

## HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

### DISCUSSION LEADER'S OUTLINE

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Good morning my name is \_\_\_\_\_. Today we will be talking about Healthy Relationships.

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**

Think about or imagine someone who grew up without receiving enough attention from their parents. Perhaps their mother worked all the time, or their father was emotionally unavailable, or their parents just could not relate to the excess energy they possessed. How do you think that person would be in an adult, personal relationship (*Pause, wait for feedback from group, answers may include: insecure, controlling, or they might be classified as an attention seeker*)? How might that person communicate in their relationships? Would that person be someone who screams and yells when upset or learns to be dishonest to avoid confrontation and seek approval? We are going to talk about the importance of healthy relationships. Healthy relationships are an important protective factor that can act as a shield against behavioral health issues. It is important to work on positive relationships not just with our loved ones or family members, but also with our friends, peers, and trusted leaders.

**Key points** for this discussion will be:

- (1) Define aspects of a healthy relationship (emphasis on Marine Corps culture)
- (2) Discuss the impact of an unhealthy relationship on the individual Marine and unit readiness
- (3) Discuss ways to engage and refer a Marine you suspect may be experiencing issues

**Learning Objective:** After this guided discussion, you will have a better understanding of how to identify potential problems in you or a fellow Marine's relationship, when to intervene, and how to identify appropriate referral resources.

#### **DISCUSSION**

Sgt James was one of your best friends at your first duty station. You lost touch and haven't seen him in years, but heard he'd gotten married and had a baby last year. You were glad to see him when he was recently assigned to your unit. Your unit has just been directed to run concurrent trainings to meet the needs of a heavy deployment rotation. The long days kept you and Sgt James from catching up, but you realize something is a little off about him. In the two weeks since Sgt James arrived, he has been late a few times and always looks tired and disheveled. He never leaves the building during chow but is the first to leave at the end of the day. You notice he is always texting and frequently seems frustrated and distracted. One day when he is excessively agitated, you ask him to ride with you to pick up supplies. During the ride you ask him if he is ok and tell him what you've noticed. At first he tells you everything is ok and that he is just trying to

get the family settled. During further conversation he tells you that his wife is insanely jealous, tracks his time, and checks the mileage on his car. He also tells you she is throwing fits, screaming, and yelling all night long. She does not believe him when he says he has field day, goes to the field, or works late. To verify his schedule, she is calling the CO or confirming with another spouse. He says he is embarrassed and has had enough but has chosen not to leave his wife. He wants his daughter to grow up with both parents.

### **KEY POINT 1**

#### **1. What behaviors/risks are identified in this scenario?**

Facilitator: Ask the group to generate the issues – first for the wife and second for the Sgt (listed below).

##### **Wife's behavior**

- Jealous
- Controlling
- Violent
- Intrusive
- Domestic Abuse
- Child witnessing acts of aggression
- Interference with his job; compromising training and readiness
- Tone set for poor peer relations

##### **Sgt James behavior**

- Sgt James did not utilize available resources
- Late for work
- Not mission ready
- Sgt James allowed his wife's behavior to interfere with his work performance

#### **2. We just talked about the behaviors and risks from the scenario. What are some examples of healthy behaviors in a relationship?**

- Treat each other with respect
- Feel secure and comfortable
- Not violent with each other
- Resolve conflicts
- Enjoy spending time together
- Support one another
- Show interest in one another's health, family, work, etc.
- Trust each other
- Communicate clearly and openly
- Have privacy in the relationship
- Encourage other friendships
- Remain honest "or" maintain honesty
- Have more good times than bad in the relationship

#### **3. Creating and maintaining a healthy relationship involves loving and consensual behaviors between each person in the relationship. When both people use the previous examples of positive behaviors, relationships are stronger and each person will have improved overall mind, body, spirit, and social**

fitness.

**Interim Summary:** We just finished discussing healthy relationships. Now let's talk about what resources are available to help our peers who may be facing relationship challenges.

## **KEY POINT 2**

**1. What resources are available? We refer to the "Big 5" let's see if we can name all five. Facilitator ask group to generate the list.**

### **PEERS:**

When you experience temporary and mild distress, characteristic of the Yellow Zone, (refer to Stress Continuum – Enclosure 1) engage your peers. Sometimes talking to another Marine is all you need to manage issues and return to the Green Zone. OSCAR team members are selected unit Marines trained to prevent, identify, and manage stress problems as early as possible; as your peers they can help you build a plan to get back on track.

### **CHAIN OF COMMAND:**

Leaders at all levels are responsible for preserving the psychological and physical health of their Marines, Sailors, and family members. This responsibility applies to every link in every chain of command from fire team leaders and work center supervisors to combatant commanders and commanding officers. To promote psychological health in their Marines and Sailors, leaders must actively foster resilience, prevent stress problems as much as possible, recognize when stress problems occur, and eliminate the "avoidance factor" with getting needed help.

### **CHAPLAIN:**

Regardless of an individual's faith or spiritual beliefs, chaplains are committed to caring for all Sailors, Marines, Coast Guardsman, and their families with dignity, respect and compassion. Rooted in the sacred trust between an individual and a chaplain, 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. Service members and families have the right and privilege to confidential communication with a chaplain. Chaplains have the obligation and responsibility to protect and guard their confidential communications. They cannot be compelled to disclose this information.

### **MEDICAL/MCCS (Such as the Family Advocacy Program):**

It is your responsibility, and part of the commitment to the Corps, to be ready to handle whatever the Marine Corps needs of you at any time. You can only do this by being at your best, and sometimes that means asking for and accepting help. It takes courage to ask for help, and doing it at the first signs of difficulty should not impact your career. Medical/MCCS offers a variety of resources to assist Marines and their families.

### **DSTRESSLINE: Call 1-877-476-7734**

From the everyday stressors of life to the stressors related to combat, stress can affect even the strongest Marine. The DSTRESS Line was developed by the Corps to provide professional, anonymous counseling for Marines, Sailors, and families when it's needed most.

## **SUMMARY/CONCLUSION**

Today we discussed healthy relationships, I am confident that you now have a better understanding of how to identify potential relationship issues in your life or the life of your fellow Marine. You should now be

confident on how to identify healthy relationships and resources when a relationship shows signs of distress.

**Closing Statement:** A healthy relationship is a balanced relationship. Having separate friends from your spouse or partner means you can spend some time apart, doing things that you like to do with your buddies. At the same time, having mutual friends allows you and your partner or family members to spend time together socializing with others and having fun experiences as a group.

Our Corps Values encourage positive relationships. You can earn respect by being honest, communicating effectively, and working on your relationships. We know all relationships take work. When you work on building relationships with these characteristics, you're building your protective factors, making yourself stronger.

*Facilitator Note: Reference Marines back to MCCS Behavioral Health programs for more information.*

### **END OF DISCUSSION**

### **RESOURCES**

1. MARINE CORPS ORDER 1754.11: Marine Corps Family Advocacy and General Counseling Program
2. MAPIT Guide. Retrieved from: [http://bhin.usmc-mccs.org/uploads/MAPIT\\_Guide.pdf](http://bhin.usmc-mccs.org/uploads/MAPIT_Guide.pdf)
3. Characteristics of a Healthy Relationship. Retrieved from: <http://www.campbell.edu/pdf/counseling-services/characteristics-of-healthy-romantic-relationships.pdf>
4. Community Counseling Program