



**COMPREHENSIVE
SOLDIER FITNESS**
STRONG MINDS ★ STRONG BODIES

Pre-Deployment Resilience
Training
for Spouses/Couples

DAMO-CSF

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Pre-Deployment Resilience Training for Spouses/Couples

Instructor Guide

Developed by the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research
v. 20 APR 11



COMPREHENSIVE SOLDIER FITNESS

STRONG MINDS ★ STRONG BODIES

Pre-Deployment Resilience Training for Spouses/Couples



Record your own notes here:

Version 20 April 2011

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Post-Deployment Resilience Training for Spouses/Couples should be presented by a Master Resilience Trainer (MRT) or Resilience Training Assistant (RTA). Ideally, the training will be conducted by an Army Community Services (ACS) MRT/RTA in coordination with unit-level MRTs/RTAs. The training is designed to take 2 hours and may be provided in one 2-hour training block or can be divided into two 1-hour training blocks. There is a suggested break point if conducted in two 1-hour training sessions at the end of Slide 33 (Activity: Thinking Traps).

Training Objectives:

1. Identify strengths you and your Family bring to the deployment experience.
2. Know what to expect in terms of the kinds of experiences you and your Spouse might have before and during a deployment.
3. Anticipate possible reactions.

Set Ground Rules: This is interactive training; your participation can make the training more meaningful and may also help other training participants. Please turn off your cell phones.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE:

1. When you conduct the training, avoid:
 - a) Personalizing - *"It wasn't like that when my Spouse came home..."*
 - b) Minimizing - *"It's not that bad!"*
 - c) Over dramatizing - *"It's the worst thing ever!"*
 - d) Gloom and doom - *"Here are the stats - 90% of you are going to have screwed up Families..."*
2. Some of the Couples may have a great deal of Army and life experience that they can draw from. Be careful to be respectful (and not to sound condescending) when addressing the group. Throughout, the focus is on Spouses but this material can be adapted to address significant others as well.

This training was developed by the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research (WRAIR) in conjunction with the University of Pennsylvania. The training also includes material adapted from the Gottman Relationship Institute and John Gottman's book, "The Marriage Clinic."



Record your own notes here:

- Frequent military deployments
- Frequent training exercises
- Long duty days
- Weekend duty
- Frequent military moves (PCS)
- Fear of death and/or serious injury
- Distance from extended Family
- Family separations

3

Key Points:

1. Ask, "*What are some of the challenges of military life?*"
2. SLIDE BUILDS - encourage group discussion for this slide, enlisting the aid of Spouses and Couples who have been in the Army for several years.
3. Ask, "*Are there are any experiences you can think of that are not listed on the slide?*" Potential answers might include: the emotional ups and downs of getting ready for deployment, arguing or fighting about the merits of Army life, loneliness, missing each other, being a single parent when the Soldier is deployed, not knowing details about the household that the Soldier is normally responsible for, Army life issues such as frequent moves, communication concerns while Soldier is deployed, fear of injury, death, psychological problems, money - especially when Soldier is deployed.
4. Let's look at some of the many positive aspects of life in the military. (Transition to the next slide).



- Financial stability; retirement benefits
- Health care
- Commissary and PX privileges
- Community and a sense of belonging
- Education and job training
- Overseas assignments, new experiences
- Opportunity to serve

4

Key Points:

1. Ask, “*What are some of the benefits of military life?*”
2. SLIDE BUILDS – encourage group discussion for this slide, enlisting the aid of Spouses and Couples who have been in the Army for several years.
3. Ask, “*Are there are any benefits you can think of that are not listed on the slide?*” Potential answers might include: housing allowance, tax breaks, public recognition, recreational opportunities, travel benefits, etc.
4. Military life also has the benefit of promoting resilience in the Family.

Record your own notes here:



Your **Family** is about to experience a deployment...

5

Key Points:

1. Deployments are experienced by all Family members.
2. 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.
3. 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 discussed the deployment, say that knowing ahead of time helped them to prepare emotionally and logistically.
4. Soldiers who deploy for the first time may also not know what to expect or what to tell their Spouse or Family.
5. This training can help you prepare yourself and your Family for deployment.

Record your own notes here:



Record your own notes here:

- What will it be like?
- How can you prepare?
 - Have you talked as a Family about the deployment?
 - Have you identified different ups and downs each Family member may experience?

6

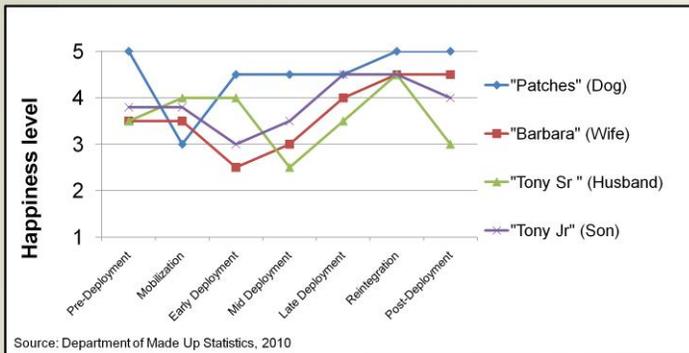
Key Points:

1. Ask, *“What do you think the deployment will be like for your Family?”*
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 the household that the Soldier is normally responsible for, communication concerns while Soldier is deployed, fear of injury, death, psychological problems, finances, missing important occasions, gossip, navigating the Army system, lack of understanding from non-military Family and friends, etc.
2. Often, because of time constraints or because some discussions are too ‘difficult’ to deal with, Families will not talk about the “what ifs”.
3. Ask, *“How have experienced Families dealt with these issues on previous deployments?”* Possible 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.”*
4. In the following slides, we’re going to go through the building blocks of resilience and explore some tools that can help your Family.



