiers. The program is being delivered at three Army bases: Ft. Bliss, Ft. Benning, and Ft. Riley. To date, 232 participants have completed an hour overview of the PICK a Partner course and 38 participants have completed the full course and subsequent pre and post surveys. Preliminary findings based on just the 38 participants who provided all data and participated in the full course are presented below.

Findings

After completing the program participants stated that:

- 97.4% of single soldiers are very satisfied with the PICK program.
- 89.5% of single soldiers would recommend the PICK program to others.

Pre and Post Test Findings

An examination of the pre and post surveys suggested a significant program impact. The preliminary findings are in the table to follow. Participants demonstrated a significant program impact effect on all items except, I understand/understood that love is both emotional and rational. The lack of significance on this item may be due to an already existing belief held by the participants that love incorporates both thinking and feeling. This item may be a better measure of a belief

about love than it is a measure of program effectiveness. All of the other items were significant, with participants indicating greater agreement with the statements following the delivery of the PICK program. These preliminary findings lend support for the effectiveness of the PICK a Partner program.

Item	Pre	Post	T-value
I felt/feel confident in my ability to maintain a balance between the critical bonding dynamics in a relationship.	3.42	4.08	-5.92 ^d
I knew/know talking, togetherness, and time are necessary for a well-rounded understanding of a potential partner.	4.06	4.53	-4.32 ^d
I felt/feel confident about choosing the 'right' partner.	3.53	4.19	-4.83 ^d
I understood/understand that love is both emotional and rational.	4.08	4.33	-1.95
I felt/feel that I have a good understanding of how to get to know a partner.	3.86	4.36	-3.87 ^d
I could/can identify the difference between someone's conscience and their dating skills.	3.30	4.00	-4.13 ^d
I could/can identify the things that are important to get to know about a partner.	3.81	4.39	-5.39 ^d
I understood/understand that previous relationship patterns often repeat in the next relationship.	3.89	4.31	-3.25 ^c
I knew/know that marriages that had courtships that lasted less than two years have much greater chances of divorce.	3.60	3.97	-2.41 ^a
I understood/understand that sexual involvement results in emotional bonding.	3.92	4.36	-4.39 ^d
I understood/understand that my own family experiences will impact my future relationships.	3.89	4.28	-2.91 ^b
I was/am confident that I will be able to apply enough self-control in setting boundaries when forming trust during the early stages of a dating relationship.	3.76	4.32	-3.60 ^c

Note: scores ranged from 1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree, with higher mean scores indicated greater agreement with the statements. *a* = $p < .05$; *b* = $p < .01$, *c* = $p < .001$, *d* = $p < .0001$.

Marriage LINKS

Research

The Marriage LINKS program has been taught to soldiers and Chaplains all over the world and has been used by community organizations and coalitions around the country. The following page will review the research conducted on the LINKS program with civilians. Additionally, reviews by United States Army Chaplains of their Marriage LINKS trainings will be provided.

Study One

Michigan Healthy Marriage Coalition. (2008)

This data collection was conducted by the Michigan Healthy Marriage Coalition which included three counties in Michigan: Jackson, Lenawee, and Wayne. The participants who received the LINKS program included both incarcerated and non-incarcerated individuals and couples. Pre and post test data was conducted. Overall 10,000 individuals were served by the Michigan Healthy Marriage Coalition with 47% coming from the prison population and 51% were TANF eligible.

Findings

After completing the program, participants significantly changed in the desired direction in attitudes and knowledge gained from the program in all categories. Specifically participants:

- Increased their understanding that marriages have a built in resistance to change.
- Learned skills for building and maintaining a healthy relationship.
- Gained a better understanding of how to avoid developing resentments in their marriage.
- Learned healthy communication skills.
- Learned how to successfully resolve conflicts.

Additionally at the 6-month follow-up participants reported the following:

- 73% reported increased conflict resolution skills.
- 91% reported increased confidence in their ability to have a healthy marriage.
- 62% reported increased commitment to their relationship.
- 61% reported an improvement in their relationship.

Implications

Based on the findings, this data suggested that the LINK program was successful in helping improve the marriages of low-income and incarcerated couples. This sample was comprised of relationships that have shown to be at a high-risk for dissolution. Overall, the data found that participants in the LINKS program learned healthy relationship skills such as communication and conflict resolution. Additionally, 61% reported an improvement in their relationship and 91% reported increased confidence in their ability to have a healthy marriage.

PICK & LINKS

Research

Marriage Works! Ohio: Elizabeth's New Life Center. Dayton, Ohio.

Overview

The Love Thinks program was delivered to n= 1428 participants in the Dayton, Ohio areas. Approximately n= 566 participants completed both the pre and post-test evaluations based on their experience in the program. The Love Thinks program is a combination of the popular PICK a Partner and Marriage LINKS programs. These programs were combined so that single, dating, engaged, and married participants could all attend the same course. Results revealed significant program effects on all variables. The results are summarized in the following table.

