

**Pre-Deployment Resilience Training for Spouses/Couples**  
**081-RTO02003 / Version 1**  
**15 July 2011**

**SECTION I. ADMINISTRATIVE DATA**

**All Courses Including This Lesson**

| <u>Course Number</u> | <u>Version</u> | <u>Course Title</u> |
|----------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| None                 |                |                     |

**Task(s) Taught(\*) or Supported**

| <u>Task Number</u> | <u>Task Title</u> |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| None               |                   |

**Reinforced Task(s)**

| <u>Task Number</u> | <u>Task Title</u> |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| None               |                   |

**Administrative/Academic Hours**

The administrative/academic hours required to teach this lesson are as follows:

| <u>Academic</u> | <u>Resident Hours / Methods</u> |                       |
|-----------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Yes             | 1 hr 40 mins                    | Conference/Discussion |
| Yes             | 0 hrs 0 mins                    | Test Review           |
| Yes             | 0 hrs 0 mins                    | Test                  |
| <hr/>           |                                 |                       |
| Total Hours:    | 2 hrs 0 mins                    |                       |

**Test Lesson Number**

| <u>Hours</u> | <u>Lesson Number</u> |
|--------------|----------------------|
| None         |                      |

**Prerequisite Lesson(s)**

| <u>Lesson Number</u> | <u>Lesson Title</u> |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| None                 |                     |

**Clearance Access**

Security Level: Unclassified  
 Requirements: There are no clearance or access requirements for the lesson.

**Foreign Disclosure Restrictions**

FD5. This product/publication has been reviewed by the training/educational developers in coordination with the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research (WRAIR) FD authority. This product is releasable to students from all requesting foreign countries without restrictions.

**References**

| <u>Number</u>                                    | <u>Title</u>   | <u>Date</u> | <u>Additional Information</u> |
|--|--|-------------|-------------------------------|
| 0-7679-1191-1                                    | The Resilience Factor, Karen Reivich, Ph.D and Andrew Shattè, Ph.D   | 14 Oct 2003 |                               |
| Adler, A.B., Bliese, P.B., & Castro, C.A. (Eds.) | Deployment Psychology: The Impact of Combat on Mental Health. American Psychological Association: Washington D.C.                    | 2011        |                               |
| Castro, C.A., Adler, A.B., & Britt, T.W. (Eds.)  | Military Life: The Psychology of Serving in Peace and Combat, Vol. 3: Military Family. Praeger Security International: Westport, CT. | 2006        |                               |
| ISBN: 0-609-80579-7                              | Gottman, J.M. & Silver, N. The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work   | 1999        |                               |

**Student Study Assignments**

Before class: none.

During class: participate in group discussions.

After class: fill out critique sheets (*where applicable*).

**Instructor Requirements**

One Army Community Service (ACS) Master Resilience Trainer (MRT) Course qualified instructor per specified group.

**Additional Support Personnel Requirements**

| <u>Name</u> | <u>Stu Ratio</u> | <u>Qty</u> | <u>Man Hours</u> |
|-------------|------------------|------------|------------------|
| None        |                  |            |                  |

**Equipment Required**

| <u>Id Name</u>                                      | <u>Stu Ratio</u> | <u>Instr Ratio</u> | <u>Spt</u> | <u>Qty</u> | <u>Exp</u> |
|---|------------------|--------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| 6515-01-1706<br>COMPUTER SYSTEM                     | 0:0              | 0:0                | No         | 1          | No         |
| 6730-00-224-9819<br>SCREEN, PROJECTION              | 0:0              | 0:0                | No         | 1          | No         |
| 6730-01-471-2476<br>PROJECTOR, MULTIMEDIA           | 0:0              | 0:0                | Yes        | 1          | No         |
| 7510-01-424-4867<br>EASEL, (STAND ALONE) WITH PAPER | 0:0              | 0:0                | No         | 1          | No         |

(Note: Asterisk before Id indicates a TADSS.)

**Materials Required****Instructor Materials:**

081-RTO02003/1 Lesson Plan (LP); 081-RTO02003/1 PowerPoint Presentation;

Video Clips: "Oreo Webcam Commercial"

(<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YI95nIN3Jx8>) (32 sec); "We're Sinking"

(<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=quELpieYIFU>) (40 sec).

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**Student Materials:**  
081-RTO02003/1 Student Handout (SH).

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**Classroom,  
Training Area,  
and Range  
Requirements**

17120  
ORGANIZATIONAL CLASSROOM

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**Ammunition  
Requirements**

| <u>DODIC- Name</u> | <u>Exp</u> | <u>Stu<br/>Ratio</u> | <u>Instr<br/>Ratio</u> | <u>Spt<br/>Qty</u> |
|--------------------|------------|----------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| None               |            |                      |                        |                    |

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**Instructional  
Guidance**

**NOTE:** Before presenting this lesson, instructors must thoroughly prepare by studying this lesson and identified reference material.

Before Class:

Review and become familiar with *The Resilience Factor, Karen Reivich, Ph.D and Andrew Shattè, Ph.D, 14 October 2003* and *The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work, J.M. Gottman and N. Silver, 1999.*

Read and study this Lesson Plan (LP) and be prepared to conduct this training. This training is designed to be presented as a single, two-hour event or as two, one-hour events.

The resilience training material is intended to be presented using a facilitated discussion methodology thereby creating a student-centered learning experience. The linked PowerPoint slides are intended to structure the discussion and reinforce key points. An easel with butcher block paper for listing participant (student) responses has been listed in Section I, Equipment Required for Instruction; however, a blackboard/ whiteboard or equivalent may be substituted.

Instructor must ensure pre-classroom checks have been completed (audiovisual equipment, microphone/PA functioning, video sound check). Ensure sufficient Student Handouts are available for each participant.

During Class:

Conduct the training in accordance with this LP.

This LP notes a possible ten-minute break during Enabling Learning Objective (ELO) B, Learning Step/Activity 2 (after Slide 33) for use when this training is conducted as a single, two-hour event.

After Class:

Collect all recoverable materials and issue/collect completed critique sheets (*where applicable*).

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**Proponent  
Lesson Plan  
Approvals**

| <u>Name</u>         | <u>Rank</u> | <u>Position</u>     | <u>Date</u> |
|---------------------|-------------|---------------------|-------------|
| Michael E. Rinehart | DJ-03       | Training Specialist | 15 Jul 2011 |

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**SECTION II. INTRODUCTION**

Method of Instruction: Conference/Discussion  
 Instr Type(I:S Ratio): MRT Qualified Instructor (Military or Civilian) (1:30)  
 Time of Instruction: 5 mins  
 Instructional Strategy: Small Group Instruction

**Motivator**

**Show Slide 1 (Pre-Deployment Resilience Training for Spouses/Couples).**

This resilience training module was developed by the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research (WRAIR) and is based on concepts developed by the Gottman Institute and the Master Resilience Trainer (MRT) curriculum developed by the University of Pennsylvania.

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Availability of Pre-Deployment Resilience Training for Spouses/Couples is mandated as part of the Army Deployment Cycle Support (DCS) Checklist (DA Form 7631, March 2007) and Army Directive 2007-02. This and other DCS Resilience Training modules can be found at [www.resilience.army.mil](http://www.resilience.army.mil).

As an ACS MRT, you can prevent this important training from becoming just another “check-the-block” event in the Soldier and Family member’s eyes. The outline contained in this LP and the instructor notes included with the PowerPoint presentation should be considered guidelines; however, take the opportunity to make this training your own and address the key points in the most effective way that is applicable to the participants receiving the training.

Pre-Deployment Resilience Training for Spouses/Couples is part of a series of Operational (*Deployment-Cycle*) resilience training modules designed to prepare Soldiers, leaders and Family members for the unique challenges and demands of Army life and combat and operational deployments.

**Terminal Learning Objective**

**NOTE:** Inform the students of the following Terminal Learning Objective requirements.

At the completion of this lesson, you [the student] will:

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| <b>Action:</b>     | Describe the possible impact deployments and separation can have on Soldiers and Family members and apply skills and techniques to mitigate problems in communication and build relationship resilience   |
| <b>Conditions:</b> | In a classroom environment, given a group of military Spouses and/or military Spouses and Soldiers (Couples) preparing for a deployment in support of combat or other military operations   |
| <b>Standards:</b>  | Described the deployment and separation impact on Soldiers and Family members and applied skills and techniques to mitigate communication problems and build relationship resilience. This consisted of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying the techniques, challenges and pitfalls associated with Families preparing for a deployment and maintaining communication before and during deployments</li> <li>• Identifying techniques of improving relationship resilience by building and maintaining a “Sound Marital House”</li> </ul> |

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**Safety Requirements** Conduct a safety brief prior to training as required IAW organization and local installation policies. Address all safety issues that are unique to the environment in which the training will be conducted (e.g., fire evacuation plan, heat/cold weather concerns, emergency situations, etc.).

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**Risk Assessment Level** Low - Ensure, prior to the commencement of training, Risk Assessments have been completed IAW with local policies and FM 100-14, have been approved and are available on-site.

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**Environmental Considerations** **NOTE:** It is the responsibility of all Soldiers and DA Civilians to protect the environment from damage.

Based on its commitment to environmental protection, all instruction will be conducted in ways that minimize environmental impacts. Instructors will comply with all environmental laws and regulations. This includes all federal, state, local, and Host Nation laws, some of which are outlined in TC 3-34.489, *The Soldier and the Environment*, 26 Oct 2001, App. B and the environmental risk assessment checklist found in TC 3-24.489, App. A.

