

LESSON PURPOSE PLAN

OPERATIONAL STRESS AND READINESS FOR COMBAT
GUIDED DISCUSSION

VALUES-BASED LEADERSHIP

7/15/2015

1. TOPIC OVERVIEW

INSTRUCTOR NOTE

Control of stress may be the decisive difference between victory and defeat. Battles and wars may be won more by managing internal stress than by killing all of the enemy combatants. Uncontrolled combat stress may cause erratic or harmful behaviors, negatively impact decision making, and impair mission performance. The Marine Corps believes resilience--the ability to cope with stressful situations and adversity--is key to an effective fighting force. Resilient warriors are strong, courageous, and ready to take on any mission. A resilient force is not immune to experiencing combat stress and not all combat stress reactions are negative, but an effective force must have the capability to recognize combat stress and provide the necessary support to manage it. Learning about operational stress from those who have experienced it and talking about it are important aspects to preparing a combat-ready force. To keep the Marine Corps at the highest level of combat readiness, operational stress and readiness must be understood and appreciated by the entire force, from private to general.

Use this time to present the topic of the guided discussion to your group. Cover why this topic is important to the Marine Corps, as a whole, and vital to the individual Marine. You may use the above paragraph to help introduce the topic, or develop a completely unique introduction. Aspects of your attention gainer should focus on your discussion topic. Authenticity is absolutely imperative; avoid glamorization or trying to shock and awe with any of the attention gainers or discussion. Never include specific details of a suicide attempt/death (i.e. do not include method or any personal identifying information about an actual attempt/death).

Ensure you have followed the Instructor Preparation Guide (IPG), familiarized yourself with the subject, and reviewed the references. From Marine Corps Reference Publication (MCRP) 6-11C, Combat Stress:

Combat Stress: is the mental, emotional or physical tension, strain, or distress resulting from exposure to combat and combat-related conditions.

Combat Stress Reactions: the result of exposure to the same conditions during military actions that cause physical injury and disease in battle or its immediate aftermath, and many combat stress reactions occur in persons who are also wounded or ill with disease.

2. METHOD

INSTRUCTOR NOTE

Inform your class that the instructional method you will be using for today's lesson is a guided discussion and that this method has been selected to actively involve students in the learning process.

The guided discussion can be effective at altering awareness and behaviors of participants. The goal of the guided discussion method is to drive group participation through leadership and encouragement. To learn more about guided discussions refer to Marine Corps Reference Publication (MCRP) 6-11B W/CH 1 - *Marine Corps Values: A User's Guide for Discussion Leaders*.

It is up to you, as the discussion leader, to use your best judgment and adapt this period of instruction to make it most suitable to your unit and the experience level of the participants. Be prepared for controversy, and form a plan to deal with conflicting viewpoints in order to keep the discussion progressing.

The guided discussion should last approximately 25 to 35 minutes. Spend a few minutes on the introduction; and, the majority of your time on the discussion questions within the body. Do not go too far over your time, as you may start to lose the attention of the participants. Too much information can start to overwhelm what is intended to be a simple and focused session. Remember to allow a few minutes for reflection and the summary of your lesson.

Determine what aspect of the topic you want to concentrate your discussion towards. Design learning outcomes, or "takeaways," which participants should grasp at the end of this discussion that best exemplify your intended focus. You can create your own learning outcomes OR use one, or more, of the examples listed below.

Example learning outcomes are:

- (a) Be able to define operational/combat stress.
- (b) Recognize symptoms of combat stress.
- (c) Understand what constitutes a "Combat Stress Injury."
- (d) Identify strategies that may be used to mitigate the effects of combat stress.
- (e) Identify the five Combat and Operational Stress Control Core Leader Functions.
- (f) Identify to whom you would report combat stress related reactions and problems.