Findings

- 94% were satisfied with the program
- 95% intend to use the information they learned in their relationships
- 93% increased their understanding of how to maintain a close bond in their relationship

Implications

The results of his analysis suggested that the Love Thinks program had a significant effect on all variables assessed. Specifically, the Love Thinks program served to increase participants' satisfaction in their relationships as well as increase the frequency participants intentionally managed their relationship.

How satisfied are you with...	Before	After	T-value
Your overall relationship	4.32	4.90	11.33
How you and your partner discuss your disagreements	3.34	4.32	15.56
The communication in your relationship	3.46	4.42	15.09
How your partner meets your needs	4.20	4.62	7.56
The level of trust you have for your partner	4.41	4.92	8.89
The level of trust your partner has for you	4.85	4.22	10.16
The chemistry in your relationship	4.54	4.90	6.86
Your sexual relationship	4.40	4.59	3.26
The amount of commitment in your relationship	4.65	5.03	6.51
How often...			
Is your partner willing to compromise	3.50	3.78	8.16
Are you willing to compromise	3.82	4.07	3.01
Do you understand each other's needs	3.49	3.79	7.50
Do you feel confident that you will be able to effectively solve problems with your partner	3.59	4.03	9.83
Do you let go of the upset feelings you have for your partner	3.72	4.03	7.58
Do you and your partner plan to spend time together as a couple	3.77	4.13	7.30
Do you listen to each other when having an argument	3.34	3.74	9.10
Do you and your partner discuss your sexual relationship	3.46	3.63	2.26
Do you and your partner use a calendar to plan things to do as a couple	2.51	3.01	8.78

Note: satisfaction was measured on a 6 point scale ranging from 1= very dissatisfied to 6 = very satisfied and frequency was measured on a 5 point scale ranging from 1= never to 5 = almost always. A significant program effect was found for all items at the $p < .0001$ level.

Chaplain Feedback with PICK

Relationship Attachment Model

Know Trust Rely Commit Touch

A total of 1,350 Chaplains were surveyed following trainings in the PICK a Partner and Marriage LINKS programs. The majority of the Chaplains were trained as part of the Chaplain Basic Officer Leadership Course (82%) and the remaining Chaplains were trained at Strong Bonds events (18%). These results are different than those reported above because the Chaplains were not just participants in the program, they were being trained to teach the program to others. The majority of the Chaplains trained in the PICK and LINKS courses were male (87%), married (79%), and white (55%). Overall, the results indicated that the Chaplains were satisfied with their trainings and felt that these courses will help singles and married couples build and maintain healthy relationships.

U.S. Military Chaplains: PICK Program Evaluation

These findings represent the aggregate of numerous PICK a Partner trainings provided to military Chaplains. The feedback data and some select comments are below.

	% Agree	% Slightly Agree	% Slightly Disagree	% Disagree
The instructor gave clear explanations of the program material.	98.6	1.2		
The PICK program addressed relevant relationship issues that singles face	97.5	1.9	0.5	0.2
The PICK program will help singles know how to build healthy relationships	96.9	2.2	0.5	0.2
I believe the PICK program will benefit singles	96.6	3.1	0.4	
I increased my understanding and confidence of how to effectively teach the PICK program.	92.7	6.6	0.3	0.3
Overall, I am very satisfied with my training in the PICK program	95.4	4.1	0.2	0.2

Select comments from Chaplain participants.

This program is great. The training makes me feel very confident that I could step in and start teaching this myself!
Very powerful program. I think this is perhaps the BEST program I have seen, using general revelation.
Amazing training that will help me to promote health to soldiers, mentally, spiritually, and emotionally.
This course was very interesting and informative especially for a single soldier. I am single so I really enjoyed it!
This training is excellent and will greatly assist members of my unit and improve relationships. Soldiers and their families will greatly benefit from this program.
We are fortunate to have this presenter. He not only authored his material, he presented it with talent that held our attention. He modeled how we should present the material, gave us useful tips and advice, and made the training enjoyable. I am going to use this in my own relationship. Keep him coming back as long as possible!
Favorite 2 days of CHBOLC. I loved it! Thank you so much for investing in this program.

Chaplain Feedback with LINKS

A total of 1,350 Chaplains were surveyed following trainings in the PICK a Partner and Marriage LINKS programs. The majority of the Chaplains were trained as part of the Chaplain Basic Officer Leadership Course (82%) and the remaining Chaplains were trained at Strong Bonds events (18%). These results are different than those reported above because the Chaplains were not just participants in the program, they were being trained to teach the program to others. The majority of the Chaplains trained in the PICK and LINKS courses were male (87%), married (79%), and white (55%). Overall, the results indicated that the Chaplains were satisfied with their trainings and felt that these courses will help singles and married couples build and maintain healthy relationships.