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**Evaluation** Pre-Deployment Resilience Training for Spouses/Couples invites discussion and personal insights from all participants receiving this training. This resilience training module encompasses instructor facilitated discussions and activities designed to stimulate analysis and identify any areas that may require extra emphasis or review.

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**Instructional Lead-In** **INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** As a reminder, prior to the commencement of training, have all participants ensure they turn off cell phones, Black Berrys and any other electronic device(s) that may interfere with training.

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Greet the participants: *Good morning/afternoon, this resilience training module is designed to be interactive. We encourage you to participate in the activities and discussions and to ask questions in order to make this training more meaningful and valuable for everyone. Please turn off any electronic devices (cell phones, Black Berrys, etc.) and give me your attention.*

Today we're going to focus on the deployment you are facing as a Family. It's been said that "*When a Soldier joins the Army, so does his/her Family.*" It is also true that "*When a Soldier goes through a deployment, so does his/her Family.*" We're going to talk about the challenges and the benefits of Army life. We'll discuss the importance of knowing what to expect when you may be faced with being both Mom and Dad while your Soldier is deployed. We'll talk about the techniques and pitfalls of maintaining a solid Family connection both before the deployment and when the Soldier is downrange. We'll talk about the way you communicate with one another as a Couple and even how you disagree as a Couple. You'll see that not all disagreements are bad or counterproductive; in fact, it could be healthy if you'll use a technique called "Gentle Starts" instead of "Harsh Starts". We'll discuss this technique and practice it today.

I want all of you who have experienced a deployment before to share some of your experiences with the other participants attending today. It's important to learn from one another so you can benefit from someone else's experiences without having to make your own mistakes.

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**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Occasionally participants may express the sentiment that, since they've already attended Pre-Deployment Resilience Training for Spouses/Couples prior to a previous deployment, there's nothing to be gained from them attending this training again. In such cases it may be helpful to suggest to the Spouse/Couple that some circumstances may be different regarding their pending deployment, such as: the environment, location and/or mission. The circumstances of their personal life may have also changed since the previous deployment. For example, they may have PCSd (*Permanent Change of Station*) since they last received this resilience training module. They may be a new parent or their children are in a different stage of development. It may also be a benefit to suggest to them that sharing their previous deployment experience with other Spouses/Couples may be valuable to the group.

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**SECTION III. PRESENTATION**

**NOTE:** Inform the students of the Enabling Learning Objective requirements.

**A. ENABLING LEARNING OBJECTIVE**

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| <b>ACTION:</b>     | Identify the techniques, challenges and pitfalls of Families preparing for a deployment and maintaining communication before and during deployments   |
| <b>CONDITIONS:</b> | In a classroom environment, given a group of military Spouses and/or military Spouses and Soldiers (Couples) preparing for a deployment in support of combat or other military operations   |
| <b>STANDARDS:</b>  | Identified the techniques, challenges and pitfalls associated with Families preparing for a deployment and maintaining communication before and during deployments. This consisted of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Recognizing both the challenges and benefits associated with military life</li><li>• Acknowledging the advantages of preparing emotionally and logistically for deployments</li><li>• Describing techniques of maintaining communication and some of the pitfalls and emotional distancing that is common when a deployment is pending</li></ul> |

1. ELO A – LSA 1. Learning Step / Activity 1. Military Life: Hardships and Benefits

Method of Instruction: Conference/Discussion  
Instr Type (I;S Ratio): MRT Qualified Instructor (Military or Civilian)(1:30)  
Time of Instruction: 0 hrs 5 mins  
Instructional Strategy: Small Group Instruction  
Media Type: PowerPoint Presentation  
Security Classification: Unclassified

**Show Slide 2 (Challenges of Military Life).**

a. As you know, life in the military can be difficult at times.

***What are some of the challenges of military life?***

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Before advancing the slide text, encourage group discussion by enlisting the aid of (veteran) Spouses/Couples who have been in the Army for several years. Then move to other Spouses/Couples who may be relatively new to the Army and ask if they've already been faced with some of the challenges mentioned.

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Left-click mouse to advance text.

Here's a list of a few of the challenges military Families face:

- (1) Frequent military deployments. The pace of deployments can create a stressful climate where it seems that problems (freezing pipes, childcare issues, etc.) wait until your primary source of support is gone.

- (2) Frequent training exercises. Some of these exercises will take place locally, at the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC), the National Training Center (NTC), etc.
- (3) Long duty days. This is particularly true when having to meet the many training requirements associated with a pending deployment.
- (4) Weekend duty. Duty such as Staff Duty or Charge of Quarters (CQ) during what was normally considered “Family” time.
- (5) Frequent military moves (PCS). PCS moves occur every few years or so. This may also mean Spouses and other Family members having to start new jobs at lower rungs.
- (6) Fear of death and/or serious injury. The Army always stresses safety, but Army life can be inherently dangerous.
- (7) Distance from extended Family. Perhaps for the very first time you might not have your extended Family as a nearby resource for support.
- (8) Family separations. A situation where many military Spouses may be called upon to be both Mom and Dad and become single parents as they adopt both roles.

***Are there any experiences you can think of that are not listed on this slide?***

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Potential answers might include: the emotional “ups and downs” of getting ready for deployment, arguing or fighting about the merits of Army life, loneliness and missing each other, not knowing details about the household that the Soldier is normally responsible for, Army life issues such as communication concerns while Soldier is deployed, psychological problems, financial issues – especially when the Soldier is deployed.

**Show Slide 3 (Benefits of Military Life).**

- b. Soldiers and Families join and remain in the Army for many different reasons. Although Army life can be demanding, there are also benefits of military life.

***What are some benefits of military life you can think of?***

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Before advancing the slide text, again encourage group discussion by enlisting the aid of (veteran) Spouses/Couples who have been in the Army for several years, moving to Spouses/Couples who are relatively new to the Army.

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Left-click mouse to advance text.

- (1) Financial stability. Retirement benefits. Few careers allow you to retire and receive half-salary (base pay) at “twenty years and a wake-up.”
- (2) Health care. Available 24 hours a day for no cost.
- (3) Commissary and PX privileges. Particularly when there’s a large disparity in the cost of living (groceries, gas, etc.) on-post versus off-post.

- (4) Community and a sense of belonging. Military Spouses tend to be very active members within their communities and schools which, in turn, will often provide increased support during deployments.
- (5) Education and job training. Access to more colleges and universities through the post, along with scholarship availability and tuition assistance.
- (6) Overseas assignments, new experiences. Opportunities to experience living and working in a foreign land.
- (7) Opportunity to serve. There's often an increased Esprit de Corps felt by all Family members. Few who have not served their nation will ever really understand the depth of these feelings.

***Are there any benefits you can think of that are not listed on this slide?***

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Potential answers might include: housing allowance, tax breaks, public recognition, recreational opportunities, etc. Offer that military life also has the benefit of promoting resilience in the Family.

CHECK ON LEARNING: Conduct a check on learning and summarize the learning activity.

2. ELO A – LSA 2. Learning Step / Activity 2. Preparing for a Deployment

Method of Instruction: Conference/Discussion  
 Instr Type (I;S Ratio): MRT Qualified Instructor (Military or Civilian)(1:30)  
 Time of Instruction: 0 hrs 10 mins  
 Instructional Strategy: Small Group Instruction  
 Media Type: PowerPoint Presentation  
 Security Classification: Unclassified

**Show Slide 4 (Preparing for a Deployment).**

- a. Deployments do not only affect the Soldier who will be moving downrange – deployments are experienced by all Family members. Being a resilient Army Family means knowing how to prepare for and get through a deployment successfully.

An important part of knowing how to prepare for a deployment is knowing what to expect. Some Spouses and/or Family members of deploying Soldiers say that no one talked to them ahead of time about what it was like to have the Soldier deploy. Spouses and Family members who had someone who had already been through a deployment talk to them about the deployment, say that knowing ahead of time helped them to prepare both emotionally and logistically.

Soldiers who deploy for the first time may also not know what to expect or what to tell their Spouse or Family. This training can help you and your Family prepare for the upcoming deployment.

**Show Slide 5 (Preparing for a Deployment).**

***What do you think the deployment will be like for your Family?***

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Potential answers may include things such as: the emotional “ups and downs” of getting ready for deployment, loneliness, missing each other, being a single parent when the Soldier is deployed, not knowing details about household responsibilities that the Soldier is normally in charge of, communication concerns while the Soldier is deployed, fear of injury, death, psychological problems, finances, missing important occasions, gossip, navigating the Army system, lack of understanding from non-military Families and friends, etc.

***How have experienced Families dealt with these issues on previous deployments?***

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Potential answers may include, “*We don’t talk about the possibility of our Soldier getting injured or killed.*” or “*We sat down as a Family and discussed all of the issues - both good and bad, as they related to deployment. It gave us a sense of peace and control.*”

In the following slides, we’re going to go through the building blocks of resilience and explore some tools that can help your Family.

**Show Slide 6 (Practice Practical Optimism).**

- b. Take a look at the chart on this slide (Slide 6). This chart shows made-up data. But it demonstrates that there can be several ups and downs for each Family member. The timing of and reasons for the ups and downs may be different for each Family member (including the Family pet). Talking about these ups and downs and anticipating them together, can help you support one another.