Record your own notes here:

- Remember ups and downs are normal
- Everyone has their own ups and downs



Key Points:

1. Take a look at the chart on this slide. This chart shows made-up data. This is just an example that 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.
2. 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. Bottom line – don't judge yourself (or the dog!) too harshly.
3. Every military Family goes through a deployment in their own way but each one of them will experience some ups and downs.



Record your own notes here:

- Even for Families who have deployed before, each deployment may be different



Key Points:

1. Every deployment is different. The location of the deployment may change, the mission may change, jobs change, Families may add new members, support system may change, kids change schools.
2. Ask (Spouses/Couples who have deployed multiple times before), "*How were your deployment experiences different ? What did you do to adapt to the change?*"
3. Adapting to change is part of being a resilient Army Family.



- Just before the deployment, Family communication can be strained, short and emotional
- Why is the “Big Chill” so common?
- Keep communication open to avoid the “Big Chill”
- Start early, communicating while deployed can be challenging

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Key Points:

1. It is common for Army Families to begin to put some “*emotional distance*” between themselves 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. The “*Big Chill*” may even take the form of having a big fight about something small or getting upset about something small.
2. Ask, “*Why is the Big Chill so common?*” Some may think emotional distancing makes the separation easier - the paradox is that the Big Chill doesn’t make separating any easier.

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.

3. Being able to recognize and understand the reasons behind the Big Chill may help Families avoid getting caught up in the conflict too much.
4. 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 significantly reduce your chances for successful communication.



- **Communicate - maintain intimacy**
 - Compliment and encourage each other
 - Be specific and use “I” statements
 - Talk about each other as a couple
 - Reinforce your sense of being a couple/Family
 - Build connections
 - Write love letters
 - Send cards (*for important & unimportant occasions*)
 - Give presents

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Key Points:

1. Ask, “*How can you communicate and maintain intimacy in your relationship during the deployment?*”
2. **SLIDE BUILDS** - 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.*” Ask, “*What impact does using “I” statements have on the way the compliments sounds?*” “I” statements personalize the compliment.
3. 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 in e-mails.
4. Speaking of phones, they may or may not be available to the Soldier on a daily 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.
5. Ask, “*If you can’t call, what can you do to build and maintain your connections?*” You can communicate by using letters, e-mails, etc. Many Couples find writing love letters is a great way to rekindle the romance in their relationship and strengthen the bond they have with each other.
6. Ask, “*If it’s a special occasion like a birthday or anniversary, what can you do?*” You might find a card and say something special. It’s also nice to communicate by sending special gifts. 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.



Record your own notes here:

- Communicate in creative ways

- Bridge communication between kids and the parent



- Keep the deployed Soldier in the “event” loop

- What have you done that works?



Click for video

11

Key Points:

1. 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 seems because you will have to deal with time zone differences and Family and Soldier schedules. You might find you need to be creative to make it all work.
2. 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).
3. Ask, “*What have you done that worked on previous deployments?*” Some examples we've heard: 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.
4. Here's one example...

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Left-click on the picture to initiate video: Oreo Webcam Commercial (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yI95nIN3Jx8>).



- E-mail offers a chance to communicate
 - *and mis-communicate*
- Negative comments can stick like glue
- How could someone interpret the following?
 - “*It’s great to finally hear from you.*”
 - “*I wish you were here.*”
 - “*We’re all doing just fine.*”
 - “*I’ve made a new friend.*”

Click for video



12

Key Points:

1. E-mail has changed the way we communicate when Families go through a deployment. What used to take days or even weeks to reach them can now be sent and received in the blink of an eye. It means we can also share in near “real time” special events like birthday parties, that first lost tooth, etc. Or...it can mean a chance to mis-communicate and misunderstand one another.
2. Mis-communication can occur in other situations as well.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Left-click on picture to initiate video: We’re Sinking (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=giELpieyIFU>).

3. Even though the video clip is not about e-mail, it demonstrates 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.
4. 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 email. 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 different ways.
5. SLIDE BUILDS (continue to left-click mouse until all examples are revealed). Ask, “*How can It’s great to finally hear from you be interpreted?*” 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). Ask, “*How can I wish you were here be interpreted?*” 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). Ask, “*How can we’re all doing just fine be interpreted?*” Discuss options.; include at least a positive option (We miss you but we are adapting) and a negative option (You are not really needed). Ask, “*How can I’ve made a new friend be interpreted?*” Discuss options; include at least a positive option (I have a new source of support) and a negative option (I have new romantic interest).
6. Let’s talk about ways to minimize these kinds of communication problems. (Transition to the next slide).



- What can you do to minimize misunderstandings?
 - Write what you mean
 - Consider waiting before writing an emotionally-charged e-mail
 - Re-read before hitting the send button
 - Give each other the benefit of the doubt
 - When in doubt, ask
- E-mails can be a great morale booster

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Key Points:

1. Ask, *“What can you do to minimize misunderstandings?”*
2. Write what you mean; be specific. Consider possible 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 loving smile.
3. It may be helpful to take a breather before firing off an emotionally-charged e-mail. You probably won’t be able to “unsubscribe” an e-mail once it’s sent.
4. It may be helpful to re-read the e-mail before hitting the “send” button. Ask, *“How many of you have re-read an e-mail and realized that you needed to change what you wrote?”*
5. Ask, *“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?”* For example: when in doubt about what an e-mail actually means, the person receiving the e-mail should ask for clarification. Don’t engage in “mind reading” via e-mail.