U.S. Military Chaplains: LINKS Program Evaluation

These findings represent the aggregate of numerous LINKS trainings provided to military Chaplains. The feedback data and some select comments are below.

	% Agree	% Slightly Agree	% Slightly Disagree	% Disagree
The instructor gave clear explanations of the program material.	97.8	2.2		
I increased my understanding of how to maintain a close bond in marriage.	96.8	3.1		0.2
The LINKS program provides answers to relevant issues couples face	96.9	2.4	0.2	0.2
I believe the LINKS program will benefit couples	95.4	4.3		0.3
I increased my understanding and confidence of how to effectively teach the LINKS program.	91.8	7.9	0.2	0.2
Overall, I am very satisfied with my training in the LINKS program	95.0	5.0		

Select comments from Chaplain participants.

Great training, very well-paced and enjoyable. Already have a thought about a target audience at my unit.
Excellent instructor. You kept my attention in my last week of CHBOLC! You had great stories that captivated my attention.
I liked this training over all the other relationship/marriage trainings we have received.
Outstanding! Hoah!
I really appreciated the sections on deployment and reunion. I will use these in my unit and in my own marriage.
The RAM is so easy to understand! Would love to see the RAM program for families.
This was a superior experience and by far the most relevant and practical of programs taught.



Ultimate Spiritual R&R

Army Program Evaluation Summary

The Ultimate Spiritual R&R (Resiliency & Relationships) course was piloted three times to a total of 81 participants at two bases: Fort Hood and Fort Jackson. Each site provided a different composition of participants. Fort Hood consisted of a mixture of participants who had varying degrees of religious/spiritual beliefs, Army experience, and rank. The first pilot at Fort Jackson was comprised of all Chaplains who were days away from graduating from their Chaplain Captain Career Coursework (C4). The third pilot at Fort Jackson was comprised of soldiers from the 171st training brigade. The different combinations of participant backgrounds and belief systems changed the feel of the course and the language used in group discussions. The first Ft. Jackson pilot consisted of all Chaplains predominately of the Protestant religious preference, therefore most of the stories and examples involved discussion about God. The Ft. Hood and second Ft. Jackson pilot participants were of mixed spiritual beliefs and backgrounds and discussions about God were virtually absent from the group discussions. These observations lend support to the utility of this course regardless of denominational identification, religious beliefs, spiritual beliefs, rank, and military experience. A brief overview of the combined findings is described below.

The participants were on average 39 years old with a range in age from 19-60 years old. Participants were predominately male (77.5%) and married (80%). Half of the sample was white 53.1% and 29.6% was African American. The majority of participants indicated that they were of the Protestant religious preference (70%); however between the three pilots participants identified as Muslim, Mormon, Jewish, and of no religious preference. Overall 47% of the sample indicated that they were very religious and 63% said they were very spiritual.


The majority of participants reported being satisfied with the Ultimate Spiritual R&R program (90%). Additionally,

90% would recommend the program to others, and 90% reported that they see the value of a course that helps them explore their spiritual beliefs. One participant commented, "I really enjoyed this class. I am more empowered to succeed emotionally, spiritually, and otherwise." Furthermore, 94% agreed that the program handled the "sensitive" nature of religion, faith, and spirituality in a non-offensive manner.

Finally, a retrospective pre-post design was used to examine whether the program had an effect on participants' beliefs about spirituality, intentions to use the skills taught in the course, and overall confidence in how to be resilient and overcome difficult life circumstances. Analyses indicated that there was a significant program effect for all of the items. These results are summarized in the table to follow. These findings are noteworthy because these significant differences suggested that the participants learned new information regarding how their spirituality serves to strengthen their emotional controls, relationships, control over their reactions, and resiliency.

Additional Comments:

- As a chaplain, this would give me a tool to engage soldiers concerning their spiritual life. I believe it works well with the comprehensive soldier fitness model.
- I think all soldiers in processing the installation should receive this course. This will also be a helpful tool during redeployment
- Great job! Great course and vitally important aspect of overall resiliency model.
- Very well done and well presented. I especially liked the exercises where we wrote out our beliefs/values.



Ultimate Spiritual R&R

ANG Program Evaluation Summary

Three ANG pilots (169 FW, 122 FW, and 147 RW) were conducted with the Ultimate Spiritual R&R program in South Carolina (pilot 1; n = 25), Indiana (pilot 2; n = 27), and Texas (pilot 3; n = 26). In total, 78 participants volunteered and completed the Ultimate Spiritual R&R program and subsequent evaluation form. These participants included a blend of traditional and full-time Guardsmen comprised of ANG enlisted Airmen, senior NCOs, officers, a civilian, and chaplains. The majority of the participants were male (67%), white (71%), and married (82%). Overall, the participants were highly educated. Specifically, 39% either completed college or attended some graduate school. The religious make-up of the participants was primarily Protestant (81%); however between the three pilots various denominations with the Protestant category were identified (i.e. Lutheran, Baptist, Nondenominational, etc) and other participants identified as Catholic, Orthodox, and no religious preference. In addition, 32% of the participants considered themselves “very religious” while 39% considered themselves “very spiritual.”