Keep things in perspective and learn to go easy on yourself. Remember, if you’re the Spouse at home, you may be doing the job of both Mom and Dad, the plumber, lawn care specialist, head chef, etc. If you’re the Soldier deploying, you may be facing a challenging environment, encountering difficult combat-related demands, missing Family events, missing home, etc.

Bottom line – don’t judge yourself (or the dog!) too harshly; every military Family goes through a deployment in their own way and each one of them will experience some ups and downs.

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** It may become necessary to point out that referencing the Family dog is meant to be humorous.

**Show Slide 7 (Multiple Deployments).**

Every deployment is different. For example, the location of the deployment may change, the mission may change, jobs change, Families may add new members, support systems may change, and kids change schools.

***How were your deployment experiences different?***

***What did you do to adapt to the change?***

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Ask Spouses/Couples who have deployed multiple times before the above questions; wait for a diversity of responses. Potential answers may include having the Soldier deployed while your child was a toddler vs. adolescent vs. a teenager, different living environment, having Family in close proximity to the duty station, etc.

Adapting to change is part of being a resilient Army Family.

CHECK ON LEARNING: Conduct a check on learning and summarize the learning activity.

3. ELO A – LSA 3. Learning Step / Activity 3. Family Communication

Method of Instruction: Conference/Discussion  
Instr Type (I;S Ratio): MRT Qualified Instructor (Military or Civilian)(1:30)  
Time of Instruction: 0 hrs 15 mins  
Instructional Strategy: Small Group Instruction  
Media Type: PowerPoint Presentation  
Security Classification: Unclassified

**Show Slide 8 (The “Big Chill”).**

- a. It’s common for Army Families to begin to put some “*emotional distance*” between one another as it gets closer to leaving for the deployment. The training schedule may be ramped up, leaving less time for the Soldier to be home. Conversations may be short, emotional and at times strained. This has come to be known as the “*Big Chill*.”

The Big Chill may even take the form of having a large fight about something small or getting upset about something small.

***Why is the Big Chill so common?***

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Ask “Veteran Families” for their experiences with the Big Chill and what they did that helped counter this problem. This will set the stage to “normalize” feelings and thoughts that new Army Spouses/Couples may be experiencing.

Some may think emotional distancing makes the separation easier - the paradox is that the Big Chill doesn’t really make separating any easier at all.

Being able to recognize and understand the reasons behind the Big Chill may help Families avoid getting caught up in the conflict too much. Try talking about it and even joking about it, if you can. Set yourself up for success by mastering communication challenges before the deployment. This will give you an advantage for managing common communication challenges during the deployment. Improving communication while you are separated is challenging. Once deployed you will each have increased demands on your time and energy, which can make it more difficult to have successful communication. Successfully working through conflict before you deploy can help you have the tools and the confidence to meet the challenges that may come up during a deployment.

**Show Slide 9 (Deployment Communication).**

- b. Let’s talk a bit about ways we can maintain communication during deployments.

***How can you communicate and maintain intimacy in your relationship during the deployment?***

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Ask both Spouses/Couples who have deployed multiple times and Spouses/Couples who are facing their first deployment the above question; wait for a diversity of responses. You should try to avoid any inappropriate discussions that tend to key-in exclusively on the “intimacy” aspect.

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Left-click mouse to advance text.

You can begin now, before the deployment, by engaging in the daily practice of encouraging and complimenting each other. When you compliment or encourage your Spouse, be sure to use “I” statements whenever possible. Examples of compliments using “I” statements include: “*I really like what you did with the garden; it makes the house look really nice; I really like when you make me coffee in the morning.*”

***What impact does using “I” statements have on the way the compliments sound?***

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Offer the response, that “I” statements tend to personalize the compliment.

Talk about each other as a Couple; reinforce your sense of being a Couple/Family. Getting in the habit of encouraging and complimenting each other now, before the deployment begins, will make encouraging each other easier when you are limited to communicating over the phone, in letters or e-mails. Speaking of phones, they may or may not be available to the Soldier on a routine basis. It will depend on the unit location. When you call, try not to make every call about taking care of Family business. Maintain your sense of “We-ness” as a Couple. Leave plenty of time to talk about each other.

***In addition to calling or if you can’t call, what else can you do to build and maintain your connections?***

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Offer examples such as communicating by using letters (snail-mail), e-mails, etc.

Many Couples find writing love letters is a great way to keep or rekindle the romance in their relationship and strengthen the bond they have with each other.

***If it’s a special occasion like a birthday or anniversary, what can you do?***

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Offer examples such as finding a card that says something special. It’s also nice to communicate by sending special gifts, even small items.

You can send gifts for a special occasion or as a surprise way of saying “I love you and miss you.” Sending cards and/or gifts may take some pre-deployment planning.

**Show Slide 10 (Deployment Communication).**

- c. As mentioned on the previous slide, there are many ways to communicate during a deployment. Pick the one(s) that work best for you. Keep in mind that coordinating a phone call may be more involved than it might seem because phones may not be available, having to deal with time zone differences and Family and Soldier schedules. You might find you need to be creative (and patient) to make it all work.

Don’t forget to include the kids (if you have them) in your communication planning. Find a way to keep the deployed parent up to date on important events. You can send photocopies of a report card, a photo of the first missing tooth (you could even send the tooth once the Tooth Fairy pays up).

***What have you done that worked on previous deployments?***

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Spend a few minutes having (veteran) Spouses/Couples share examples. Offer examples such as putting a special occasion (birthday, anniversary, etc.) photograph book together, creating a

Family photo journal, making a paper cut-out of a Family member, making a custom-made singing card with the kids singing happy birthday, etc.

Here's one example of maintaining communication...

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Left-click on the "Oreo Cookies" picture to initiate the 32 second Video Clip: "Oreo Webcam Commercial" (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yI95nIN3Jx8>).

### **Show Slide 11 (Deployment Communication).**

E-mail has changed the way Families communicate during a combat or operational deployment. What used to take days or even weeks to reach the Soldier can now be sent and received in the blink of an eye. It means Families can also share in near "real time" special events like birthday parties, children's first lost tooth, etc. Unfortunately, it can also mean a chance to mis-communicate and misunderstand one another.

Mis-communication can occur in other situations as well...

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Left-click on the "Soldier sitting on bunk" picture to initiate the 40 second Video Clip: "We're Sinking" (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qjELpieyIFU>).

Even though the video clip is not about e-mail, it demonstrates with humor how mis-communication can easily occur.

Even relatively minor negative comments can stick like glue. For example: any small criticism about how someone is handling a situation can have a disproportionately negative effect. But it's not just the negative comments that can hurt, even neutral comments or comments that were intended to be positive can be difficult to communicate clearly in e-mail. These kinds of comments can be open to interpretation.

We are going to do a quick activity to demonstrate how these kinds of comments can be interpreted in many different and perhaps, unintended ways.

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Introduce this group activity by asking, "*How could someone interpret the following?*" Take about 3-5 minutes for this activity. Pause for discussion after revealing each response before revealing the next one.

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Left-click mouse to advance text.

(1) "*It's great to finally hear from you.*"

***How can "It's great to finally hear from you" be interpreted?***

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Discuss options; include at least a positive option ("*I really missed you and am glad to hear from you*") and a negative option ("*You took too long to contact me; I'm irritated*").

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Left-click mouse to advance text.

(2) "*I wish you were here.*"

***How can "I wish you were here" be interpreted?***

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Discuss options; include at least a positive option ("*I like it when we are together*") and a negative option ("*You are not where you are supposed to be; you should be here with me*").

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Left-click mouse to advance text.

(3) *"We're all doing just fine."*

***How can "we're all doing just fine" be interpreted?***

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Discuss options; include at least a positive option (*"We miss you but we are adapting"*) and a negative option (*"You are not really needed"*).

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Left-click mouse to advance text.

(4) *"I've made a new friend."*

***How can "I've made a new friend" be interpreted?***

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Discuss options; include at least a positive option (*"I have a new source of support"*) and a negative option (*"I have new romantic interest since you've been gone"*).

Let's spend a few minutes discussing ways to minimize these kinds of communication problems.

**Show Slide 12 (Deployment Communication).**

So what can you do to minimize misunderstandings? First, write what you mean and be specific. Consider possible interpretations/misinterpretations of what you've written. If you mean, *"I really missed you and am glad to hear from you."* then write that rather than, *"It's great to finally hear from you."* Avoid sarcasm which can come across as hostile without the benefit of tone of voice, gesture or a loving smile.

It may also be helpful to take a breather before firing off an emotionally-charged e-mail. You probably won't be able to "un-send" an e-mail once it's sent. It may be helpful to re-read the e-mail before hitting the "send" button.

***How many of you have re-read an e-mail and realized that you needed to change what you wrote?***

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Ask students the question above; a simple show of hands should suffice at this point.

***What does it mean to give each other the benefit of the doubt in an e-mail?***

***How will you make sure you give each other the benefit of the doubt?***

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Ask students the questions above; wait for a diversity of responses. Discussion may include examples such as when in doubt, the person receiving the e-mail should ask for clarification. Don't engage in "mind reading" via e-mail.

**Show Slide 13 (Deployment Communication).**

***How much will you plan to share with each other during the deployment?***

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Offer that how much information Couples will share with each other during a deployment will vary between Couples.

As a Couple, plan in advance what you can and will discuss with each other during the deployment. Be aware that sometimes communication will not be possible for a variety of technical and operational reasons and this lack of communication doesn't necessarily mean that something bad has happened. Families should expect interruptions in communication as a normal part of the deployment.

