

FAMILY ADVOCACY: SOS HELP!

DISCUSSION LEADER'S OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

Good morning my name is _____. Today we will be talking about what resources are available if you should find yourself in need of assistance.

The **ground rules** for this discussion are:

- (1) No personal attacks on anyone's opinions
- (2) Allow each participant to express themselves
- (3) Make head calls at your leisure, just don't interrupt the group
- (4) Keep your language clean as not to offend others
- (5) PARTICIPATION BY ALL!!!!!!

Gain Attention:

SSgt Miller is a solid guy. He's the one everyone goes to for help. Although he gives great advice, you notice he doesn't always refer his Marines to the appropriate resources. Your concern is that he may not have the right amount of understanding in some areas and therefore may wrongly advise someone. The Marine Corps offers several resources for Marines and their family members. Taking a moment to familiarize yourself with the options available to you will be immeasurably beneficial.

Key points for the discussion today will be:

- (1) Identifying resources
- (2) Roles of providers
- (3) Additional resources

Learning Objective: After this guided discussion, you will have a better understanding of the roles of chaplains, healthcare professionals, relationship/marriage counselors, and other relevant resources.

DISCUSSION

You and your wife have been married for 3 years. Six months ago, she lost her father to thyroid cancer and found out her youngest brother was diagnosed with leukemia. The two of you have been talking about starting a family but decided to put that on the back burner with the recent loss. You have been talking to your best friend, SSgt Miller, about the drastic change in your wife's temperament as you are concerned that she is very withdrawn—she's numb. You know she is feeling a lot of guilt about the two of you being stationed so far away from home. The distance prevented her from being there for her father in his final days and keeps her from physically being there to support her brother during his treatment. SSgt Miller's advice is to just leave her alone. He assures you she will come around on her own and that bothering her may make her angry and cause issues in your marriage. You later discuss your issues with another Marine in your unit, he tells you that you should contact the Community Counseling Program (CCP) or at least reach out to the chaplain for guidance. Since you aren't sure what help they will be, you decide to take SSgt Miller's advice. You're going to leave your wife alone and wait to see what happens. You don't understand that anxiety, difficulty sleeping, lack of focus, sadness, irritation, loss of interest, nightmares, anger, panic, and rage are symptoms that—not given proper attention—can lead to serious consequences. A few weeks later, the same Marine that offered the chaplain and CCP as resources asks how your wife is holding up. You tell him she is still withdrawn. He's noticed that

this has been the case for the past month and he tells you that you have to get her the help she needs, so she can begin to address her grief and sadness. After doing some research on your own, you realize your peer was correct in suggesting you contact the chaplain.

KEY POINT 1

1. The Community Counseling Program provides a variety of services designed to support our Marines, Sailors, and their families with personal and family concerns. Through counseling, advocacy and educational programs, their compassionate staff strives to empower and encourage our community.
2. Chaplains are committed to caring for all Marines, Sailors, and their families with dignity, respect, and compassion, regardless of an individual's faith beliefs. Chaplains are bound by unbreakable confidentiality. What you say to a chaplain in confidence stays between you and the chaplain, unless you decide differently. You hold the key.
3. Service members and families have the right and privilege to confidential communication with a Navy chaplain. Chaplains have the obligation and responsibility to protect and guard the confidential communications disclosed to them. Commanders honor and support the unique, private relationship between an individual and a chaplain. Chaplains cannot be compelled by the command, medical professionals, or others to disclose what a service member or family member shares in confidence.
4. We all know it takes courage to ask for help, and doing it at the first signs of a struggle will help you process and address whatever issues you may be facing. Medical/ Marine Corps Community Services (MCCS) offers a variety of resources to assist Marines and their families in getting the care they need. Another great resource is TRICARE. Dependents covered under TRICARE Prime, Prime Remote, Extra, Standard, and the U.S. Family Health Plan can receive eight counseling sessions, per issue, at no cost by self-referring to a TRICARE network provider. An online self-screening program is available for all military branches. This program is set up to help service members and their spouses overcome and confront possible problems. It is available 24/7 and provides anonymity.
5. Military Pathways was designed with the understanding that military life can present challenges to service members and their families that are both unique and difficult. Some are manageable, some are not. Many times, we can successfully deal with them on our own. In some instances, matters get worse and one problem can trigger other more serious issues. At such times, it is wise to check things out and see what is really happening. If you or someone you know is showing signs of distress, it is important to seek help as soon as possible.
6. A reference sheet is available on the Dashboard at https://ehqmc.usmc.mil/sites/family/_layouts/MySubs.aspx or you can perform a quick Internet search to help you locate available resources along with a description of services provided.

KEY POINT 2

1. Health providers play numerous roles in the overall well-being of their patients. In addition to providing assistance with medical needs, they offer advice and direction for prevention of illness and injury. Providers also create an environment that responds to the needs of their

clients, and act as liaisons between wrap-around services and agencies.

KEY POINT 3

1. Remember there are resources available:

- a) Peers
- b) Chain of command
- c) Chaplain
- d) Medical
- e) Marine Corps Community Services
 - Substance Abuse Counseling Center (SACC)
 - Community Counseling Program (CCP)
 - Family Advocacy Program (FAP)
- F) DSTRESS Line (1-877-476-7734)

Should you need additional assistance the following are also available: Military and Family Life Consultant (MFLC) as well as Military One Source.

SUMMARY/CONCLUSION

Today we discussed how to locate resources and when to seek them out should you or a loved one need assistance. Keep in mind that each day life presents new challenges. Loss and grief are a part of those challenges, but you are not alone and there are resources to help when things seem most difficult. Remember that it is ok to ask for help and doing so takes a lot of courage.

Closing Statement:

When you or someone you know shows signs of distress, seek assistance as soon as possible. Anxiety, difficulty sleeping, lack of focus, sadness, irritation, loss of interest, nightmares, anger, panic, and rage are just a few symptoms that, not given proper attention, can lead to serious consequences. With the vast array of resources available, no one has to suffer alone.

END OF DISCUSSION

RESOURCES

1. MAPIT Guide. Retrieved from http://bhinc.usmc-mccs.org/uploads/MAPIT_Guide.pdf.
2. Draft MCO 1754.14