Overall, satisfaction with the Ultimate Spiritual R&R program was high. Specifically, 95% of the total participants agreed that they were very satisfied with the program. Additionally, 92% agreed they learned new information, 87% agreed that they increased their understanding of the role of spirituality in developing emotional strength, and 87% agreed that they will become more resilient because of the skills taught in the R&R course. Finally, 96% agreed that the program handled the sensitive nature of religion, faith and spirituality in a non-offensive manner. One participant commented, “With many programs we in the military are exposed to during our careers, this program opens the door to future learning. It can be the catalyst of growth by expanding our horizons. It enables us to move outside the box.” Another participant said, “This program was well developed and develops tools to help individuals better cope with the

stressors of life both at home, work, military, etc.”

Finally, a retrospective pre-post design was used to examine whether the program had an effect on participants’ beliefs about spirituality, intentions to use the skills taught in the course, and overall confidence in how to be resilient and overcome difficult life circumstances. Analyses of the retrospective pre-post questions indicated that there was a significant program effect for all items, suggesting that the Ultimate Spiritual R&R program helped in developing participants’ beliefs about spirituality, resulted in intentions to use the skills taught in the course, and increased confidence in how to be resilient and overcome difficult circumstances. The results are summarized in the table to follow.

Additional Comments:

- This is a value added course. Members gain insight on how important spirituality is to relationships.
- I found the training very beneficial for me and feel that I have been helped greatly.
- Especially now with all the changes in the military, deployments, uncertainty I believe this course can help people to be able to cope with whatever circumstances that happen to them.
- I can see how it could be very valuable in helping people gain understanding of self and others. Great tools forcing ourselves to look in the mirror. This may be a good tool to use prior to deployments and basic training. The tools learned definitely are invaluable.
- I believe it helped me to become more self-aware and how to react and cope through significant events.

Item	Before (Mean,SD)	After (Mean, SD)	T-value
I clearly know the spiritual values and beliefs I hold that relate to circumstances, myself, and others	2.56 (1.09)	1.53 (0.66)	10.49
I know how to find meaning in difficult and challenging life circumstances by using my spiritual values and beliefs	2.38 (1.05)	1.42 (0.59)	8.98
I intend on handling my emotional reactions consistent with my spiritual values and beliefs	2.58 (0.93)	1.41 (0.57)	11.41
I am motivated to practice my spiritual values and beliefs	2.40 (1.02)	1.32 (0.57)	10.47
I have a good understanding of my spiritual values and beliefs	2.49 (1.13)	1.59 (0.78)	9.72
I intend on developing strong supportive relationships	2.44 (1.08)	1.49 (0.82)	9.51
I have a spiritual responsibility to both give support to others and receive support from others	2.37 (1.08)	1.40 (0.63)	8.55
I know who I can turn to for support when I am down or very upset	2.17 (1.09)	1.50 (0.80)	6.82
I know how my spirituality can help me control my thinking and reactions even if I cannot control my circumstances	2.41 (0.93)	1.42 (0.57)	12.25
I know how to be resilient in the ways I spiritually handle difficult or challenging experiences	2.59 (0.99)	1.51 (0.62)	11.00
I feel hopeful about my life	1.92 (1.07)	1.31 (0.78)	6.72

Note: 1= strongly agree; 2 = agree; 3= slightly agree; 4= slightly disagree; 5= disagree; 6= strongly disagree; all items were significant at the $p < .0001$ level

Our Home Runs Instructor Evaluation Summary

A total of 345 military Chaplains have been trained in The Our Home Runs program. On average, the participants were male (90.5%), married (79.1%), and white (65.8%). When looking at their evaluation of the courses, the majority of Chaplains were satisfied with their trainings and felt the programs provided relevant solutions to common problems faced by families. A break down of each question is below. The responses are recorded as percentages. Additionally, participant comments are recorded at the end of the summary.

N= 345

	% Agree	% Slightly Agree	% Slightly Disagree	% Disagree
The instructor gave clear explanations of the program material.	96.8	3.2		
The HR program will help families manage their relationships better.	91.0	8.4	0.3	0.3
The HR program provides answers to relevant questions families face.	88.7	10.1	0.9	0.3
I believe the HR program will benefit families.	92.2	7.0	0.6	0.3
I increased my understanding and confidence of how to effectively teach the HR program.	88.0	10.2	1.7	0.3
Overall, I am very satisfied with my training in the HR program.	90.1	8.7	0.9	0.3

This is some of the best training I have received. Great method of teaching and very relevant and practical.

I really appreciate a standardized model for Strong Bonds programming. I believe the materials can be widely applied to diverse groups of people. This HR ideal in the military environment. Dr. Van Epp has a special way of teaching, guiding, and modeling Chaplains regardless of their previous counseling experience.