There may be times when a Soldier might not want to share all of the details of the deployment with their Spouse. This does not mean the Soldier is rejecting their Spouse or loved ones.

***Why might a Soldier not want to tell all the details?***

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Offer that some Soldiers may wish to "protect" the Spouse from being worried, keeping the deployment separate from home life so it doesn't get "contaminated" with deployment-related memories – being concerned that the Family won't understand and not knowing how to bridge the gap – or not having the emotional energy to engage in a deep discussion. There are also operational security (OPSEC) considerations that do not allow a Soldier to talk about what's going on.

Spouses may also not want to tell the Soldier details about what's going on at home. Less information does not mean the Family is pushing the Soldier away.

***Why might a Spouse choose not to share with the Soldier?***

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Offer that some Spouses may want to help the Soldier stay mission-focused and safe. Spouses also know that Soldiers may not be able to solve homefront problems from thousands of miles away.

Being clear about how a Family communicates during deployment is a key part of building a resilient relationship.

***What do you and your Spouse expect from each other?***

***What do you and your Spouse want from each other in terms of communication?***

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Ask students the questions above; wait for a diversity of responses. Allow a few minutes for this discussion as this is typically an opportunity to reiterate several points: the need to plan in advance what should be discussed with each other during the deployment; the understanding that communication may be intermittent; and that interruptions in communication are commonplace and don't necessarily mean that something bad has happened.

**CHECK ON LEARNING:** Conduct a check on learning and summarize the learning activity.

**B. ENABLING LEARNING OBJECTIVE**

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| <b>ACTION:</b>     | Identify techniques of improving relationship resilience by building and maintaining a “Sound Marital House”  |
| <b>CONDITIONS:</b> | In a classroom environment, given a group of military Spouses and/or military Spouses and Soldiers (Couples) preparing for a deployment in support of combat or other military operations   |
| <b>STANDARDS:</b>  | Identified techniques of improving relationship resilience by building and maintaining a “Sound Marital House.” This consisted of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describing the elements of building a “Sound Marital House” by establishing and maintaining: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A Loving Friendship through Spouse Mapping, Fondness and Admiration and Connecting</li> <li>- Confronting Problems by Adapting Thinking, avoiding Thinking Traps, making Repair Attempts, using Gentle Starts, and avoiding The Four Horsemen</li> <li>- Confronting Problems by increasing the Positivity Ratio</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Describing the benefits of maintaining a social support network and techniques for successfully navigating through the Army system</li> </ul> |

1. ELO B – LSA 1. Learning Step / Activity 1. Create a Loving Friendship

Method of Instruction: Conference/Discussion  
Instr Type (I;S Ratio): MRT Qualified Instructor (Military or Civilian)(1:30)  
Time of Instruction: 0 hrs 15 mins  
Instructional Strategy: Small Group Instruction  
Media Type: PowerPoint Presentation  
Security Classification: Unclassified

**Show Slide 14 (Relationship Resilience).**

- a. As we discussed previously, you can improve your relationship resilience by preparing for the ups and downs and by increasing your daily dose of compliments and encouragement for one another and by working on communication.

The next step for improving relationship resilience is strengthening or building your “Sound Marital House.” Building a Sound Marital House may require changing or improving several areas of the relationship, such as: how you think about your Spouse, how you feel about your Spouse, how you connect with your Spouse, and how you engage in conflict with your Spouse.

**Show Slide 15 (Sound Marital House: Loving Friendship).**

There are several key structural elements to the Sound Marital House – creating a loving friendship that enables your relationship to thrive; learning to confront problems successfully so they do not destroy the quality of the relationship; and increasing your “Positivity Ratio” (we’ll talk more about this in a moment).

***Why is it important to work on reinforcing a Sound Marital House?***

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Reiterate that loving friendships enable relationships to thrive and learning to confront problems successfully sustains the quality of the relationship. These help create and sustain a solid “foundation” – pun intended.

Research has shown that Couples who have a loving friendship and know how to successfully confront problems tend to have strong marriages that last for years. The Sound Marital House helps Couples withstand the difficult experiences that all Couples have from time to time.

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** The “Sound Marital House” is a term coined by \*Dr. John Gottman of the University of Washington and his research about happy and successful marriages. He coined the term and its principles based on the interviews and observations of hundreds of couples.

*\*John and Julie Gottman founded the Gottman Relationship Institute in Seattle, Washington. Their research, conducted at the University of Washington, has enabled them to predict with a high degree of accuracy which couples will succeed or fail in their relationships. Some of the terms and concepts used in this training are borrowed from the Gottman Institute and blend with the terms and concepts of the MRT course.*

**Show Slide 16 (Loving Friendship).**

***How much do you know about your Spouse?***

***If I asked you, could you tell me who your Spouse’s friends are?***

***Do you know what your Spouse’s dreams and goals are?***

***What they like or don’t like?***

***What their worries or concerns are?***

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Ask students the questions above; wait for a diversity of responses. Ask, “*Have you ever participated in one of those marriage quizzes in the back of so many magazines? Questions such as the ones listed above?*” These are the kind of things Spouses know about one another that demonstrate a well-defined “Spouse Map.” Allow a few minutes for this discussion and begin revealing the examples on the slide (Slide 16).

- b. “Spouse Mapping” is thinking about your Spouse. It’s about paying attention to the details of your Spouse’s life (work, Family, self) and being familiar with his/her world.

As we go through the slide, notice how the Spouse Mapping thoughts alternate between what the wife is thinking about her husband and what the husband is thinking about his wife.

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Left-click mouse to advance text (x2).

- (1) She’s thinking he loves the kids; he’s also thinking she loves the kids...

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Left-click mouse to advance text (x2).

- (2) She’s thinking he like video games (HALO, Angry Birds); he’s thinking she likes Wii Yoga...

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Left-click mouse to advance text (x2).

- (3) She's thinking he likes to go Mountain biking; he's thinking about how she likes to go running...

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Left-click mouse to advance text (x2).

- (4) She's thinking he likes Earl Grey tea; he's thinking she likes coffee with milk...

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Left-click mouse to advance text (x2).

- (5) She's thinking about how he "goes commando"; he's thinking she's a bargain hunter...

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** "Going commando" is slang for the practice of not wearing underwear under one's clothing.

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Left-click mouse to advance text (x2).

- (6) She thinking he likes wood-working; he's thinking she also likes wood-working...

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Left-click mouse to advance text (x2).

- (7) She thinking he's not a big fan of asparagus; he knows she feels the same about peas...

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Left-click mouse to advance text (x2).

- (8) She knows he goes for Raisinettes and a movie; he knows she goes for popcorn and a movie...

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Left-click mouse to advance text (x2).

- (9) She's thinking he likes sex and spooning; he's thinking she likes sex and spooning!

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Spooning is like a "horizontal hug" where the Couples lie back to chest, fitting together like "spoons" in a drawer.

Couples who have good "Spouse Maps" know each other, know their Spouse's likes or dislikes, what their concerns are, what their dreams and aspirations are, etc. They also keep updating their Spouse Maps (Spouse Re-Mapping) with new information about their Spouse. This updating may be more challenging during a deployment, but it's just as important.

***What is the benefit of Spouse Mapping for a Couple?***

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Possible responses might include: "*It helps build resilience to weather marital storms.*" "*Couples are better prepared to cope with deployments or other stressful events in their lives.*" "*It promotes and improves the love between a Couple.*"

**Show Slide 17 (Loving Friendship).**

- c. Fondness and Admiration” is about honoring and respecting your Spouse’s contributions to the relationship. It’s about remembering what he/she contributes to the Family relationship, how he/she supports your career, etc. Fondness and Admiration help us to recall the things that attracted us to our Spouse – to remember the things that we admired about him/her that lead to committing your life to him/her.

Like Spouse Mapping, Fondness and Admiration need to be updated and refreshed by new experiences. Adding the new experiences to your old Fondness and Admiration memories serves to enrich the marital relationship.

In a moment we’ll turn to “Activity: Loving Friendship” in your student handout. This activity will provide you with an opportunity to reflect on your Fondness and Admiration for your Spouse.

**Show Slide 18 (Your Positivity Ratio).**

- d. The third piece for creating a loving friendship that we’ll examine is “Connecting.” Connecting is the action piece of creating a loving friendship. When Couples engage in “Connecting” on a daily basis, it’s money in the bank - building goodwill in the relationship that can propel the Couple past the conflicts that even happy, successful Couples can experience...*it can even build interest!* Once again, pun intended.

**Show Slide 19 (Activity: Loving Friendship).**

- e. This is an activity to help you to remember the many things you admired about your Spouse when the two of you first began dating.

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Have the participants divide into two person teams; Couples should conduct this activity together. If there is an odd number of participants, one of the teams can have three people. Have the teams work through the “Loving Friendship” activity (page 2) in their student handout. Have each team list 5 things they admired or found attractive about their Spouse when they first met/started dating. The items listed on the “started dating” vs. “current” list may change for some Couples. For example, someone might appreciate their partner’s parenting skills now but they didn’t know while dating what kind of parent their partner would become. After listing 5 things they admired while first dating, have them list 5 things they currently admire or find attractive (appreciate) about their Spouse. Each participant should take five (5) minutes to create their list. Tell the group to switch half-way through the activity. Total time for this activity should not exceed 10 minutes.