- How much information will you share with each other during the deployment?
- Many Soldiers do not want to share all the details of the deployment
 - Deployment boundaries do not mean the Soldier is rejecting their Spouse or loved ones
- Many Spouses don't want to burden the deployed Soldier with Family details
 - Less information does not mean the Family is pushing the Soldier away

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Key Points:

1. Ask, "*How much will you plan to share with each other during the deployment?*" How much information Couples will share with each other during a deployment will vary. As a Couple, plan in advance what you can and will discuss with each other during the actual deployment.
2. Note that sometimes communication will not be possible for a variety of technical and operational reasons. 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.
3. There may be times when a Soldier might not want to share all of the details of the deployment with their Spouse. Ask, "*Why might a Soldier not want to tell all the details?*" Discuss issues related to protecting 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, and not having the emotional energy to engage in a whole, deep discussion. There are also operational security (OPSEC) considerations that do not allow a Soldier to talk about what's going on.
4. Spouses may also not want to tell the Soldier details about what's going on at home. Ask, "*Why might a Spouse choose not to share with the Soldier?*" Answers may include that they 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.
5. Being clear about how a Family communicates during deployment is a key part of building a resilient relationship. Ask, "*What do you expect from each other? What do you want from each other in terms of communication?*"



Record your own notes here:

- How can you become a more resilient Army Family?
 - Improve your relationship resilience before you deploy
 - Keep building your “*Sound Marital House*”

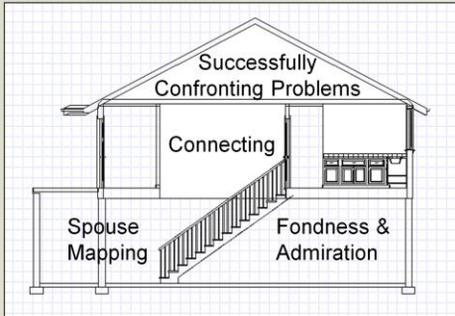
15

Key Points:

1. As we discussed previously, you can improve your relationship resilience by preparing for the ups and downs, by increasing your daily dose of compliments and encouragement for each other, and by working on communication.
2. 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.



- Create a loving friendship
- Learn to confront problems successfully
- Increase your positivity ratio



16

Key Points:

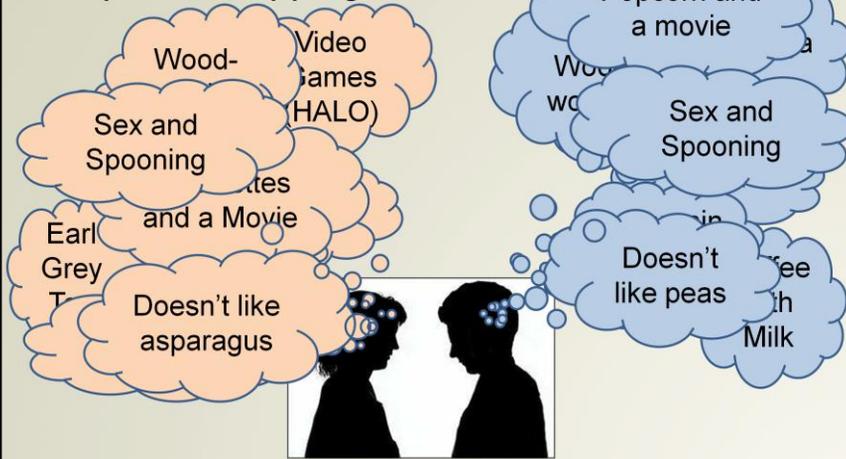
1. There are several key structural elements to the “Sound Marital House” – creating a loving friendship that enables your relationship to thrive, learning to confront problems successfully so they do not destroy the quality of the relationship and increasing your “Positivity Ratio” (we’ll talk more about this in a moment).
2. Ask, “*Why is it important to work on reinforcing a Sound Marital House?*” 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.
3. Increasing your “Positivity Ratio” is about doing more of the good things you do for your Spouse.

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 observation 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.*



Spouse Mapping



NOTE: Adapted from Gottman

17

Key Points:

1. Ask, "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?"
2. "Spouse Mapping" is thinking about your Spouse. It's about paying attention to the details of your Spouse's life, being familiar with his/her world.
3. SLIDE BUILDS (continue to left-click the mouse until all examples are revealed) - notice how the Spouse Mapping thoughts alternate between what the wife is thinking about the husband and what the husband is thinking about the wife.
4. Couples who have good "Spouse Maps" know each other, know what their Spouse likes or dislikes, what their concerns are, what their dreams and aspirations are, etc. They keep updating their Spouse Maps (Spouse Re-Mapping) with new information about their Spouse. This updating will be more challenging during a deployment, but it's just as important.
5. Ask, "What is the benefit of Spouse Mapping for a couple?" Some 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."

Record your own notes here:



Record your own notes here:

▪ Fondness and Admiration

- Reinforce by remembering your Spouse's contributions to the relationship
- Focus on thoughts about your Spouse
 - What initially attracted you
 - What currently attracts you

- How do you use Fondness and Admiration to reinforce loving friendship?



NOTE: Adapted from Gottman

18

Key Points:

1. "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, careers, success, and happiness.
2. Fondness and Admiration help us to recall the things that attracted us to our partner – to remember the things that we admired about him/her that lead to committing your life to him/her.
3. 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.
4. In a moment we'll turn to "Activity: Loving Friendship" in your handout. This activity will provide you with an opportunity to reflect on your Fondness and Admiration.



- Connecting - like money in the bank
- Increase your positive daily interactions with your Spouse
 - Enhances the quality of your relationship
 - Shortens and smoothes out the disagreements
 - Reduces the stress in your relationship



NOTE: Adapted from Gottman

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Key Points:

1. The third piece for creating a loving friendship we'll examine is "Connecting". Connecting is the action piece of creating a loving friendship.
2. When couple's engage in "Connecting" on a daily basis, it acts like 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!*

Record your own notes here:



- List 5 things you remember about your Spouse that you admired or found attractive when you first started dating each other
- List 5 things you currently admire or appreciate about your Spouse
- Activity Time: 10 minutes

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Key Points:

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. Have the teams work through the "Loving Friendship" activity (see handout).

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Have teams list five things they admired or found attractive about their Spouse when they first met. 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 when dating what kind of parent their partner would become. After listing five things they admired while first dating, have them list five (5) things they currently admire or find attractive (appreciate) about their Spouse.