This is excellent material. Really good stuff. Thank you for this real GIFT!

The programs presented are beneficial to military personnel. The program, HR, I believe is one of the most beneficial. All three can be used in a church setting. I would use the HR program more during a yellow ribbon if all possible.

I enjoyed this training very much. It will benefit both military personnel as well as my local church. Thank you so much for your time, sir.

OUR HOME RUNS

	% Agree	% Slightly Agree	% Slightly Disagree	% Disagree
The instructor gave clear explanations of the program material.	90.8	9.2		
The HR program will help families manage their relationships better.	88.2	11.8		
The HR program provides answers to relevant questions families face.	85.5	13.2	1.3	
I believe the HR program will benefit families.	88.2	10.5	1.3	
I increased my understanding and confidence of how to effectively teach the HR program.	85.3	13.3	1.3	
Overall, I am very satisfied with my training in the HR program.	84.2	14.5	1.3	

Select comments from Chaplain participants.

This is some of the best training I have received. Great method of teaching and very relevant and practical.
I really appreciate a standardized model for Strong Bonds programming. I believe the materials can be widely applied to diverse groups of people. This makes PICK, LINKS, and HR ideal in the military environment. Dr. Van Epp has a special way of teaching, guiding, and modeling Chaplains regardless of their previous counseling experience.
This is excellent material. Really good stuff. Thank you for this real GIFT!
The programs presented are beneficial to military personnel. The program, HR, I believe is one of the most beneficial. All three can be used in a church setting. I would use the HR program more during a yellow ribbon if all possible.
I enjoyed this training very much. It will benefit both military personnel as well as my local church. Thank you so much for your time, sir.

Pastoral Counseling with the RAM

Chaplain Feedback

From November 2011-August 2013 the Pastoral Counseling (PC) with the RAM course has been taught to 461 Chaplains. On average, the participants were male (88%), married (81%), and white (70%). The Chaplains ranged in age from 24-82 and were an average age of 38.8 (SD=10.21). Following the course, Chaplains were asked to complete a brief survey. A break down of each question is below and the responses are recorded as percentages. Select participant comments are recorded at the end of the summary.

	% Agree	% Slightly Agree	% Slightly Disagree	% Disagree
The RAM format provided me a way to determine specific areas to consider when counseling constituents.	96.3	3.3	0.2	0.2
I will use the RAM format to help me organize a conceptualization and treatment plan when counseling a constituent.	85.6	10.9	2.6	0.9
This course has heightened my awareness of the need to assess the risks of constituents when counseling.	85.4	13.1	1.3	0.2
This course has increased my understanding of how to manage my relationship with a constituent.	85.4	12.0	2.2	0.4
This course has helped me to consider my competency and a constituent's needs when counseling.	87.1	9.8	3.1	
Overall, I am very satisfied with my training in the PC with the RAM course.	83.0	14.2	2.0	0.9
I will be a better counselor because of what I have learned from this course.	91.3	7.6	0.4	0.6

This is an excellent counseling model. It is clear, concise, and practical.
As a CISM certified counselor and pastor with 4 years of experience, this is a great tool to add to my toolbox! Recommendation is to extend class over two days!
I love the model. It's practical, but it does not oversimplify the counseling relationship or the issue of the counselee/constituent.
Outstanding presentation, very helpful and tangible tool for the chaplain counseling environment.
Would have been helpful if we had more time on this course because of its valuable information.
Well thought through format. Instructor was very knowledgeable of material and provided wealth of insight.
Excellent information and well presented. It was helpful even after 18 years of pastoral work to re-focus and re-think my actions.
The breakout sessions were key. Once we had the training on the KNOW we got to go do it. Then after finishing the material we got to try out our skills. This is great material that can help any pastoral counselor to evaluate how they counsel and get some new ideas. This was an A+ course. Thank you for your time and sharing your experiences.

I enjoyed the course and it helped put another tool in my bag. This will help me counsel and help others be their best. Thank you.

Excellent class your instructor has helped me to provide wonderful, effective counseling to my constituents. Thank you.

Great presentation; kept attention well.

This course is timely for me and other chaplains in my course. Most have received little or no theory for psycho-social-spiritual care. This course provided such theory and framework. An additional day or half-day block of time would help students to integrate concepts through more time and attention in role plays. Great course.

Would have been helpful if we had more time on this course because of its valuable information.

I thoroughly enjoyed learning about this material and the techniques it made sense and I can tell it is very practical. I didn't have much counseling instruction (aside from Biblical based) before this day of instruction so I am extremely grateful for this sort of spring board for further counselor training. In terms of improves, I would appreciate more practical exercises throughout the course to check on learning.

I'm currently working on my MA for Marriage and Family Therapy. This is a very good and practical tool for both novice and seasoned counseling students. I would recommend 1 more day to apply this information—these are our troops!