**Show Slide 20 (Activity: Loving Friendship).**

***Does anyone have a current list that differs from their dating list?***

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Take a few minutes to debrief the students by having 1-2 Couples (volunteers) share their lists with the class. You may wish to outline their responses on butcher paper, blackboard/whiteboard or equivalent. Ask the students, “*What did you find easy and what did you find difficult about this activity?*” and “*How many items on your lists did you have in common?*”

**CHECK ON LEARNING:** Conduct a check on learning and summarize the learning activity.

2. ELO B – LSA 2. Learning Step / Activity 2. Confronting Problems Successfully

Method of Instruction: Conference/Discussion  
Instr Type (I;S Ratio): MRT Qualified Instructor (Military or Civilian)(1:30)  
Time of Instruction: 0 hrs 20 mins  
Instructional Strategy: Small Group Instruction  
Media Type: PowerPoint Presentation  
Security Classification: Unclassified

**Show Slide 21 (Sound Marital House: Confronting Problems).**

- a. The first half of the Sound Marital House was about learning how to create a loving friendship. We talked about Spouse Mapping, Fondness and Admiration and Connecting. Now we are going to turn our attention to learning how to confront problems successfully.

When combined with creating a Loving Friendship, learning how to successfully confront relationship problems will help to ensure your relationship will continue to grow and overcome any obstacles life throws your way.

**Show Slide 22 (Confronting Problems).**

Everyone (and every relationship) has problems or conflicts from time to time. There are many ways to approach resolving these problems or conflicts. We're going to address three approaches for confronting problems successfully: things you can do to adapt your own thinking, repairing relationships after a conflict has happened and using "Gentle Starts" in addressing potentially difficult topics.

**Show Slide 23 (Confronting Problems).**

- b. One of the tools our Soldiers are learning about for resolving problems and increasing resilience is called the "ATC" model. If you've heard of the ATC model before you'll see that in this discussion, we're focused on how the model can be useful for Families during pre-deployment. Let's take a look at the ATC model.

**Show Slide 24 (Adapting Your Thinking).**

Using the ATC model helps to build *Self-Awareness* and provide greater control over your Emotions and Reactions. ATC stands for:

- (1) The Activating Event is the who, what, when, and where. The Activating Event is the trigger that starts the Thoughts and Consequences in motion. An Activating Event can be an adversity (such as a child getting sick during the deployment), a challenge (such as the geographical separation), or a positive event (such as a child getting an award at school for a class project).
- (2) Thoughts are what you say to yourself in the heat of the moment. Thoughts drive immediate Reactions which can be productive or counterproductive.
- (3) Consequences ER are the Emotions you *feel* in reaction to the Activating Event. Reactions are what you *do* in reaction to the Activating Event. Consequences can be either negative or positive.

Next, let's take a look at a range of different Activating Events.

### **Show Slide 25 (Activating Events).**

The Activating Events on this slide (Slide 25) can trigger a wide range of Thoughts which may have positive or negative Consequences. How people think and how they respond to these circumstances vary from individual to individual; these Thoughts and Reactions can also vary from one point in time to another point in time for the same person.

A deployment can also affect the way you think about these events. The context can affect the kinds of Thoughts these events might trigger. For example, a child's first steps might trigger one set of Thoughts if there's no deployment involved and another set of Thoughts if the Soldier is deployed when this happens.

***What kinds of thoughts might go through your mind when one of these things happens?***

***What about if it happened during a deployment?***

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Ask students the questions above; wait for a diversity of responses. Ask the students “*Why do your thoughts matter?*” Offer that Thoughts are critically important as they are likely to drive your Reactions to events (your feelings and behavior).

Don't forget – Activating Events can trigger positive or negative Thoughts and result in positive or negative Consequences. To drive this point home, let's look at an example of the ATC model for an Army Couple during the pre-deployment phase.

### **Show Slide 26 (Adapting Your Thinking).**

Here the Activating Event is the “Soldier returns from a training exercise and snaps at the Spouse.” The Spouse's Thoughts about this Activating Event will affect how the Spouse responds.

***What are Thoughts that the Spouse might have?***

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Ask students the question above; discuss possible options before proceeding.

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Left-click mouse to advance text.

In this example, the Spouse thinks the Soldier is always in a bad mood and that the Soldier's behavior is part of a pattern of being self-centered or selfish.

***What kinds of Consequences are likely to result from these Thoughts in terms of Emotions and Reactions?***

***With such Thoughts, what are the likely Emotions this Soldier will be experiencing?***

***How is the Soldier likely to react in turn?***

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Ask students the questions above; discuss possible options before proceeding.

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Left-click mouse to advance text.

The Soldier is likely to feel bitter and angry and possibly be more distant and aggressive. This will likely set this Couple up for a potential negative spiral.

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Left-click mouse to advance text.

This chain of events can wear down a Couple as such Thoughts can produce arguments and retaliation. By being aware of their Thoughts, individuals can adapt their Thoughts and change their Reactions.

Adapting Thoughts is particularly important for unhappy Couples because research shows that unhappy Couples tend to interpret negative behavior as permanent and unchanging. In contrast, generally happy Couples interpret negative behavior (like one of them snapping at the other) to be a temporary, single and isolated event.

Now we'll walk through an alternative set of Thoughts of a Spouse experiencing the same Activating Event.

**Show Slide 27 (Adapting Your Thinking).**

Here the Activating Event is the same (a Soldier snapping at his/her Spouse after returning from a field training exercise), but in this example, the Spouse of the Soldier has different Thoughts about the Soldier's behavior.

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Left-click mouse to advance text.

These alternative Thoughts could include, "*He's under a lot of stress. He's tired from the long hours. All those hours and thoughts about the upcoming deployment are causing him to be tired and in a bad mood. That's not his usual behavior. He must be under a lot of stress.*"

***What other Thoughts might this Spouse have in relation to this situation?***

***What kind of Thoughts might help put the behavior into perspective or give the Soldier the benefit of the doubt?"***

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Ask students the questions above; discuss possible options before proceeding.

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Left-click mouse to advance text.

Just as in the case of negative Thoughts, these positive Thoughts result in Consequences.

***What kinds of Emotions and Reactions might result from these positive Thoughts?***

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Ask students the question above; discuss possible options before proceeding. Discuss options related to being supportive, feeling sympathy, being patient, affectionate, understanding, etc.

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Left-click mouse to advance text (x2).

**What about if the situation were reversed and the Spouse snaps at the Soldier returning from the field?**

**What kinds of thoughts might the Soldier have?**

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Ask students the questions above; discuss possible options before proceeding.

Negative Thoughts might focus on blaming the Spouse; Thoughts such as: “*My Spouse is always like this. She’s a difficult person.*” Positive Thoughts might focus on the situation; Thoughts such as: “*My Spouse must be feeling the pressure, knowing I’m about to leave. This isn’t easy on either one of us.*” Happy Couples tend to have these kinds of Thoughts about one another.

By adjusting Thoughts, Couples can alter their interactions. Sometimes Thoughts can be influenced by rigid patterns of thinking that they learn over a period of time. We call these patterns of thinking “Thinking Traps.”

**Show Slide 28 (Thinking Traps).**

- c. Thinking Traps are patterns of thinking in which we are certain of our perception without evidence to support it. This can cause us to miss critical information about a situation or a person resulting in unwanted or unintended Consequences. By identifying the Thinking Traps Spouses/Couples tend to fall into, they can enhance their individual resilience and strengthen their relationship.

**Show Slide 29 (Thinking Traps).**

Here is a partial list of Thinking Traps. In the ATC model we learned how our Thoughts affect Consequences, our Emotions and Reactions. Thinking Traps occur in Reaction to Activating Events. By identifying our Thinking Traps and challenging them, we can change the Consequences (Emotions and Reactions).

In unit-based resilience training, Soldiers are learning about various Thinking Traps. They are learning how to adjust these patterns of thinking through the use of Critical Questions. We’re going to review three of these Thinking Traps and the kinds of Critical Questions that can be used to counter them.

**Show Slide 30 (Thinking Traps).**

- (1) When someone responds to an Activating Event by thinking, “*Nothing can be changed and I have no control over things*” - this pattern of thinking is a Thinking Trap called “*Always, Always, Always.*”

***In what ways can thinking that things can’t be changed and that you have no control become a problem?***

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Ask students the question above; discuss how helplessness and hopelessness often accompanies this Thinking Trap.

***What can you do to counter this Thinking Trap?***

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Ask students the question above; discuss countering helplessness and grabbing control by using Critical Questions. Discuss the Critical Questions, “*What can I control?*” and “*What do I have to accept?*”

In the previous example about the Soldier coming home and snapping at the Spouse, a Thought such as: “*He’s always like this*” is an example of Always, Always, Always. Another example of Always, Always, Always could be, “*I will never have enough energy to deal with the kids on my own.*”

***What can you control?***

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Ask students the question above; review this Critical Question with examples such as: asking for help from others; doing things together with other friends in the same situation so you can back each other up; changing your expectations about how you manage all the Family tasks like taking care of the kids, running the household, etc.

***What do you have to accept?***

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Ask students the question above; review this Critical Question with an example such as: possibly having to accept that there will be times during the deployment when parenting on your own will feel stressful and that it will be different than when two parents are together and available.

Recognize that there are strategies such as using perspective, humor and social support when something is beyond your control. These strategies help to counter helplessness with understanding what you can and cannot control.