4. Ask, "*Does anyone have a current list that differs from their dating list?*" If the training is done as a couple, you can use the last two minutes for Couples to share their responses.
5. Each participant should take 5 minutes to create their list. Tell the group to switch half-way through the activity. This activity should take about 10 minutes in total.



- Debrief

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Key Points:

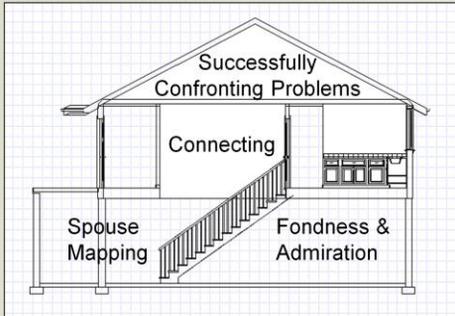
1. Ask, "*What did you find easy and what did you find difficult about this activity?*"
2. Ask, "*How many items on your lists did you have in common?*"

Record your own notes here:



Record your own notes here:

- Create a loving friendship
- Learn to confront problems successfully
- Increase your positivity ratio



NOTE: Adapted from Gottman

22

Key Points:

1. 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.
2. When combined with creating a Loving Friendship, learning how to successfully confront relationship problems will help ensure your relationship will continue to grow and overcome any obstacles life throws your way. (Transition to the next slide).



- Adapt your own thinking
- Make Repair Attempts
- Use Gentle Starts



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Key Points:

1. Everyone (and every relationship) has problems or conflicts from time to time. There are many ways to approach resolving these problems or conflicts.
2. 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.

Record your own notes here:



- You can use the ATC model to adapt your own thinking when problems arise



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Key Points:

1. There are many ways to approach resolving problems or conflicts. One of the tools our Soldiers are learning about for resolving problems and increasing resilience is called the “ATC” model.
2. 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 during pre-deployment.
3. Let’s take a look at the ATC model. (Transition to the next slide).

Record your own notes here:



Record your own notes here:

■ ATC Model

Activating Event:
The trigger:
adversity, a
challenge or
positive event

Thoughts:
Your interpretations
of the Activating
Event; what you say
to yourself at the time

Consequences: ER
Emotions
Reactions

Key Points:

1. Using the ATC model helps to build self-awareness and provide greater control over your Emotions and Reactions.
2. ATC stands for:
 - a) 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 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).
 - b) Thoughts are what you say to yourself in the heat of the moment. Thoughts drive immediate Reactions which can be productive or counterproductive.
 - c) 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.
3. Let's take a look at a range of different Activating Events on the next slide. (Transition to the next slide).



- Your child takes his/her first steps
- Your Spouse sends flowers when you get a new job
- The car breaks down
- Your child gets into trouble at school
- You're 7,000 miles apart on your 1st anniversary
- It's bedtime, you're tired and your kids want a story
- You're having an "on-line" argument with each other
- You won a trip for two to Tahiti

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Key Points:

1. The Activating Events on this slide can trigger a wide range of Thoughts which may have positive or negative Consequences. What you think and how you respond to these circumstances will vary from individual to individual. It can also vary from one point in time to another point in time for the same person.
2. 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.
3. Ask, "*What kinds of thoughts might go through your mind when one of these things happen? What about if it happened during a deployment?*"
Discuss.
4. Ask, "*Why do your thoughts matter?*" Thoughts are critically important. They are likely to drive your Reaction to these events (your feelings and behavior).
5. Don't forget – Activating Events can be both positive and negative.
6. Lets look at an example of the ATC model for an Army Couple during the pre-deployment phase. (Transition to the next slide).

Record your own notes here:



Activating Event:
Soldier returns from a training exercise and snaps at Spouse

Thoughts:
“He’s always in a bad mood. He thinks he’s the only one getting stressed out about the deployment. He’s so self-centered.”

Consequences:
Emotions: Anger, bitterness
Reactions: Argue, retaliate, yell

Adapted from Copyright 2010 by the Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania.

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Key Points:

1. The Activating Event is “the Soldier returns from a training exercise and snaps at the Spouse.”
2. How the Spouse thinks about the Activating Event will affect how the Spouse responds.
3. What are Thoughts that the Spouse might have?

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Discuss possible options, before proceeding.

4. SLIDE BUILDS - 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.
5. Ask, “*What kinds of Consequences are likely to result from these Thoughts in terms of emotions and reactions?*”
6. SLIDE BUILDS - ask, “*With such thoughts, what are the likely emotions this Soldier will be experiencing? How is the Soldier likely to react in turn?*”
The Soldier is likely to be more distant and aggressive setting this couple up for a potential negative spiral. This chain of events can wear down a Couple.
7. By being aware of their Thoughts, individuals can adapt their Thoughts and change their Reactions.
8. Adapting Thoughts is particularly important for unhappy Couples because research shows that un-happy 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.
9. Now we’ll walk through an alternative set of Thoughts in a Spouse experiencing the same Activating Event. (Transition to the next slide).

Record your own notes here:



Activating Event:
Soldier returns from a training exercise and snaps at Spouse

Alternative Thoughts:
"He's in a bad mood today. He's probably tired. He's been working long hours getting ready for the deployment."

Consequences:
Emotions: Caring, sympathy
Reactions: Patience, affection, support

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Key Points:

1. The Activating Event is the same, a Soldier snapping at his/her Spouse after returning from a field training exercise.
2. SLIDE BUILDS - in this example, the Spouse of the Soldier has different Thoughts about the Soldier's behavior. These 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."*
3. Ask, *"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?"*
4. SLIDE BUILDS - just as in the case of negative Thoughts, these positive Thoughts result in Consequences. Ask, *"What kinds of Emotions and Reactions might result from these positive Thoughts?"*

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Discuss options related to being supportive, feeling sympathy, being patient, affectionate, understanding.

5. Ask, *"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?"* 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."*
6. Happy Couples tend to use these kinds of Thoughts with one another. By adjusting Thoughts, Couples can alter their interactions.
7. Sometimes Thoughts can be influenced by rigid patterns of thinking we learn over a period of time. We call these patterns of thinking "Thinking Traps". (Transition to the next slide).

