

## MARINE TOTAL FITNESS

### DISCUSSION LEADER'S OUTLINE

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Good morning my name is \_\_\_\_\_. Today we will be talking about Marine Total Fitness.

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**

Although new to the unit, Cpl Nolan is a top performer; she gets to the shop early preparing for each workday, she is a quick learner and never complains but she rarely smiles. You know from her previous command that she was badly shaken by a near miss on deployment and was seen at a military treatment facility. Her integration to this new unit, while doing a slightly different job, is going well. You're surprised after working with her for over a month that she has not spoken about her husband. Another Marine informed you that Cpl Nolan is not happy at home; citing she's convinced that her husband cheated when she was deployed, he denies it. You bumped into Cpl Nolan out in town and she looked very flustered and not physically well. Cpl Nolan participates in unit activities but does not open up to other Marines. You know Cpl Nolan has been experiencing a nagging cough but does not want to take time out to go to medical, she blames it on allergies but you think it's more than that. You try to talk to her about her health, but she says she's doing a great job and that's all that matters, then she says she's not used to anyone caring and questions the sincerity of your concern.

**Key points** for the discussion today will be:

- (1) Describing the Marine Total Fitness concept
- (2) Identifying your role in implementing total fitness

**Learning Objective:** After this guided discussion, you will be able to explain the Marine Total Fitness concept and implement activities that support total fitness.

#### **DISCUSSION**

Just as we respond to operational challenges by adapting our warfighting strategies, we can face personal challenges with a strategy by using the Marine Total Fitness concept. This discussion arms Marines with the ability to identify issues and seek assistance early to mitigate the impact on individual, family, and unit readiness. Imagine body, mind, spirit, and social as cords which make one rope. Like a climbing rope gets strength from weaving small strands of rope into larger cords until it is strong enough to hold hundreds of pounds, Marines develop strength by focusing on fitness of body, fitness of mind, fitness of spirit, and social fitness. Marine Total Fitness involves balancing strength across these cords and leads to personal success. Totally fit Marines also improve the ability of their families and units to overcome common garrison and deployment challenges.

### **KEY POINT 1**

1. Marines are required to be more than just physically fit. The Marine Corps expects 100% effort towards fitness of body, fitness of mind, fitness of spirit, and social fitness – this is the basis of the Marine Total Fitness concept, with which you may already be familiar.
2. Every Marine encounters challenges which impact their individual, family, and unit readiness. What warning signs could you identify in Cpl Nolan's scenario? (Participants need to provide all the answers below.)
  - a) New to the unit and doing a slightly different job
  - b) Experienced life threat on deployment and was seen at a military treatment facility
  - c) Not happy at home from possible infidelity
  - d) Appears flustered and not physically well
  - e) Does not open up to other Marines, is not used to anyone caring, questions sincerity
  - f) Experiencing a nagging cough, will not go to medical, focuses only on work
3. Total fitness emphasizes the importance of integrative wholeness, resiliency, self-awareness and self-optimization among each of the four cords. A deficiency or neglect in one area will impact the others. Fitness in one cord lays foundation for and helps maintain fitness and resilience in the others.
4. Fitness of body allows you to focus on the mission, assist others in need, and display healthy mental toughness when circumstances get rough. Fitness of mind promotes self-confidence and adaptability. Fitness of spirit provides a sense of purpose and endurance. And, social fitness creates positive interactions and a sense of connectedness with others.
5. Achieving fitness of body means that you are physically able to perform current and future tasks and missions under stress. What are the factors of fitness of body? (Participants need to provide only five to six of the possible answers.)
  - a) Sets and achieves fitness goals
  - b) Normal appetite
  - c) Absence of digestive problems
  - d) Challenges self and others
  - e) Rarely gets sick (e.g., common cold)
  - f) Meets/exceeds PFT/CFT standards
  - g) Medically/dentally cleared for full duty
  - h) Lifestyle decisions support health, fitness, and readiness
  - i) Physically fit
  - j) Follows a predictable fitness routine
  - k) Injury free
  - l) Meets body composition standards
6. Achieving fitness of mind means you are engaged in psychologically healthy behaviors that enable you to successfully meet your duties while deployed and in garrison. What do you think are the characteristics of fitness of mind? (Participants need to provide only five to six of the possible answers.)
  - a) Perseverance
  - b) Personal-focused
  - c) Confident under pressure
  - d) Remaining calm and steady
  - e) Assists others in need
  - f) In control of emotions
  - g) Retains a sense of humor
  - h) Normal behavioral patterns

- i) Alert/rested
  - j) Strong coping and decision making skills
  - k) Able to relax as needed
  - l) Optimistic about the future
  - m) Self-competence
7. If you are fit in spirit, you are engaged in life's meaning and purpose, are hopeful about life, are engaged in core values and beliefs, and are better able to make correct moral decisions in every circumstance. What are the characteristics of fitness of spirit? (Participants need to provide only three to four of the possible answers.)
- a) Engaged in life's meaning/purpose
  - b) Hopeful about life/future
  - c) Makes sound moral decisions
  - d) Fully engaged with family, friends, and community
  - e) Able to forgive self and others
  - f) Respectful of others
  - g) Engaged in core values/beliefs
8. You have achieved social fitness if you are engaged in socially healthy behaviors that enable you to successfully interact with your peers, families, and community and meet your duties, while deployed and in garrison. What do you think are the factors of social fitness? (Participants need to provide only five to six of the possible answers.)
- a) Strong coping and decision making skills
  - b) Calm and balanced in social settings
  - c) Sense of community
  - d) Mission focused
  - e) Respects themselves and others
  - f) Seeks or provides mentorship opportunities
  - g) Interest in fitness and community activities
  - h) Strong family support system
  - i) Socially self-confident
  - j) Balanced and healthy relationships
9. Which cords were affected by Cpl Nolan's challenges?
- a) Body, mind, spirit, and social.