**Show Slide 31 (Thinking Traps).**

- (2) When someone is certain about a situation despite having little or no evidence to support it, this pattern of thinking is a Thinking Trap called “Jumping to Conclusions.”

***In what ways can Jumping to Conclusions become a problem?***

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Ask students the question above; discuss how being confident about something without having the evidence can lead to wrong assumptions and bad decision making.

***What can you do to counter this Thinking Trap?***

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Ask students the question above; discuss slowing down by using the Critical Questions: “*What’s the evidence?*” and “*What are the facts, not just the beliefs, that may lead to the conclusion in the first place?*” Offer an example: “*Our neighbor hasn’t deployed, my husband/wife must have volunteered to get away from me.*” or “*Things will never get better for us at this rate.*” Review the Critical Questions with this example: “*What’s the evidence that the Soldier volunteered? Is there any direct evidence? Are there other possible explanations? For example, could the neighbor have a health-related or other reason (for example, the type of unit the neighbor is in) for not deploying?*”

Recognize there are strategies such as identifying assumptions, asking for more information and verifying assumptions to help counter “Jumping to Conclusions” by verifying with information.

**Show Slide 32 (Thinking Traps).**

- (3) When a Soldier or Spouse engages in assuming he/she knows what another person is thinking, or expects another person to know what they are thinking, this is a Thinking Trap called “Mind Reading.”

***In what way can assuming others know what you are thinking or assuming you know what others are thinking become a problem?***

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Ask students the question above; discuss how assuming that you know what your Spouse is thinking, or expecting your Spouse to know what you are thinking undermines resilience. Offer that we tend to save this particular Thinking Trap for those we love the most, “*If my Spouse loves me enough, they would know what I’m thinking!*”

***What can you do to counter this Thinking Trap?***

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Ask students the question above; discuss the need to make certain you understand your Spouse or others by repeating to them what you think you heard them say. One technique to make sure you are understood is to ask the person you are talking to, to repeat what they think they heard you say. Please note to be careful when doing this as you could easily sound condescending or irritated. Often times, your tone or affect may also convey a message. Discuss the Critical Questions: “*Did I express myself clearly?*” and “*Did I ask for information?*”

Recognize there are strategies such as asking for clarification, expressing your needs and concerns clearly, etc. These strategies help to counter Mind Reading by speaking up and clarifying your needs, concerns and thoughts.

***Are there times when Mind Reading might be viewed as a positive thing in a relationship?”***

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Ask students the question above; discuss how Couples who know each other well might complete a thought or sentence their partner started (it should be noted that some Couples may have other thoughts and feelings concerning this phenomena). They might also see or hear something and each have a similar response or comment.

**Show Slide 33 (Activity: Thinking Traps).**

- d. This is an activity to review the three Thinking Traps, possible Consequences of these Thinking Traps and how these Thinking Traps can be countered.

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Conduct this activity as a group; there is nothing in the student handout associated with this activity. The slide builds by revealing “Trap Examples” and the “Consequence” together, followed by the “Counter.” Total time for this activity should not exceed 5 minutes.

- (1) Let’s start with the first Trap example:

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Left-click mouse to advance text.

*“I’m never going to adjust to the deployment.”*

***Which Thinking Trap is this?***

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Ask students the question above; acknowledge the correct answer, Always, Always, Always.

The consequence is being sad, feeling anxious and acting withdrawn.

***How can this Trap be countered?***

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Ask students the question above before revealing the correct answer. Left-click mouse to advance text.

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Acknowledge the correct answer: make a plan and accept what you have to.

(2) The next Trap example is:

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Left-click mouse to advance text.

*“She didn’t bring me coffee – she doesn’t care about me.”*

***Which Thinking Trap is this?***

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Ask students the question above; acknowledge the correct answer: Jumping to Conclusions.

The consequence is being disappointment and acting distant and sulking.

***How can this Trap be countered?***

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Ask students the question above before revealing the correct answer. Left-click mouse to advance text.

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Acknowledge the correct answer: consider other reasons.

(3) The final Trap example is:

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Left-click mouse to advance text.

*“He should have known I had a bad day.”*

***Which Thinking Trap is this?***

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Ask students the question above; acknowledge the correct answer: Mind-Reading.

The consequence is being becoming irritated and acting angry.

***How can this Thinking Trap be countered?***

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Ask students the question above before revealing the correct answer. Left-click mouse to advance text.

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Acknowledge the correct answer: be clear in telling your Spouse about your day.

More than one Thinking Trap may be working in any Couples’ interaction – the key is to recognize whether changing the way you are thinking might support you in managing conflict in your relationship more successfully.

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** If this training module is to be presented in two separate one-hour blocks, this is a good time to break in order to allow participants to stretch and to visit the rest room.

**Show Slide 34 (Confronting Problems).**

- e. As I mentioned before, all Couples have problems or conflicts from time to time and there are many ways to approach resolving problems or conflicts. You can use “Repair Attempts” and “Gentle Starts” to make relationships more resilient when problems arise. Let’s examine both of these approaches.

**Show Slide 35 (Confronting Problems).**

There are times when even our best intentions get off track. As you probably know, even happy, successful Couples have disagreements and argue. What separates successful Couples from those in trouble is how they confront the disagreement and how they manage their “Repair Attempts.” A Repair Attempt is one way Couples try to put the “brakes on” during an argument. It’s an attempt by one or both to deescalate the tension, calm the situation down and re-connect with each other.

Repair Attempt methods vary with Couples. What may be successful for one Couple may not work for another. The situation can also influence what works; what may work for one argument may not work for another.

Some examples of Repair Attempts are: saying you agree to disagree, sticking out your tongue, making a face, funny statements like “*Drop and give me twenty.*” gentle bantering, accepting your partner’s influence, make-up sex, etc.

If the Repair Attempt is successful, the Couple can move on and the disagreement is either minimized or resolved.

***Does anyone have another example of a repair attempt that they like?***

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Briefly discuss the “uniqueness” (if applicable) of any examples offered.

**Show Slide 36 (Confronting Problems).**

Take a look at the pictures on this slide (Slide 36).

***What do you think is happening with these two Couples and what leads you to believe that?***

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Possible responses might include: “*The Couple on the left is having a fight, they are not happy with each other. He’s looking away and not talking. Her body language says she is angry and closed to further conversation.*” Conversely, “*The Couple on the right is happy, maybe he just asked her to marry him. They are both smiling and touching each other in a positive and affectionate way.*”

Part of any interaction is the emotional tone: the tone of voice used to deliver the words and the non-verbal message the body language sends. It’s everything that is said and done when delivering a message. Emotional tone relates to the affective or emotional quality of a conversation. It enables the receiver to

understand how the sender is feeling about the conversation (such as angry, happy, sad, excited, etc.).

Examples of negative emotional tone include: closed body posture (like in the picture on the left), poor eye contact (again, like in the picture on the left), interrupting the other person, mocking, sarcasm, mimicking the other person.

Examples of ways to show positive emotional tone include: smiling, open body posture, good eye contact, active listening, a calm voice, or positive touching (as with the picture on the right).

### **Show Slide 37 (Confronting Problems).**

In simple terms, a “Gentle Start” is how you begin a discussion and this strategy can help prevent an argument from happening or reduce the tension in the discussion. It lowers the intensity and makes it easier for a Couple to find a resolution to the problem or come to an understanding or compromise they can each live with. Next time you want to talk to your Spouse about something you disagree on, try these simple suggestions.

- (1) Pick the right time to have your discussion. Don’t insist on having “the conversation” when your partner is pressed for time and cannot focus. Don’t force the conversation for the sake of “clearing the decks.” It may be that your Spouse needs time to cool down or rethink his/her position. Words spoken in anger and haste are difficult to take back.
- (2) Limit your concern to a specific complaint. Complain, don’t blame. Describe what you think is happening without judging.
- (3) Storing up your arguments or complaints and then unloading them all at once can overwhelm your partner and make it more difficult to resolve the problem. Don’t keep rehashing the same argument over and over. Some problems may not be solvable. The goal for the unsolvable problem or argument is to find a happy medium you can both live with.
- (4) Use “I” statements wherever possible. Speak clearly about what you need. Be polite and give ample amounts of appreciation. “I” statements make your comments personal and focused. They convey what you, the speaker, feel, need or think about a specific event or circumstance. Try using the following sentence structure: “*I feel* (insert a feeling) *when you* (insert a description of a specific behavior). *I would prefer it if you would* (insert a specific request for a reasonable change).”
- (5) When you do have an argument or disagreement, choose an emotional tone that will lead to a successful resolution. Engage in the conversation while remembering that you are speaking with someone you love. The old saying “you can catch more flies with honey than vinegar” applies in relationships too.

### **Show Slide 38 (Confronting Problems).**

The polar opposite of a Gentle Start is a “Harsh Start”. This is when one or both individuals begin a disagreement with an accusatory or negative emotional tone that includes criticism, sarcasm or contempt. For example: “*You’re never around when I need you. You’re not a very good father.*”

How an argument begins often predicts how it will end. If it starts off on a negative tone it generally ends on a negative tone.

***Why do you think it is so hard to keep a Harsh Start from ending on a negative note?***

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Possible responses might include: *“It may be difficult for one or both parties to stop and change their emotional tone in the middle of a heated argument; or they be more likely to dig in or press on with the attack in an effort to win the argument.”*

Let’s look at how a Harsh Start can deteriorate into something more problematic in the relationship.