This training has been some of the best and more thorough and concise. I make this statement from the frame of reference that I hold a Masters of arts in Counseling and a professional counseling credential from the state of CA.

Actually having a course in CHBOLC that addresses counseling application was very beneficial. This will be utilized tremendously.

RAM Research

R.A.M.

Relationship Attachment Model

Study One

This study sought to examine the validity of the Relationship Attachment Model Measure (RAM-M) which is based on the Relationship Attachment Model with a sample of 425 married individuals. The Relationship Attachment Model (RAM; see below) was developed in 1987 by Dr. John Van Epp as an alternative model for examining close relationships. This theoretical model was and is a visual representation of the relational bonds in a relationship. The RAM consists of five dynamic bonds: know, trust, rely, commit, and touch. Each of these five bonds provides a range of separate contributions to the feelings of connection in a relationship. The composite of these five bonds also provides a picture of the overall feeling of closeness in the relationship. Thus, the individual dynamic bonds and the composite of all five dynamic bonds provide meaningful information about the feeling of love, bondedness, and closeness within relationships.

The RAM is a dynamic model that allows for various combinations of each of the dynamic bonds at any given point in time. This composite picture is useful because various combinations of the dynamic bonds provide insight as to where vulnerabilities exist in the relationship and how to subsequently repair these vulnerabilities. Furthermore, the RAM has been used since 1997 as the theoretical foundation for the PICK a Partner relationship education program and more recently for the Marriage LINKS and Ultimate Spiritual R&R (Relationships & Resiliency) Courses.

For the current study, 425 married individuals were contacted and agreed to participate using the Smart Marriages listserv, Love Thinks customer listserv, and by passing out survey invitations at marriage and family

conferences in the summer of 2011. Individuals were asked to participate in a 20 minute survey that asked about love and marriage. The majority of the sample was white, female, highly educated, and in their first marriage. On average, respondents were 47 years old, had been married 15.7 (SD = 11.8) years and only 35% lived together before marriage. Over half of the sample, 59%, engaged in premarital counseling and 44.5% of respondents reported that they have attended marital counseling at some point while married. In addition, the majority of respondents had no prior familiarity with the PICK a Partner program (39%), Marriage LINKS (27%), and the Relationship Attachment Model (RAM; 42%).

The current study evaluated three hypotheses:

1 The composite score on the RAM-M will significantly correlate with the previously validated measures of the conceptually related constructs: love, intimacy, and relationship satisfaction. This hypothesis examined the convergent validity of the RAM-M.

2 Each dynamic bond of the RAM-M (know, trust, rely, commit, and touch) will significantly correlate with previously validated measures of these constructs. This hypothesis examined the construct validity of the RAM-M.

3 Scores on the RAM-M for a spousal relationship, close friend, and acquaintance will differ significantly from one another. This hypothesis tested the concurrent validity of the RAM-M.

The major findings of the study are summarized below:

- The RAM-M was significantly related to conceptually related measures of love, intimacy, and relationship



- Each scale of the RAM-M, representing the 5 bonding dynamics (know, trust, rely, commit, and touch), was significantly related to previously validated measures of each of the 5 constructs. This finding suggested that the RAM-M does provide an adequate measure of each of the 5 bonding dynamics. In other words, the RAM-M does measure know, trust, rely, commit, and touch.
- The RAM-M was able to distinguish between different types of relationships (spouse, close friend, and acquaintance).
- The RAM-M was a powerful predictor of relationship satisfaction and was a more powerful predictor than both love and intimacy.

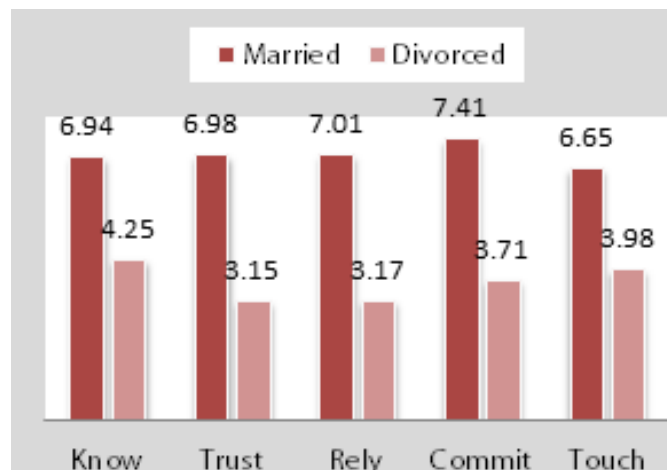
Study Two

Data from a study exploring the marriages of female soldiers was also analyzed to look at the performance of the RAM-M. Overall, 463 female soldiers: 157 divorced females and 306 married females were included in the study. The sample consisted of 60% Army and 40% National Guard females. Respondents were on average 36 years old at the time of the survey, and 21 years old when they enlisted. On average, females had spent 15 years in military service and married 7 years after joining the military. The majority of females were white and 67% had either attended or completed college. Analyses that compared the married and divorced females found that divorced females marriage, on average, younger than married females; that a higher percentage of married females had a total household income of 81k and above; and that a higher percentage of divorced females attended marital counseling at some point while married.