Record your own notes here:



- Thinking Traps are overly rigid patterns in thinking that can cause us to miss critical information about a situation or person
- Identify your Thinking Traps so you can correct your thinking in the moment and avoid future traps

Key Points:

1. "Thinking Traps" are patterns of thinking about Activating Events that drive our Consequences.
2. When we are in a Thinking Trap 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.
3. By identifying the Thinking Traps Spouses/Couples tend to fall into, they can enhance their individual resilience and strengthen their relationship.

Record your own notes here:



- Always, Always, Always
- Jumping to Conclusions
- Mind Reading

- There are can be other Thinking Traps but these are the ones we're going to focus on today...



Key Points:

1. Here is a partial list of Thinking Traps.
2. In the ATC model we learned how our Thoughts affect the Consequences - our Emotions and Reactions.
3. Thinking Traps occur in Reaction to Activating Events. By identifying our Thinking Traps and challenging them, we can change the Consequences (Emotions and Reactions).
4. In unit-based resilience training, Soldiers are currently being taught about various Thinking Traps. They are learning how to adjust these thinking patterns 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.

Record your own notes here:



- **Always, Always, Always:** Believing that all problems are unchangeable, will always be that way, and you have little or no control over them
- **Action:** Grab control
- **Critical Questions:**
 - What can I control? What do I have to accept?
- **Counter helplessness with understanding what you can and cannot control**

Key Points:

1. When someone evaluates 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*”.
2. Ask, “*In what ways can thinking that things can’t be changed and that you have no control become a problem?*” Discuss helplessness and hopelessness.
3. Ask, “*What can you do to counter this Thinking Trap?*” Discuss grabbing control by using Critical Questions. Discuss the Critical Questions:
 - a. What can I control?
 - b. What do I have to accept?
4. In the previous example about the Soldier coming home and snapping at the Spouse, Thoughts such as: “*He’s always like this*” are an example of Always, Always, Always.
5. Another example of Always, Always, Always:
 - a. Example: “*I will never have enough energy to deal with the kids on my own.*”
 - b. Review Critical Question(s) with this example; ask, “*What can you control?*” For example: ask for help from others, do things together with other friends in the same situation so you can back each other up, change your expectations about how you manage all the Family tasks like taking care of the kids, running the household, etc. Ask, “*What do you have to accept?*” For example: you may have 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 available.
6. 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.

Record your own notes here:



- **Jumping to Conclusions:** Being certain about a situation despite having little or no evidence to support it
- **Action:** Slow Down
- **Critical Question:**
 - What's the evidence?
- **Counter Jumping to Conclusions with verifying information**

Key Points:

1. 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".
2. Ask, "*In what ways can jumping to conclusions become a problem?*" Discuss how being confident about something without evidence can lead to wrong assumptions and bad decision making.
3. Ask, "*What can you do to counter this Thinking Trap?*" Discuss slowing down by using the Critical Question. Discuss the Critical Question: "*What's the evidence? What are the facts, not just the beliefs, that may lead to the conclusion in the first place?*"

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Ask for an example: "*Our neighbor hasn't deployed, my husband/wife must have volunteered to get away from me. Things will never get better for us at this rate.*" Review 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 not deploying?*"

4. 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.

Record your own notes here:



- **Mind Reading:** Assuming you know what the other person is thinking, or expecting another person to know what you are thinking
- **Action:** Speak up
- **Critical Questions:**
 - Did I express myself clearly? Did I ask for information?
- **Counter your assumptions by asking questions**

Key Points:

1. 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 pattern of thinking is a Thinking Trap called "Mind Reading".
2. Ask, "*In what way can assuming others know what I am thinking or assuming I know what others are thinking become a problem?*"
3. Ask, "*What can you do to counter this Thinking Trap?*" Discuss making sure you understand your Spouse or others by repeating to them what you think you heard them say. When you want to make sure you are understood, ask the person you are talking to, to repeat what they think they heard you say. Be careful when doing this. Try not to sound condescending or irritated. Your tone or affect may also convey a message.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Ask for an example of Mind Reading, such as: you come home from a long, difficult day getting prepared for the deployment and your Spouse hands the kids off to you. You're thinking, "*Can't he/she tell I've had the day from hell and need a break?*" Review Critical Question(s) with the example; ask, "*Did the Soldier express him/herself? Did the Soldier ask what kind of day the Spouse had? Are both potentially falling into the trap of Mind-Reading?*"

4. 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.
5. Ask, "*Are there times when Mind Reading might be a positive thing in a relationship?*" For example: Couples who know each other well might complete a thought or sentence their partner started. They might also see or hear something and each have a similar response or comment.

Record your own notes here:



Trap Examples	Consequence	Counter
I'm never going to adjust to the deployment	Sad, anxious, act withdrawn	Be clear in telling your Spouse about your day
She didn't bring me coffee – she doesn't care about me	Irritated, act angry	Consider other reasons
He should have known I had a bad day	Disappointed, act distant and sulk	Make a plan, accept what you have to

Key Points:

1. 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: There is no course handout associated with this activity.

2. SLIDE BUILDS - start with the first Thinking Trap: "*I'm never going to adjust to the deployment.*" Ask, "*Which Thinking Trap is it?*" [The correct answer is Always, Always, Always]. Ask, "*What consequence is it likely to lead to?*" [The correct answer is sad, anxious, act withdrawn]. Ask, "*How can this trap be countered?*" [The correct answer is make a plan].
3. SLIDE BUILDS - the next Thinking Trap is: "*She didn't bring me coffee – she doesn't care about me.*" Ask, "*Which Thinking Trap is it?*" [The correct answer is Jumping to Conclusions]. Ask, "*What consequence is it likely to lead to?*" [The correct answer is disappointed, act distant and sulk.] Ask, "*How can this trap be countered?*" [The correct answer is consider other reasons].
4. SLIDE BUILDS - the next Thinking Trap is: "*He should have known I had a bad day.*" Ask, "*Which Thinking Trap is it?*" [The correct answer is Mind-Reading]. Ask, "*What consequence is it likely to lead to?*" [The correct answer is irritated, act angry]. Ask, "*How can this Thinking Trap be countered?*" [The correct answer is be clear in telling your Spouse about your day].
5. More than one Thinking Trap may be working in any one Couples' interaction – the key is to recognize whether changing the way in which you are thinking might support you in managing conflict in your relationship more successfully.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: If the training module is to be presented in two, 2-hour blocks, this is a good time to break. This may also be a good time for participants to visit the rest room.