3. INTRODUCTION

INSTRUCTOR NOTE

Use this time to introduce yourself to the group if necessary, and to ensure the group is familiar with each other. This is also the time to introduce any ground rules, which will establish what behaviors are expected during the guided discussion. Some example ground rules are: everyone participates fully; permit participants to express themselves without becoming recipients of personal attacks from anyone regarding their views; keep language clean, as not to offend others; make head-calls, as needed, without disrupting the rest of the participants; etc.

4. **BODY**

INSTRUCTOR NOTE

Start the discussion by giving your participants the learning outcome you developed for the guided discussion.

a. **Gain Attention**

INSTRUCTOR NOTE

A few attention-gaining stories are provided, but you are encouraged to personalize the attention-gainer to fit your personality, audience, and your desired learning outcome. You may use one of the provided stories, or conduct research in order to find others more applicable to your learning outcome.

(1) Medal of Honor Citation of PFC Clausen, Raymond M.

"For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while serving with Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 263 during operations against enemy forces.

Participating in a helicopter rescue mission to extract elements of a platoon which had inadvertently entered a minefield while attacking enemy positions, Pfc. Clausen skillfully guided the helicopter pilot to a landing in an area cleared by 1 of several mine explosions. With 11 Marines wounded, one dead, and the remaining 8 Marines holding their positions for fear of detonating other mines, Pfc. Clausen quickly leaped from the helicopter and, in the face of enemy fire, moved across the extremely hazardous mine laden area to assist in carrying casualties to the waiting helicopter and in placing them aboard.

Despite the ever-present threat of further mine explosions, he continued his valiant efforts, leaving the comparatively safe area of the helicopter on 6 separate occasions to carry out his rescue efforts. On 1 occasion while he was carrying 1 of the wounded, another mine detonated, killing a corpsman and wounding 3 other men. Only when he was certain that all Marines were safely aboard did he signal the pilot to lift the helicopter.

By the courageous, determined and inspiring efforts in the face of the utmost danger, Pfc. Clausen upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and of the U.S. Naval Service."

Excerpt from:

Congressional Medal of Honor Society, "Clausen, Raymond M." Cmohs.org, 01 Apr. 2015. [<http://www.cmohs.org/recipient-detail/3246/clausen-raymond-m.php>]

(2) Operational Stress Control and Readiness (OSCAR) Program

In the Garmsir District, Helmand Province, of Afghanistan a heavily muscled Marine with Weapons Company 2/1, prepares to leave Patrol Base Karma to go on patrol in southern Garmsir. Despite the tough, Alpha-male and "suck it up" image they are known for, after almost 10 years of war, the USMC has recently been putting units through the new OSCAR (Operational Stress Control and Readiness) program, which seeks to assist Marines in combat who may be having difficulties dealing with their wartime experiences.

Rather than removing Marines having issues from the battlefield, chaplains, senior non-commissioned officers, and corpsmen, among others, are being encouraged to keep lines of communication open on the front lines, in the interest of keeping an at-risk Marine with his tight-knit squad--which officials believe is the best support structure available.

Reference:

Phillips, Michael. "For Story on Combat Stress in Helmand Province, Afghanistan" *Photoshelter.com*, 02 Jul. 2011.
[<http://bryandenton.photoshelter.com/image/I0000r9sWW5hCH9k>]

(3) Rx for Combat Stress: Comradeship

"The morning after Chad Wade died, nobody wanted to walk point.

The Marines in Corporal Wade's squad no longer had to imagine what would happen if they stepped on a buried bomb. Now they had seen it, and the fresh memory of their friend's shattered legs froze them in place.

When their squad leader, Sergeant (Sgt) Albert Tippett, lined them up for their next patrol, no one would pick up the metal detector used by the point man to clear a path through the mines. It was, Sgt Tippett knew, the moment his men would either keep fighting or succumb to fear and loss. So he handed the metal detector to the man who was hurting most, Cpl Wade's best friend.