Divorced vs. Married

Both the married and divorced female soldiers completed the RAM-M. Divorced females were asked to think about their marriage as a whole when completing the RAM-M.

The results are presented in the following figure.



Note: Scale scores may range from 1-9. All scores differed significantly at the $p < .0001$ level.

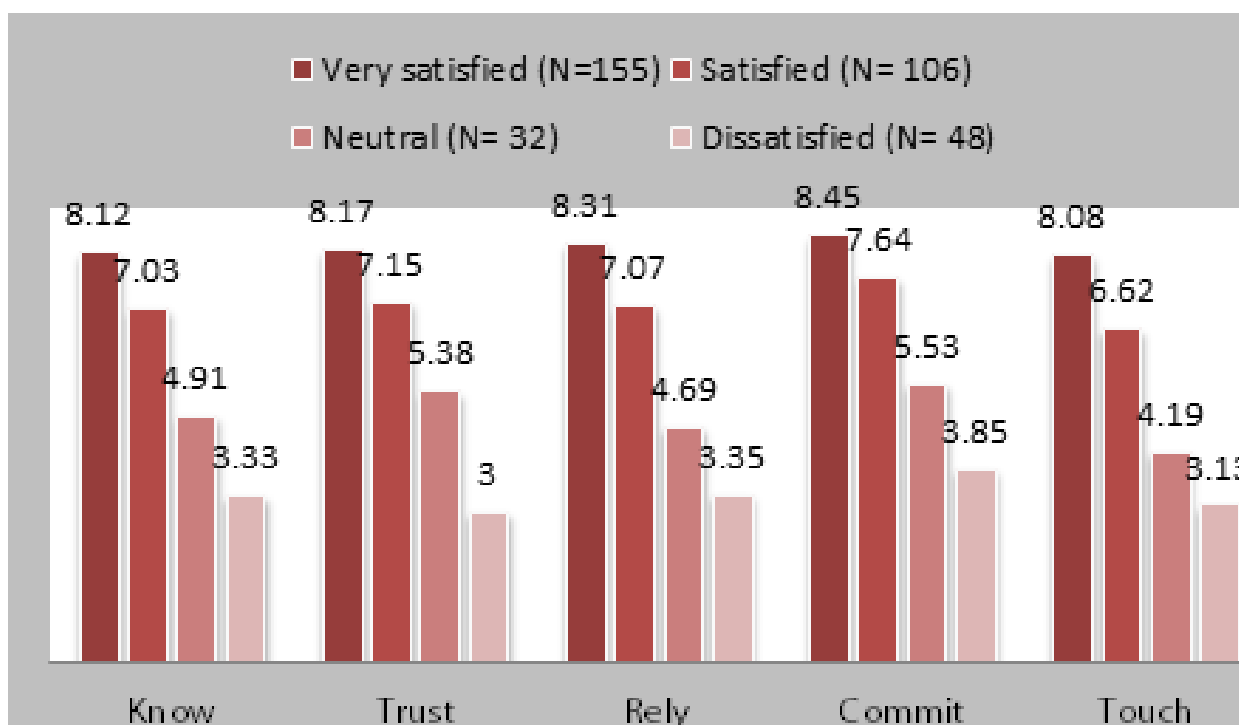
Overall, the results indicated that the RAM-M scores differed significantly for married and divorced females. This finding provided an initial glimpse at the RAM-M profile of marriages that are distressed and potentially on the verge of dissolution.

Satisfied vs. Dissatisfied

The next set of findings only included the female soldiers who were married (N= 341). Four groups were created based on a female's reported level of marital satisfaction. The groups were: very satisfied (n = 155), satisfied (n= 106), neutral (n = 32), and dissatisfied (n = 48). These groups were compared to determine whether there were variations in their RAM-M scores based on their level of reported marital satisfaction. The findings are presented in the figure on the following page.

This finding demonstrated the sensitivity of the RAM-M as an indicator of relationship satisfaction. The profiles created suggested that those who are most satisfied in their relationship will score each bonding dynamic between a 8-9, those who are satisfied will score between a 6.6-7.6, neutral will range between 4.2-5.5, and dissatisfied individuals will range between 3-3.9. This finding has clinical utility because clinicians could have couples complete the RAM-M prior to attending couples counseling which would provide the clinician with an immediate indication of how satisfied this couple/individual is in their marriage.

other. This finding indicated the unique contribution of both the total marital problems and the RAM-M score to the prediction of relationship satisfaction. Using just the RAM-M score as a predictor of relationship satisfaction, 54% of the variance in relationship satisfaction was explained. When marital problems was used as a single predictor, 47% of the variance in relationship satisfaction was explained. Overall, these findings suggested that both understanding the number of marital problems and the overall score on the RAM-M is important when understanding overall relationship satisfaction; however the RAM-M explains more variance in the overall



Prediction Models

To explore the predictive power of the RAM-M and the total number of problems experienced in a relationship on the overall relationship satisfaction regression analyses were performed. In other words, an analysis was performed to determine if the RAM-M and the number of marital problems experienced predicted relationship satisfaction.

