Relational Certainty:
A Theoretical Framework Describing the Relationship between Military Veterans and Companion Canines

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Conflict of Interest

• No presenters have any conflict of interest related to this presentation or the work reported herein

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Purpose

• To describe the impact of relational certainty in human interactions as demonstrated by Companion Canines
• Relational certainty is drawn from the adaptive stress responses military veterans’ display when reintegrating into society
Introduction
Theoretical Background

- Relational certainty is drawn from the adaptive stress responses military veterans’ display when reintegrating into society
- Theory drawn from the adaptive stress response military veterans display reintegrating into society
- Explain how veterans internally construct meaning of stable relationships through a balance of biological and social links
- Discussion will be systematized based on two main strands:
  - nature
  - social nurture
Theory Development

• The process used to develop this theory included
  • derivation
  • synthesis
  • analysis

The development began with an in-depth review of existing literature on stress in the military veteran population
This information was blended with the reports of military veterans on the value of companion canines
External Relational Certainty: Three Antecedents

Basic nature of any human being is based on three antecedents of external relational certainty:

1) The level of stress associated with any recurring experience that affects the veteran’s emotional response and cognitive responses colored by prior experiences and perception.

2) Regagens expression capacity of the appraisal of external relational certainty - the process of placing a value on the certainty of the relationship within any given situation.

3) Regagens expression of the relational certainty - for coping with uncertain events.
Process to Develop Theory

Derivation & synthesis of existing literature

Analysis-foundational strands: nature and social nurture
Relational Certainty: Basis for Human Response

• Stress associated with recurring experiences affects veteran’s cognitive-emotional response colored by prior experiences and biological shifts

• A value of the certainty of the relationship within any given situation is based on relagens expression capacity through cognitive – emotional appraisal of relational certainty

• Relagens expression seen in the relational certainty-coping with uncertain events
Relagens Expression: Biological Basis

• Nucleobases of cytosine (C), guanine (G) adenine (A) or thymine (T) form the building blocks of DNA
• A stress response, is genetically driven by the protein, carbohydrate, and nucleic acid molecules forming each person’s DNA
• mRNA translates genetic information to express new products instructing a cell in how to behave
• Excessive stress creates an epigenetic mark on the gene altering expression
Relagens Expression: Physiological Bridge

• Cortisol alters the expression generating an epigenetically marked DNA
• Altered DNA demethylation triggers inflammatory cytokine response
• Inflammatory cytokine response is mediated by Serotonin gene during acute stress
• Altered Serotonin gene increases inflammatory cytokines reducing health
Relagens Expression: Context

• Psychosocial context and exposure to cortisol defines presence or absence of epigenetic marks
• Epigenetic marks define DNA expression to stress
• DNA demethylation with stress results in altered serotonin gene expression reducing capacity to cope
• Altered biological basis for coping results in sustained altered DNA expression, strained serotonin response, and reduced immunity
Representation of imbalance of links can occur and perpetuates (in red)
This can be rectified through intervention (in blue)
Assumptions

Assumptions on the psychosocial context interventions and contextually expressed outcomes were drawn from Weiss’s Social Provision Theory (1974):

• Psychosocial context intervention assumptions
  • Guidance
    • (advice or information)
  • Reliable alliance
    • (assurance that others can be counted on in times of stress)
  • Reassurance of worth
    • (recognition of competence)
Assumptions

Contextually expressed outcome assumptions:

• Attachment
  emotional closeness

• Social integration
  a sense of belonging to a group of friends

• Social opportunities for nurturance
  providing acceptance of assistance from others
Theory of Relational Certainty: Utility for nursing research and practice

- Comprised of knowledge resulting from nursing and related disciplines
- Addresses a utility for research
- Suggests a rebalancing of epigenetic and social links
- Explains the process of determining meaning to the certainty of relationships within the military veteran population
Conclusion

• This theory as demonstrated by canine companions is comprised of knowledge resulting from the experiences of military veterans, addresses a need for research, and suggests a balance of epigenetic and external social links for explaining the process of determining the certainty of any relationships to members within the military veteran population
Questions

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Thank you