Record your own notes here:



- You can use Repair Attempts and Gentle Starts to make relationships more resilient when problems arise



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Key Points:

1. Everyone has 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.
2. Let’s examine both of these approaches (Transition to the next slide).

Record your own notes here:



- Sometimes communications hit a speed bump
- Make and accept “*Repair Attempts*”
 - An attempt to defuse the tension
 - Examples: agreeing to disagree, gentle banter, sticking out tongue, funny statements like “drop and give me twenty,” making a face
- Accept your partner’s influence
- Directly confronting problems...

NOTE: Adapted from Gottman

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Key Points:

1. 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 try manage their “Repair Attempts”.
2. 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 defuse the event, calm the situation down and re-connect with each other.
3. 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.
4. Some examples of Repair Attempts are: agreeing to disagree, sticking out tongue, making a face, funny statements like “*Drop and give me twenty*”, gentle banter, accepting your partner’s influence, make-up sex, etc.
6. If the Repair Attempt is successful, the Couple can move on and the disagreement is either minimized or resolved.
7. Ask, “*Does anyone have another example of a repair attempt that they like?*”



How we say it is as important as what we say



NOTE: Adapted from Gottman

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Key Points

1. Take a look at the pictures on the slide. Ask, “*What do you think is happening with the two Couples and what leads you to believe what you see is happening?*” Some responses might be: “*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.*” “*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.*”
2. Part of any interaction is the emotional tone: the tone of voice we choose to deliver our words and the non-verbal message our body language sends. It’s everything we say and do to deliver our message.
3. 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.).
4. Examples of positive emotional tone include: smiling, open body posture, good eye contact, active listening, a calm voice or positive touching. Examples of negative emotional tone include: closed body posture (like in the picture on the left), poor eye contact (like in the picture on the left), interrupting the other person, mocking, sarcasm, mimicking the other person.



▪ Gentle Start:

- Time your communication
- Limit your concern to a specific complaint
- Don't store complaints and unload them all at once
- Use "I" Statements: "*I feel _____ when you _____; I would prefer if you would _____.*"
- Choose the right emotional tone

NOTE: Adapted from Gottman

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Key Points:

1. If your Repair Attempt fails or falls short of its mark and you end up in an argument, you might want to try what Gottman refers to as the "Gentle Start". In simple terms, a "Gentle Start" is a strategy for reducing the tension in an argument. 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.
2. Next time you have a disagreement try these simple suggestions.
 - a. 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.
 - b. Limit your concern to a specific complaint. Complain, don't blame. Describe what you think is happening without judging or evaluating.
 - c. 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.
 - d. Use "I" statements where ever possible. Be clear and talk 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, feels, needs or thinks 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 (insert a specific request for a reasonable change).*"
3. When you do have an argument or disagreement, choose an emotional tone that will lead to a successful resolution. Engage in the conversation as though you were speaking with someone you love. The old saying "you can catch more flies with honey than vinegar" applies in relationships too.



- Harsh Start:
 - Begin with a negative or accusatory tone
 - Jump immediately to criticism and/or contempt
 - Use the Four Horsemen

NOTE: Adapted from Gottman

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Key Points:

1. Ask, "What is a "Harsh Start?" When one or both individuals begin a disagreement or conflict with a accusatory or negative emotional tone that includes criticism, sarcasm or contempt, it is considered to be a "Harsh Start". For example: "*You're never around when I need you. You're not a very good father.*"
2. 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.
3. Ask, "*Why do you think it is so hard to keep a "Harsh Start" from ending on a negative note?*" Some possible answers 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. They be more likely to dig in or press on with the attack in an effort to win the argument.*"
4. Let's look now at how a Harsh Start can deteriorate into something more problematic in the relationship. (Transition to the next slide).

Record your own notes here:



■ The Four Horsemen:

- Criticism
- Contempt
- Defensiveness
- Stonewalling



NOTE: Adapted from Gottman

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Key Points:

1. The “Four Horsemen” are:
 - a. Criticism
 - b. Contempt
 - c. Defensiveness
 - d. Stonewalling
2. Gottman found that 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.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Transition to next slide by saying, “*We will go into more detail about each of the Four Horsemen and how to counter them in the coming slides.*”

Record your own notes here:



Record your own notes here:

- **Definition:** A global complaint that typically includes a personality or character attack
- **Event:** Your Spouse came home late from the field and left stinky ACUs on the bathroom floor
 - Criticism: *“You’re such a slob! You never pick up after yourself!”*
 - Kind Request: *“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.”*

NOTE: Adapted from Gottman

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Key Points:

1. **Criticism:** All problems inherently include an underlying complaint, but not all complaints include criticism.
2. Criticism tends to be more “global” in nature and suggests something is defective with your partner; a complaint addresses a “specific” action or problem.
3. Criticism event example: Your Spouse came home late from the field and left stinky ACUs on the bathroom floor. You respond with, *“You’re such a slob! You never pick up after yourself.”*
4. Ask, *“How could you change this criticism to a more favorable response?”* One possible response might be: *“I know you’re tired from the field. It would be very helpful to me if left your dirty clothes by the washer.”* This request can be called a “Kind Request”. Ask, *“What makes this request kind?”* Discuss the acknowledgement of contributing factors, emphasize appreciation, keep the request specific.



