



Pre-Deployment Resilience Training for Spouses/Couples Student Handout

**Loving Friendship
Four Horsemen**

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Activity: Loving Friendship

Thinking about when you first stated dating your partner, list 5 things you can remember about him/her that you admired or found attractive – please be specific!

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Next list 5 things you currently admire or find attractive about him/her.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Activity: The Four Horsemen

In groups of two or three, please review each of the scenarios below. First, assess the start up (Harsh or Gentle). Second, identify which of The Four Horsemen are being demonstrated. Third, develop an alternative approach that can avoid a Harsh Start and The Four Horsemen (criticism, contempt, defensiveness, stonewalling).

Scenario 1: The laundry problem:

Your Spouse has been leaving his/her clothes on the floor at the end of the day and you are tired of picking up after him/her. You've mentioned the problem several times but there's been no change. You start off by saying "*Aren't you ever going to learn how to pick up after yourself? Do you think I'm your maid?!?*"

1. Start up: Harsh or Gentle?
2. Which of The Four Horsemen?
3. Alternative approach (USE NEW NAME)

Scenario 2: Computer games:

You and your Spouse are arguing about how much time the kids can spend playing computer games. You start by saying "*I'm concerned about how much the kids are playing computer games. When you deploy, I'm not going to let them play so much.*" Your Spouse replies, "*You let them watch tons of crap on TV and that's worse.*" You roll your eyes, say "*whatever*", and walk away.

1. Start up: Harsh or Gentle?
2. Which of The Four Horsemen?
3. Alternative approach (USE NEW NAME)

Activity: The Four Horsemen (continued)

Scenario 3: Create your own:

Describe a real-life example in which you, your Spouse or someone close to you started off with a Harsh Start and/or used one of The Four Horsemen (criticism, contempt, defensiveness, stonewalling).

What happened? (who, what, when, where)

Describe an alternative approach you could have used to encourage a Gentle Start and avoid The Four Horsemen.