Findings indicated that together marital problems and the total RAM-M score predicted 61% of the variance in relationship satisfaction. A nested regression analysis found that the RAM-M score and total marital problems predicted relationship satisfaction above and beyond each

relationship satisfaction. This has clinical utility when working with committed couples. This finding suggests that it may be more beneficial to focus on strengthening the overall relationship bond than focusing on all the problems in the relationship. Results are reported in the table on page 28.

	Model 1		Model 2	
	B	β	B	β
Total Marital Problems	.009	.35	0.17	.692 ^a
RAM-M	-.049	-.49 ^a	-.049	-.49 ^a
R ²	.61		.60	
F	259.41^a		259.41	
R ² Δ			.126	
F Δ			108.38^a	

Note: $a = p < .0001$

Conclusion

Overall, this study found support for the validity of the RAM-M with married individuals. The findings of this study have several implications for clinical work:

- The RAM-M scores were significantly different for married versus divorced females, which indicated that the RAM-M distinguished between married and divorced females.
- Using only married females, the RAM-M significantly discriminated between those females who were very satisfied, satisfied, neutral, and dissatisfied in their marriages.
- The RAM-M was a more powerful predictor of relationship satisfaction than the total number of marital problems in a relationship, which suggested that clinical work that focuses on strengthening the marital bond may be more helpful than just focusing on solving marital problems.



DR JOHN VAN EPP

author | speaker | trainer

about John

John Van Epp, PhD in Counseling Psychology, is the founder of Love Thinks, LLC and author of *How to Avoid Falling in Love with a Jerk*, published by McGraw-Hill. His pastoral background, twenty-five years of clinical experience and extensive research in premarital, marital and family relations have paved the way for his courses, *PICK (How to Avoid Falling for a Jerk)*, *Couple LINKS*, *Our Home Runs*, *Ultimate Spiritual R&R*, and *Pastoral Counseling with the RAM* to be taught in thousands of churches, singles organizations, military and educational settings and social agencies in all fifty states, ten countries and by more than 6,000 instructors certified by Dr. Van Epp.

Van Epp and his innovative Relationship Attachment Model, book and relationship courses were awarded the Smart Marriage Impact Award (2008) and have been featured in *The Wall Street Journal*, *Time Magazine*, *Psychology Today*, *O Magazine*, and *Cosmopolitan*; and he has appeared on the CBS Early Show, the O'Reilly Factor, Fox News, and Focus on the Family.

“EYE OPENING AND PRACTICAL, HOW TO AVOID FALLING IN LOVE WITH A JERK IS FOR ANYONE WHO'S TIRED OF DATING AND WANTS TO FINALLY FIND “THE ONE”.”

JOHN GRAY, AUTHOR OF *MEN ARE FROM MARS, WOMEN ARE FROM VENUS*

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US AIRMAN, ULTIMATE SPIRITUAL R&R INSTRUCTOR

PROGRAMS OFFERED

PICK a Partner Program: for singles

Couple LINKS: for committed couples

Ultimate Spiritual R&R: for all individuals

Our Home Runs: for families

Counseling with the RAM: for Lay & Professional Counselors

about Love Thinks

Love Thinks, LLC is dedicated to creating educational programs that teach how to build, strengthen, and manage relationships. You will find that the Relationship Attachment Model (RAM) provides a picture of love and closeness. When you understand what produces the feelings of love in your relationship, and how these dynamics work together, then you can manage your relationship, healing hurts and deepening intimacy.

Four programs use the RAM. The first is the PICK a Partner, aka *How To Avoid Falling for a Jerk(ette)* which teaches how to build a healthy relationship that keeps the head and heart working together. The *Couple LINKS* Program empowers couples to be active relationship managers and work together to keep their relationship strong and resilient. *Ultimate Spiritual R&R* teaches individuals how to use the RAM to develop their spirituality in ways that increase their ability to resiliently relate with three domains of life: self, others, and circumstances. And *Our Home Runs* helps families know how to stay connected while successfully running their homes.

“

THE RAM IS AN EXCELLENT TOOL. THE BEST TRAINING I'VE EVER RECEIVED. I HAVE A MASTERS IN COUNSELING & NEVER RECEIVED INSTRUCTION SO PRACTICAL, RELEVANT, AND USEFUL.”

CLINICAL COUNSELOR, LOVE THINKS INSTRUCTOR

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