**Show Slide 39 (The Four Horsemen).**

f. There are four behaviors that are particularly detrimental to relationships. In fact, these behaviors are so detrimental that Gottman termed them “The Four Horsemen”. The Four Horsemen are:

- (1) Criticism. Attacking your Spouse’s personality or character.
- (2) Contempt. Attacking your Spouse’s sense of self.
- (3) Defensiveness. Seeing yourself as the victim.
- (4) Stonewalling. Withdrawing as a means to avoid conflict.

Gottman found that each of The Four Horsemen may pave the way for the next. When Couples frequently interact using The Four Horsemen, they may be headed for serious conflict, and may even be more likely to separate or divorce. On the next several slides, we’re going to discuss each of The Four Horsemen and how to counter them so you have a better chance of succeeding in your relationship.

**Show Slide 40 (Criticism vs. Kindness).**

- (1) Let’s begin with the first of The Four Horsemen: Criticism.

All problems inherently include an underlying complaint, but not all complaints include criticism. Criticism tends to be more “global” in nature and suggests something is defective with your Spouse. A complaint, however, addresses a “specific” action or problem.

Criticism example: Your Spouse came home late from the field and left his/her stinky ACUs on the bathroom floor. You respond with: *“You’re such a slob! You never pick up after yourself!”*

***How could you change this criticism to a more favorable response?***

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Ask students the question above before revealing the example answer. Left-click mouse to advance text.

One possible response might be: *"I know you're tired from being in the field. I would appreciate it if you would leave your dirty clothes by the washing machine."*

This request can be called a "Kind Request."

***What makes this request kind?***

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Discuss the acknowledgement of contributing factors, emphasizing appreciation and keeping the request specific. Kind Requests attempt to state your complaint without blame or criticism.

**Show Slide 41 (Contempt vs. Respect).**

- (2) The second of The Four Horsemen is Contempt.

Contempt is any "biting" statement or behavior that mocks your Spouse with the intention to insult or psychologically "wound" them. This form of attack makes it seem that you think you are better than they are.

Contempt example: Your Spouse buys some things for you at "Ranger Ricks." You respond with: *"Don't spend my money on worthless S#&t."*

***How could you change this contempt to a more favorable response?***

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Ask students the question above before revealing the example answer. Left-click mouse to advance text.

One possible response might be: *"[Honey], I appreciate that you were thinking of me, but I'm concerned about our budget. I would prefer it if we stuck to the budget we agreed on."*

This request can be called a "Respectful Request."

***What makes this request respectful?***

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Discuss the acknowledgement of contributing factors such as the budget and emphasizing appreciation. Again, keep the request specific. Acknowledge that sometimes Couples might tease one another in the spirit of playfulness, which can be beneficial. However, if you find yourself teasing your Spouse in a mean-spirited way (as in making fun of something you know they are sensitive about), that's a sign of contempt.

**Show Slide 42 (Defensiveness vs. Acknowledgement).**

- (3) The third of The Four Horsemen (remember, Gottman found that each of The Four Horsemen may pave the way for the next) is Defensiveness.

Defensiveness is seeing yourself as the victim and warding off a perceived attack. It's making excuses or justifying your behavior with statements such as *"It's not my fault."* It might involve cross-complaining or counter-attacking (meeting your Spouse's criticism with a complaint of your own); disagreeing and then cross-complaining *"That's not true, you're the one who ...";*

“Yes-butting”: start off by agreeing but end up disagreeing. It can also be repeating yourself without paying attention to what the other person is saying.

Defensiveness rarely has the desired effect. The attacking Spouse generally does not back down or apologize and it generally ends up escalating the conflict.

Defensiveness example: A Soldier says [to his/her Spouse], “*You never support me and come to unit functions.*” The Spouse replies defensively with, “*That’s not true. You never give me enough time to get ready and make arrangements.*”

***How could you change this defensiveness to a more favorable response?***

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Ask students the question above before revealing the example answer. Left-click mouse to advance text.

One possible response that incorporates “Acknowledging Need for Improvement” might be: “*I want to support you but you’re right; I don’t like unit functions. I usually feel shy and don’t know what to say. I’ll work on this issue. Next time, I’ll arrange to meet up with another Spouse so I’ll have someone to talk with.*”

The problem with Defensiveness is that it doesn’t allow you to see your role in contributing to the problem and it’s frustrating for your Spouse who may feel like he/she isn’t being heard.

**Show Slide 43 (Stonewalling vs. Attending).**

- (4) The fourth of The Four Horsemen is Stonewalling.

Stonewalling is not so much about what you do, but what you don’t do. Stonewalling is typically the intentional withdrawing or walking away from an argument or interaction. It can be “clamming up,” not paying attention, physically withdrawing, sticking your head in the newspaper, giving the silent treatment, being too busy to talk about it, too tired to do it, “tell it to the hand...”, etc.

Stonewalling is often preceded by “flooding” – the body’s physical response to feeling overwhelmed during an argument. Gottman has found that men tend to feel internally overwhelmed or “flooded” in arguments more often than women. They become physically uncomfortable during the argument. In response they clam up or “stonewall.”

Stonewalling example: You arrive late for dinner; you didn’t call and your Spouse says she’s not happy with your behavior. You respond by looking away, giving the silent treatment and walking out on the conversation.

***How could you alter this Stonewalling example to a more favorable response?***

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Ask students the question above before revealing the example answer. Left-click mouse to advance text.

One possible response that incorporates “Attending to Unpleasant Topics” might be to *pay attention with eye contact and body language*. Instead of disengaging as a response to being overwhelmed, try letting your Spouse know you need some time to calm down and plan to return to the conversation when you are.

Although we’ve described The Four Horsemen separately, they often go together where criticism from one Spouse may lead to defensiveness in the other, promoting feelings of contempt and eventually leading to stonewalling.

**Show Slide 44 (Activity: The Four Horsemen).**

- g. This is an activity that focuses on practicing Gentle Starts and avoiding The Four Horsemen of Criticism, Contempt, Defensiveness, and Stonewalling.

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Have the participants divide into two person teams; Couples should conduct this activity together. If there is an odd number of participants, one of the teams can have three people. Have the teams work through “The Four Horsemen” activity (page 3-4) in their student handout. Have each team read the first scenario (The Laundry Problem) and assess whether the start is “harsh” or “gentle.” Second, have each of the teams identify which of The Four Horsemen is being demonstrated. Third, have each team develop an alternative approach that can avoid a Harsh Start and The Four Horsemen. Total time for this activity should not exceed 5 minutes. Time permitting, complete and debrief the second scenario (Computer Games). Time permitting, you may have the students complete and debrief the third scenario (Create your own) by having each team describe a real-life example in which they, their Spouse, or someone close to them started off with a Harsh Start and/or used one of The Four Horsemen.

**Show Slide 45 (Activity: The Four Horsemen).**

***What was easy and what was difficult about this activity?***

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Take a few minutes to debrief the students by having 1-2 Couples (volunteers) share responses and alternative approaches. Listen for repair attempts. If the debrief does not identify any repair attempt examples from the Couples, mention them again and ask for how a repair attempt might be used.

CHECK ON LEARNING: Conduct a check on learning and summarize the learning activity.

3. ELO B – LSA 3. Learning Step / Activity 3. Positivity Ratio

Method of Instruction: Conference/Discussion  
Instr Type (I;S Ratio): MRT Qualified Instructor (Military or Civilian)(1:30)  
Time of Instruction: 0 hrs 15 mins  
Instructional Strategy: Small Group Instruction  
Media Type: PowerPoint Presentation  
Security Classification: Unclassified

**Show Slide 46 (Sound Marital House: Your Positivity Ratio).**

- a. Let’s quickly review. We started building our Sound Marital House by creating a Loving Friendship.

***Who can tell me the elements that make up the Loving Friendship?***

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Acknowledge the correct answer: Spouse Mapping, Fondness and Admiration, Connecting.

From Loving Friendship we looked at some suggestions for confronting problems successfully using the Gentle Start and the ATC model. We included The Four Horsemen and alternative approaches to each of them. Let's put the finishing touches on the Sound Marital House by reinforcing our understanding of your "Positivity Ratio."

**Show Slide 47 (Your Positivity Ratio).**

Your Positivity Ratio is a combination of the things you do to and for your Spouse on a daily basis. It's taking the time to think about your Spouse in terms of what he/she likes, dislikes, dreams about, fears, etc. It's caring and feeling about your Spouse in way that says, "*I honor and respect my Spouse.*" Finally, it's about the things you do on a daily basis that show you care about each other. Those "things" can be large or small. They might be things you wouldn't normally do for yourself or even like to do, but you do them because you love your Spouse.

Gottman reports that Couples who do these things daily at a rate of 5:1 (or even higher) have happy, successful marriages that typically last a life time. Unhappy Couples have a Positivity Ratio of 0.8:1 (and also use Harsh Starts and The Four Horsemen). Deployments can add further stress to an already stressed relationship. How does this ratio work? Think about the balance of your day..."

**Show Slide 48 (Your Positivity Ratio: Unhappy Couples).**

Let's begin by looking at what an unhappy Couple looks like in terms of the Positivity Ratio.

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Left-click mouse to advance text.

- (1) Complained my Spouse forgot to take out the garbage...
- (2) Refilled my coffee but didn't offer Spouse any...
- (3) Watched TV instead of listening to Spouse...
- And on the other side of the see-saw...*
- (4) Scraped most of the ice from Spouse's car...
- (5) Kissed before leaving for work...