That moment, and those that followed, epitomize the new approach to combat stress that the Marine Corps wants to institutionalize. Faced with a wave of mental-health problems among returning troops, the Corps is training young Marines--down to Corporals and Sergeants--to sniff out combat stress among their peers on the front lines and tackle it directly on the field of battle.

"The closer they are to their buddies, and the company they trained and deployed with, the better chance you have of returning them to combat," says Colonel David Furness, commander of 1st Marine Regiment."

Reference:

Phillips, Michael M. "Rx for Combat Stress: Comradeship." *The Wall Street Journal*, 02 Apr. 2011.

[<http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052748703362904576219184030233852>]

(4) Former Marine Addresses Combat Stress

During a deployment, service members often endure a daunting spectrum of struggles and challenges that many have never faced. These warriors return home with injuries, baring battle scars with a story not always told. There are also some who functional on the outside, but who battle invisible wounds that can't be fixed by a doctor with a first aid kit. To some, losing a limb can be less painful than losing a friend.

Combat stress is a part of what service members continually face. Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune is becoming more aware of its cancerous effects on its warriors. The Protestant Chapel hopes to combat this issue by inviting former Marine, Phil Downer, the president of Discipleship Network of America, to speak at the Military Family Conference at the Paradise Point Officers' Club aboard the base, March 11.

"We'd like to give them the tools needed to find healing from within," said Bob Uber, the director of field ministry with DNA, who will also speak at the conference.

Downer said his mission is to encourage and help service members and their families operate as a team and understand the methods of dealing with conflicts.

Downer did not always provide the dosage of helpful lessons and tips. The teacher was once a student himself. After returning from the Vietnam War, Downer struggled with combat stress.

"(After the Vietnam War), I came home with operational stress (and), post-traumatic stress disorder," said Downer. "I thought I left the war behind when I came home, and I married the girl of my dreams and found that I brought the war home. That war within - the pain, the guilt, the hurt and the stories of lost friends - impacted every day of my life in a negative way. It hurt my marriage and my performance at work, so I carried it with me."

Downer found that speaking to someone about what he felt was the first step toward overcoming the stress. After overcoming his challenges, he went on to publish the book "From Hell to Eternity," which recounts his experiences and how it impacted his family and relations. He will also be sharing the stories told in the book at the conference.

"It's a book of hope, because it's healing," said Uber. "It's a resource that he's produced out of his own life experiences to help others, and it's a recommended resource from a Marine to a Marine."

Downer has been speaking to service members across the nation for more than 10 years. Families will have the opportunity to share their experiences or ask questions during the conference, but will not be pressured to speak. The goal of the conference is to inform families and units about ways to overcome combat stress.

"I talk about core values, the values of the military, the great heritage of service members and also the subjects of marriage, children, being a father, mother, husband or wife," said Downer. "It is very gratifying to be able to talk about this topic with the Marines, because our goal is to heal our service members."

Uber added, America has done well to honor its military, but what they are committed to is moving from honoring to healing them.

Reference:

Phongsisattanak, PFC Nik S. "Former Marine Provides Helpful Words, Addresses Combat Stress." *Marines.mil*, 23 Feb. 2012.
[<http://www.lejeune.marines.mil/News/tabid/1099/Article/512897/former-marine-provides-helpful-words-addresses-combat-stress.aspx>]

(5) Staff Sergeant Workman's Story

One of the most highly decorated Marines during the war in Iraq had to drink to fall asleep. He once tried to kill himself. This was after Jeremiah Workman's tour in Fallujah, where on December 23, 2004 he demonstrated such extraordinary heroism that he was awarded the Navy Cross, an award for valor second only to the Medal of Honor.

He led three assaults into a house where insurgents had trapped other Marines. Injured by grenade shrapnel, he helped save many of those Marines and kill 24 insurgents. Retired Staff Sargent (SSgt) Workman was from Richwood, Ohio, and was a high school football player. He tells these biographical details to current and retired Marines, including the ones he spoke with in Ohio. "I wasn't broken before I went in," he tells them. "I'm you."