- **Definition:** Mocking attitude or sarcasm that typically includes moral disgust
- **Event:** Your Spouse buys some things for you at Ranger Ricks; you respond with...
 - **Contempt:** *“Don’t spend my money on worthless S#&t.”*
 - **Respectful Request:** *“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.”*

NOTE: Adapted from Gottman

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Key Points:

1. **Contempt:** Any “biting” statement or behavior that mocks your partner or makes you seem like you think you are better than they are. Insults and name calling, placing yourself on a higher plane than your partner, etc.
2. Contempt event example: Your Spouse buys some things for you at “Ranger Ricks”. You respond with: *“Don’t spend my money worthless S#&t.”*
3. Ask, *“How could you change this contempt to a more favorable response?”* 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.”*
4. This request can be called a “Respectful Request”. Ask, *“What makes this request respectful?”* Discuss the acknowledgement of contributing factors such as the budget, emphasize appreciation, again, keep the request specific.

Record your own notes here:



- **Definition:** Warding off a perceived attack rather than listening to the concern
- **Event:** A Soldier says, “*You never support me and come to unit functions*”
 - **Defensiveness:** “*That’s not true. You never tell me in time to make arrangements.*”
 - **Acknowledging Need for Improvement:** “*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.*”

NOTE: Adapted from Gottman

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Key Points:

1. **Defensiveness:** Seeing self as the victim, warding off a perceived attack. Making excuses or justifying your behavior such as “*It’s not my fault...*”. 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 agreeing but end up disagreeing. Repeating yourself without paying attention to what the other person is saying.
2. Defensiveness rarely has the desired effect. The attacking Spouse generally does not back down or apologize and it generally ends up escalating the conflict.
3. Defensiveness event 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.*”
4. Ask, “*How could you change this defensiveness to a more favorable response?*” 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.*”

Record your own notes here:



- **Definition:** Withdrawing from an argument rather than listening or talking about a problem
- **Event:** You arrive late for dinner; you didn't call, and your Spouse says she's not happy with your behavior
 - **Stonewalling:** *Looking away, the silent treatment, walking out on the conversation*
 - **Attending to Unpleasant Topics:** *Pay attention with eye contact and body language*

NOTE: Adapted from Gottman

44

Key Points:

1. And the final "Horseman" **Stonewalling:** 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 news paper", "giving the silent treatment", being too busy to talk about it, too tired to do it, "tell it to the hand...".
2. Stonewalling is often preceded by "flooding" – the bodies physical response to feeling overwhelmed by an argument. 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."
3. Stonewalling event example: You're late for dinner, didn't call and now you're catching hell. You feel overpowered and leave the house.
4. Ask, "*How could you alter this Stonewalling example to a more favorable response?*" One possible response that incorporates "Attending to Unpleasant Topics" might be to *Pay attention with eye contact and body language. Acknowledge your mistake and move on.*

Record your own notes here:



Record your own notes here:

- Divide into groups of 2 or 3
- Work through 3 scenarios in the handout
- Look for ways to use a Gentle Start and avoid a Harsh Start and the Four Horsemen
- Complete the handout
- Activity Time: 10-15 minutes

45

Key Points:

1. This activity focuses on practicing “Gentle Starts” and avoiding the Four Horsemen of “Criticism”, “Contempt”, “Defensiveness”, and “Stonewalling.”
2. First, assess whether the start up is “harsh” or “gentle”.
3. Second, identify which of the Four Horsemen are being demonstrated.
4. Third, develop an alternative approach that can avoid a Harsh start up and the four horsemen (criticism, contempt, defensiveness, stonewalling).
5. Have the participants work through the “Four Horsemen” activity (see handout).
6. Take about 10-15 minutes for this activity.



Record your own notes here:

- Debrief

Key Points:

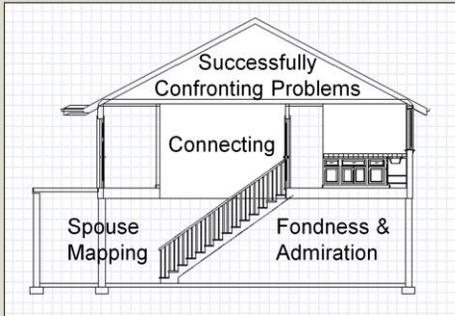
1. Debrief the Activity: Four Horsemen by identifying which responses were used for each of the three scenarios.
2. Ask, "*What was easy and what was difficult about this activity?*"

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Listen for repair attempts. If the debrief does not identify any repair attempt examples, mention them again and ask for how it might be used.



Record your own notes here:

- Create a loving friendship
- Learn to confront problems successfully
- Increase your positivity ratio



NOTE: Adapted from Gottman

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Key Points:

1. Let's quickly review. We started building our Sound Marital House by creating a Loving Friendship.
2. Ask, "Who can tell me the elements that make up the Loving Friendship?" [The correct answer: Spouse Mapping, Fondness and Admiration, Connecting].
3. From loving friendship we looked at some suggestions on confronting problems successfully using the "Gentle Start" and the "ATC" model. We included the "Four Horsemen" to illustrate how NOT to confront your problems.
4. Let's put the finishing touches on our Sound Marital House by reinforcing our understanding of the "Positivity Ratio". (Transition to the next slide).



- Your “Positivity Ratio” is the way you:
 - Think about your Spouse
 - Feel about your Spouse
 - Connect with your Spouse
- Unhappy Couples - $0.8:1$
- Happy Couples - $5:1$



NOTE: Adapted from Gottman

48

Key Points:

1. “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 shows you care about each other.
2. Those “things” can be large or small things. 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.
3. 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.
4. How does this ratio work? Think about the balance of your day...”
(Transition to the next slide).

Record your own notes here:


COMPREHENSIVE SOLDIER FITNESS
 STRONG MINDS. STRONG BODIES.