***What do you notice about this slide?***

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Point out that even unhappy Couples engage in positive thoughts, feelings and actions. It's not about the absence of such positive experiences but about the balance. Discuss that it's natural to focus on the negative which is why even a few negative remarks or actions can weigh more heavily than a few positive ones.

**Show Slide 49 (Your Positivity Ratio: Happy Couples).**

Now let's look at what a happy Couple looks like in terms of the Positivity Ratio.

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Left-click mouse to advance text.

(1) Complained my Spouse forgot to take out the garbage...

*And on the other side of the see-saw...*

(2) Feeling lucky to be married to my Spouse...

(3) Scraped ice from Spouse's car...

(4) Kissed before leaving for work...

(5) Said "I love you" to Spouse...

(6) Appreciated how much we've gone through together...

***What do you notice about this slide?***

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Point out that the focus here is on your Positivity Ratio because that's what you can control – not on tracking your partner's ratio.

***What role does Spouse Mapping have in keeping a healthy positivity ratio?***

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Point out that knowing someone's likes and dislikes makes it easier to engage in positive actions and thoughts that build your Positivity Ratio. Is it still OK to complain that your Spouse didn't take out the garbage?

***What thoughts, actions, and feelings can you have or do that might improve your Positivity Ratio?***

***When is it especially difficult to maintain a healthy positivity ratio?***

***If you notice your ratio is out of whack, what can you do?"***

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Ask students the questions above; wait for a diversity of responses. Point out options like giving yourself a time out, looking at other sources of stress, making sure you're taking care of yourself (getting enough rest, relaxing, etc.).

**Show Slide 50 (Sound Marital House: Summary).**

b. We've now reviewed how to build a Sound Marital House.

***Which pieces [rooms] do you recognize?***

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Review "Create a Loving Friendship" using Spouse Mapping (knowing your Spouse's likes and dislikes), nurturing Fondness and Admiration and Connecting (investing in your emotional piggy bank). Review confronting problems successfully by avoiding The Four Horsemen (and countering them), adapting your own thinking

using the ATC model (Thinking Traps like Always, Always, Always, Mind Reading and Jumping to Conclusions), Repair attempts, Gentle Starts (vs. Harsh Starts). Review the Four Horsemen (and countering them) by covering: Criticism vs. Kind Request, Contempt vs. Respectful Request, Defensiveness vs. Acknowledging Need for Improvement, and Stonewalling vs. Attending to Unpleasant Topics. Review maintaining a good Positivity Ratio (5 positive comments/ thoughts/ actions for every 1 negative comment/thought/action). This ratio is related to all the parts of the Sound Marital House.

By knowing what makes your Spouse happy, you can engage in positive comments. By confronting problems successfully, you can reduce the negative interactions.

The upcoming deployment has the potential to test and build the Sound Marital House. The deployment can also lead to personal growth and development which in turn can strengthen the Sound Marital House.

CHECK ON LEARNING: Conduct a check on learning and summarize the learning activity.

4. ELO B – LSA 4. Learning Step / Activity 4. Personal and Relationship Growth

Method of Instruction: Conference/Discussion  
Instr Type (I;S Ratio): MRT Qualified Instructor (Military or Civilian)(1:30)  
Time of Instruction: 0 hrs 10 mins  
Instructional Strategy: Small Group Instruction  
Media Type: PowerPoint Presentation  
Security Classification: Unclassified

**Show Slide 51 (Personal and Relationship Growth).**

- a. For many Soldiers and Army Families, deployments offer opportunities for growth as individuals and as Families. The Sound Marital House is strengthened through enhanced appreciation for each other, renewed admiration for your resilience and practicing new ways of connecting and communicating.

Deployments can provide opportunities to develop and master new skills and strengths that may not have existed before. Things like fixing the plumbing, mastering car maintenance, cooking and cleaning, or navigating the complexities of the Army system and becoming fluent in all things Army.

It's important to recognize that, even though deployments can be difficult for Families, relationships and individuals can grow from the experience.

**Show Slide 52 (Strengths and Skills).**

***What personal strengths and skills enable you to face the demands of deployment?***

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Ask students (who have been through a deployment before as a Couple) the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Listen for what helped the veteran Spouses and/or Family members. Focus on themes of acceptance, humor, social support, relaxation or exercise, spiritual comfort, positive thinking skills, etc. Outline their responses on butcher paper, blackboard/whiteboard or equivalent.

**Show Slide 53 (Support).**

- b. Soldiers and Families separated from each other during a deployment do better when they have a strong social support network to reach out to. Research has shown that the more an Army Family understands how to “navigate the system” the better they do when the Soldier is deployed.

While deployed, Soldiers will develop strong relationships with their fellow Soldiers. At home, Spouses may also form new relationships within the Army community through the Family Readiness Group (FRG) and/or religious and social organizations or with neighbors. Existing relationships may also be strengthened and communication with other Family members may increase.

Don’t wait until you need one of these resources to locate the contact information. Put together your own personal resource and support list with phone numbers and key points of contact. Having a list and knowing who to contact can help to reduce your anxiety and stress.

Army Community Service (ACS) is a great place to start when you have a problem. Their trained staff can help you navigate the system by connecting you with the right resource at the right time.

***What plans or contacts have you made to help support you and your Family while your Soldier is deployed?***

***How do you plan to “navigate the system” and develop a resilient mindset?***

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Ask students the questions above; wait for a diversity of responses. Outline their responses on butcher paper, blackboard/whiteboard or equivalent. Encourage “experienced” Spouses and/or Family members to share with the Spouses and/or Families that are new to the deployment experience.

**Show Slide 54 (Navigating the Army).**

- c. This is a list of what can help Family members in the event of a deployment. This list is not designed to be all-inclusive.

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Use this list as a point of discussion if there is time available.

- (1) Learn to network. Keep a “finger-tip” card file of resources and connections you can refer to in the future. Use your FRG.
- (2) The “truth” is sometimes a moving target. Policies change and events happen that can alter information or the “truth.”
- (3) Make sure your source of Army (and deployment) information is credible. Most people have an opinion but that opinion may not be one you should rely on.
- (4) Make sure the agency or person you want to see is available when you plan to visit. Check the hours posted and verify they will be available. Sometimes building locations change or close for repair without it being posted.
- (5) Have all of your documents with you and store them in a safe place. If you don’t have a safety deposit box or fire proof box, you can store your

documents in the freezer – it can also provide protection in the event you have a house fire.

- (6) When Soldiers deploy, schedules are often changed. The Soldier may tell you he/she will be home on Monday and not show up until Friday. Plans get delayed, events change, all kinds of things can happen. Stay flexible, stay resilient.
- (7) Try to keep your sense of humor – it comes in handy.
- (8) The Army “**Uses A Lot Of Acronyms**” – it’s helpful to know what they mean.

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Ask if there are any other tips that experienced individuals want to share; again, only if there is time available.

CHECK ON LEARNING: Conduct a check on learning and summarize the learning activity.

**SECTION IV. SUMMARY**

Method of Instruction: Conference/Discussion  
Instr Type (I:S Ratio): MRT Qualified Instructor (Military or Civilian) (1:30)  
Time of Instruction: 5 mins  
Instructional Strategy: Small Group Instruction

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**Check on Learning**

Determine if the students have learned the material presented by soliciting student questions and explanations. Ask the students questions and correct misunderstandings.

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**Review / Summarize Lesson**

**Show Slide 55 (Thank-You).**

As an Army Spouse or Couple, you bring experience, strengths and skills that will help you and your Family prepare for the upcoming deployment and help all of you to thrive during the deployment and afterwards. As we've discussed, although Army life has its challenges, it doesn't mean that being a military Spouse (or Couple) can't be a positive experience even when your Soldier is deployed.

Thank-you for coming today, for your participation and most of all, thank-you for your service as an Army Family and your Family's commitment to our nation – Army Strong.

What are your questions regarding this resilience training module?

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Determine if the participants have learned the material presented by asking questions. Correct any misunderstandings that may arise. Encourage participants to either ask the question in the group or afterwards. Ensure you have time set aside after the training to be available.

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**SECTION V. STUDENT EVALUATION**

**Testing  
Requirements**

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Pre-Deployment Resilience Training for Spouses/Couples invites discussion and personal insights from all participants receiving this training. This resilience training module encompasses instructor facilitated discussions designed to stimulate analysis and identify any areas that may require extra emphasis or review.

**Feedback  
Requirements**

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NOTE: Feedback is essential to effective learning. Schedule and provide feedback on the evaluation and any information to help answer students' questions about the test. Provide remedial training as needed.

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## Appendix A - Viewgraph Masters

### VIEWGRAPHS FOR LESSON 1: 081-RTO02003/1 Version 1

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Terminal Learning Objective

Viewgraph, 081-RTO02003/1, Pre-Deployment Resilience Training for Spouses/Couples,  
15 July 2011

**Multi Media Attached! [Click here and then press F9 to view.](#)**

**Appendix B - Test(s) and Test Solution(s) (N/A)**

**Appendix C - Practical Exercises and Solutions (N/A)**

## Appendix D - Student Handouts

### HANDOUTS FOR LESSON 1: 081-RTO02003/1 Version 1

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Terminal Learning Objective

Handout, 081-RTO02003/1, Pre-Deployment Resilience Training for Spouses/Couples,  
15 July 2011

**Multi Media Attached! [Click here and then press F9 to view.](#)**