He still goes to counseling, he says, and he still takes medicine for post-traumatic stress disorder. If a football player, not to mention a Navy Cross Recipient, admits that he needed help after a deployment, maybe other Marines will admit it too. "The wheels can still fall off the bus, no matter who you are," Workman said. Workman is a deputy program manager for the Marine Corps Wounded Warrior Regiment, which connects wounded, ill and injured Marine veterans with the resources they need.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE

Keep in mind that although they are separate issues in many cases there is a direct link between sexual assault, substance abuse, combat stress, suicide and domestic violence.

b. **Potential Discussion Questions**

INSTRUCTOR NOTE

The provided questions can be altered, but all questions should be carefully formulated to focus the discussion toward your desired learning outcome. It is the facilitator's responsibility to provoke thought, foster discussion and involvement on the part of the participants, manage the group, and keep discussion flowing. Choose several questions from the following list, which will help accomplish your learning outcome in the specified time.

The discussion format is intended to have the majority of the input come from the participants. Ensure you conduct comprehensive research on this topic using the provided references. Having a comprehensive understanding of the subject material is essential in order to clarify portions of the discussion that may be confusing, and to ensure only accurate information is disseminated during this exchange. This is not intended to be a lecture, so keep your comments direct and focused to keep the group discussion moving.

Do not insert too many of your own convictions, as it may cause the group to skew their input just to mirror your positions, and may not be a true representation of the participants' thoughts. Ensure you have writing material throughout the discussion so you can capture key elements of the discussion, which arise in each segment, in order to create follow-on questions and to summarize each key point.

As the facilitator, you may use a question to initiate a topic for discussion. After the discussion develops, follow-up questions can be used to guide the discussion. Follow-up questions may help a participant to explain something more thoroughly, or enable you to bring the discussion back to a point from which it has strayed.

Questions are so much a part of teaching, they are often taken for granted. Effective use of questions may result in more student learning than through use of any other instructional technique. In general, you should ask open-ended questions, which are thought-provoking and require more mental activity than simply remembering facts. Questions should require students to grasp concepts, explain similarities and differences, and infer cause-and-effect relationships.

Plan at least one lead-off question for each of your desired learning outcomes. While preparing questions, remember the purpose is to stimulate discussion, not merely to get answers. Avoid questions, which require only short categorical answers, such as "yes" or "no." Lead-off questions should usually begin with "how" or "why."

- (1) What are specific sources of fear in combat?
- (2) What effect does the stress of fear have?
- (3) What psychological reactions might someone under combat stress show?
- (4) Why is it important to know and be able to recognize the physical and psychological reactions to combat stress?
- (5) What is it that enables Marines to overcome fear and combat stress?
- (6) What actions can you, as a leader or fellow Marine, take to help other Marines overcome fear?
- (7) What are the five Combat and Operational Stress Control core leader Functions?

INSTRUCTOR NOTE

From Marine Corps Order 5351.1: COMBAT AND OPERATIONAL STRESS CONTROL PROGRAM, the five Combat and Operational Stress Control core leader functions are Strengthen, Mitigate, Identify, Treat, and Reintegrate.

- (8) What is meant by the term "Fog of War"? How is it significant to the individual Marine? How is it significant to leaders of Marines?
- (9) What does "combat fatigue" mean? How does it affect leadership in combat?
- (10) What are some key indicators of combat fatigue?
- (11) What may happen to Marines if combat fatigue is ignored? What can be done to help counter combat fatigue?
- (12) What is the significance of endurance to the individual Marine in countering combat stress?
- (13) What effect do casualties have on other Marines? How should Marines respond to casualties? How might a unit and individual Marines be affected if casualties are not expeditiously evacuated?
- (14) What are some psychological challenges in combat that leaders must be aware of?
- (15) What impact does combat stress have on the effectiveness of a unit?