**Interim Summary:** Fitness of body is regular practice of adequate sleep, good nutrition, frequent exercise, regular medical and dental care, and safety – this prepares your body for high performance and your mind for focus in adverse conditions. Marines demonstrate fitness of mind by knowing themselves and continually seeking self-improvement, adapting to challenging circumstances and persevering, acting with confidence, and making good decisions – this allows you to focus on the mission and assist others in need. Fitness of spirit provides an understanding of your life's importance and a foundation for your choices. Marines demonstrate fitness of spirit in worldviews, sense of purpose and connectedness, values, ethics, morals, and religious faith or personal confidence in non-religious beliefs. Fitness of spirit involves doing things with your family, friends, and community; acting respectfully toward others; and granting forgiveness. A socially fit Marine builds personal relationships with family and friends and fosters esprit de corps and community connections. Spend time developing and maintaining trusted, valued friendships that are fulfilling and foster good communication to improve your quality of life and aid your growth from the exchange of ideas, views, and experiences. The Marine Total Fitness concept gives Marines a foundation to become resilient to life's stress. We'll discuss employment of total fitness.

## **KEY POINT 2**

Total fitness is relationship focused. It's based on the fact that we are impacted by others and we impact others. Our actions and attitudes impact our families, units, communities, and institutions. Being aware of this interrelatedness of the cords builds resiliency, esprit de corps, and cohesiveness.

1. What is the relationship between personal and family readiness, unit readiness, and mission readiness?
  - a) Personal and family readiness + unit readiness = mission readiness. Mission readiness relies as much on personal and family readiness as it does on equipment, knowledge, and personal gear.
2. You have a role in implementing total fitness. You will maximize the application of COSC core leader functions:
  - a) Strengthen with tough/ realistic training, a social group with mutual trust and support, leaders who teach and inspire.
  - b) Mitigate, as a core leader function, requires balancing of competing priorities.
  - c) Identify, every leader must continuously monitor the stress zones of each unit member, Marines are responsible for knowing their stress zone. There are some types of stress that tend to cause stress injuries more often than others: life threat, wear and tear, loss, and inner conflict. You need to keep an eye out for these "red flag" stresses.
  - d) Treat, as a core leader function, requires getting Marines who are experiencing difficulty the help they need. Some of the ways that you treat are engage, listen, problem solve, refer, provide resources, help refocus on the mission, and continually monitor risks.
  - e) Reintegrate is the fifth core leader function. Marines kept with their units during treatment tend to get better faster due to still feeling a part of their "family," being reminded daily that their unit needs them, encouragement by leaders and peers to get better, expectation of return to full duty, and not getting used to being away from their normal routine.
3. Part of your role in implementing total fitness is enforcing regulations and applying leadership principles and traits. How does total fitness tie in with the core values of honor, courage, and commitment?
  - a) Honor denotes virtuous conduct and personal integrity. Honor motivates Marines to aspire to the highest physical, mental, spiritual, and social standards of the Marine Corps. Physical courage is the ability to act in the face of pain, fear, hardship, or danger of death. Moral courage is the inner strength to stand up for, and do what is right, regardless of personal consequences. Mental courage is the strength of mind to persevere and remain positive in the face of adverse conditions.
  - b) Commitment upholds the obligation to something larger than ourselves.
4. Thinking back to the scenario, what resources are available to help Cpl Nolan?
  - a) Big five: peers, chain of command, chaplain, medical/Marine Corps Community Services resources, and the DSTRESS Line
  - b) OSCAR
  - c) Military and Family Life Consultant
  - d) Community Counseling Program

**Interim Summary:** You use the COSC core leader functions, apply leadership principles and traits, and enforce regulations on a daily basis. In Cpl Nolan's scenario you saw a Marine experiencing difficulty and you engaged to help achieve total fitness. If you see a fellow Marine who needs assistance, take steps to talk to him or her and refer them to useful resources.

## **SUMMARY/CONCLUSION**

Spend time doing the things you find energizing to improve your well-being, readiness to serve our Country, and ability to apply your experience outside of the Marine Corps. Many activities strengthen multiple cords of the Marine Total Fitness concept, for example, hiking with friends. Balancing your strength like this develops resiliency, helps you enjoy life, and builds success. Achieving total fitness means that you will be better able to deal with, and operate amongst, stressful experiences, recover from them quickly, and view them as challenging life experiences that help you grow as a person.

**Closing Statement:** The Marine Total Fitness concept has a prominent role in your ability to meet the challenges of combat and the rigors of garrison life. The Marine Corps expects 100% effort towards fitness of body, fitness of mind, fitness of spirit, and social fitness.

## **END OF DISCUSSION**

## **RESOURCES**

1. Combat Stress MCRP 6-11C
2. MCO 5351.1 Combat and Operational Stress Control Program
3. MCRP 6-11B W/Ch 1, Marine Corps Values: A User's Guide for Discussion Leaders
4. MAPIT Guide. Retrieved from [http://bhin.usmc-mccs.org/uploads/MAPIT\\_Guide.pdf](http://bhin.usmc-mccs.org/uploads/MAPIT_Guide.pdf).