(16) How do you, as a leader, maintain morale within your unit?

(17) What factors do you think are particularly significant to keeping Marines motivated in difficult situations?

(18) What is discipline? Are there different types of discipline? How is discipline demonstrated?

(19) What are the specific actions that you, as a leader, can take to improve unit discipline?

(20) Does Esprit de Corps have an impact on combat stress? What are some indicators of Esprit de Corps in a unit that embodies it?

(21) What are some important considerations to remember when integrating new Marines into a unit?

(22) What resources are available to Marines who may be struggling with combat stress?

(23) Whether you are dealing with combat stress issues yourself or assisting a fellow Marine who is, do you think any of the Marine Corps Leadership Traits or Principles apply? If so, which ones do you think are the most important to this subject and why?

(24) How did the Marine from the attention gainer demonstrate effectively coping with combat stress?

5. **REFLECTION**

INSTRUCTOR NOTE

Incorporate reflection questions here, in order to prompt the participants to re-evaluate the issues discussed and topics covered. The more mentally involved each participant is in the active review of the topic, the greater their retention of the subject will be.

Reflection questions should be meaningful in relation to the experiences of the students and should bridge the gap between their discussion involvement and the abstract issues discussed in class. Questions posed during reflection are for personal consideration, as the participants may be uncomfortable openly sharing responses.

Reflection questions can be broken down into the following categories:

1. What? Ask the participants to re-examine in detail the content of the discussion.

2. So, what? What difference did the event make to their perceptions of the issue?

3. Now what? How will the participants think or act in the future as a result of this new perspective?

6. SUMMARY

INSTRUCTOR NOTE

Provide overview of main ideas covered. No questions should be asked here. Provide closure that is relevant to MOS, the Marine Corps, or applicable to the participants in some other manner.

INSTRUCTOR REFERENCE MATERIAL

From Marine Corps Reference Publication (MCRP) 6-11C, *Combat Stress*:

Combat Stress: is the mental, emotional or physical tension, strain, or distress resulting from exposure to combat and combat-related conditions.

Combat Stress Reactions: the result of exposure to the same conditions during military actions that cause physical injury and disease in battle or its immediate aftermath, and many combat stress reactions occur in persons who are also wounded or ill with disease.

From Marine Corps Order 5351.1: COMBAT AND OPERATIONAL STRESS CONTROL PROGRAM, the five Combat and Operational Stress Control core leader functions are Strengthen, Mitigate, Identify, Treat, and Reintegrate.

Suggested Resources:

- Marine Corps Warfighting Publication 6-11, *Leading Marines*
- Marine Corps Reference Publication 6-11D, *Sustaining the Transformation: Discussion Leader's Guide*
- Marine Corps Order 5351.1, Combat and Operational Stress Control Program
[<http://www.marines.mil/Portals/59/Publications/MCO%205351.1.pdf>]
- MCRP 6-11C: *Combat Stress*
- Leaders Resource Guide [<http://bhin.usmc-mccs.org/uploads/Leaders%20Resource%20Guide1.pdf>]
- Combating Stress Pocket Guide [<http://bhin.usmc-mccs.org/uploads/PocketGuide.pdf>]
- Marine Corps Community Services: Combat Operational Stress website
[<http://www.mccscf.com/combat-operational-stress>]
- Naval Center Combat & Operational Stress Control website
[<http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcsd/nccosc/serviceMembersV2/ptsdTBI/Depression/Pages/default.aspx>]
- Department of Defense (DoD) Instruction 6490.05: Maintenance of Psychological Health in Military Operations
[<http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/corres/pdf/649005p.pdf>]
- DoD Instruction 6490.03: Deployment Health
[<http://fhp.osd.mil/pdhrainfo/media/DoD11AUG06.pdf>]
- DoD Stress Awareness Website
[<http://www.defense.gov/specials/stressawareness03/combat.html>]