**Positivity Ratio:
 Unhappy Couples**

Scraped most of the ice off Spouse's car
Kissed before leaving for work

Complained my Spouse forgot to take the trash out
Refilled my coffee but didn't offer to take the dog to the park
Watched TV instead of listening to Spouse



0.8:1

49

Record your own notes here:

Key Points:

1. SLIDE BUILDS (continue to left-click the mouse until all examples are revealed) - here's an example of what an unhappy Couple looks like in terms of the Positivity Ratio.
2. Ask, "What do you notice about this slide?" 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.
3. 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.

COMPREHENSIVE SOLDIER FITNESS
STRONG MINDS

Positivity Ratio:
Happy Couples

Appreciated how much we've gone through together

Complained my Spouse forgot to take out the garbage

Kissed before leaving for work

Said "I love you" to Spouse



5:1

50

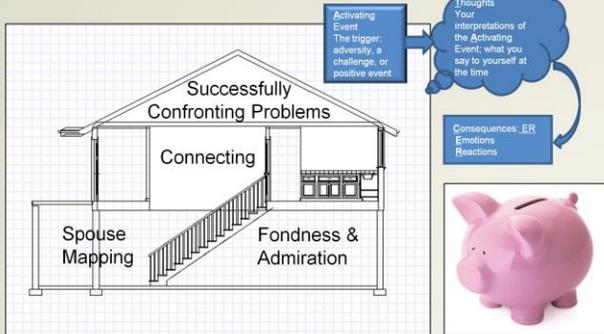
Record your own notes here:

Key Points:

1. SLIDE BUILDS (continue to left-click the mouse until all examples are revealed) - here's an example of what a happy Couple looks like in terms of the Positivity Ratio.
2. Ask, "What do you notice about this slide?" Point out that happy Couples engage in more positive thoughts, feelings and actions. It's not about the absence of negative experiences – happy Couples occasionally criticize one another or have negative thoughts about each other. Again it's a matter of balance.
3. Notice the focus here is on your Positivity Ratio because that's what you can control – not on tracking your partner's ratio.
4. Ask, "What role does Spouse Mapping have in keeping a healthy positivity ratio?" Discuss how knowing someone's likes and dislikes makes it easier to engage in positive actions and to build your Positivity Ratio.
5. Ask, "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?" Discuss options like giving yourself a time out, looking at other sources of stress, making sure you're taking care of yourself (getting enough stress, relaxing, etc.).



Record your own notes here:



NOTE: Adapted from Gottman

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Key Points:

1. We've now reviewed how to build a Sound Marital House.
2. Ask, "Which pieces do you recognize?" 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).
3. 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")
4. Review the "Four Horsemen" (and countering them) by covering:
 - a. "Criticism vs. Kind Request"
 - b. "Contempt vs. Respectful Request"
 - c. "Defensiveness vs. Acknowledging Need for Improvement"
 - d. "Stonewalling vs. Attending to Unpleasant Topics"
6. 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 ratio also helps build connection.
7. The deployment has the potential to help 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. (Transition to the next slide).



- Appreciating each other
- Gaining renewed admiration for each other
- Practicing new ways of connecting
- Being a role model of independence
- Mastering new tasks (*cooking, car maintenance*)
- Becoming fluent in “Army”

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Key Points:

1. For many Soldiers and Army Families, deployments offer opportunities for growth as individuals and as Families.
2. 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.
3. Deployments can provide opportunities to develop and master new skills and strengths that may not have existed before. Things like, fixing the plumbing, car maintenance or navigating the complexities of the Army system and becoming fluent in all things Army.
4. Even though deployments can be difficult for Families, relationships and individuals can grow from the experience.

Record your own notes here:



Record your own notes here:

What other strengths and skills does your Family have to face the demands of a deployment?



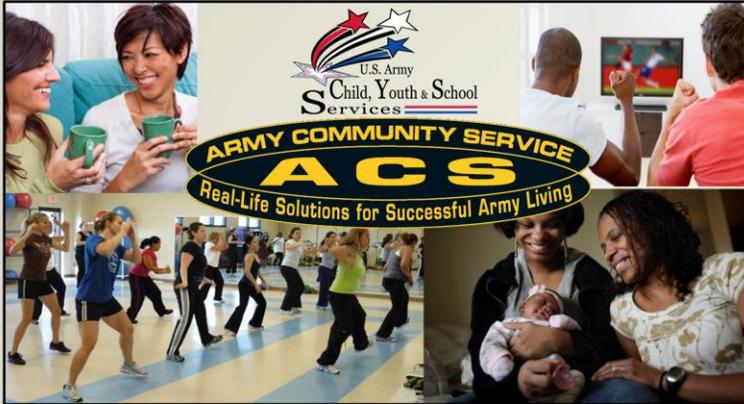
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Key Points:

1. Ask (individuals who have been through a deployment before as a couple), “*What personal strengths and skills enabled you to face the demands of deployment?*” Listen for what helped the experienced Spouses and/or Family members. Focus on themes of acceptance, humor, social support, relaxation or exercise, spiritual comfort, positive thinking skills, etc.
2. List their examples [Write down examples on butcher paper] for all to view.



- Build up a social support network
- Use community supports



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Key Points:

1. 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 in a deployed status.
2. When deployed, Soldiers will develop strong relationships with their fellow Soldiers.
3. At home, Spouses may also form new relationships within the Army community through the Family Readiness Group (FRG) and/or religious and/or social organizations or with neighbors. Existing relationships may also be strengthened and communication with other Family members may increase.
4. Don't wait until you need one of these resources to locate the contact information. Put together your own personal resource and support list complete with phone numbers and key points of contact. Having a list and knowing who to contact can help to reduce your anxiety and stress.
5. 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.
6. Ask, “*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?*” (Transition to the next slide).

Record your own notes here:



Record your own notes here:

- Network
 - Use rear detachment/FRG resources
- The “Truth” changes (policies, local differences and rumor)
 - Get information from credible sources
 - Double check hours and location of services
- Track key paperwork and documents (and keep them up-to-date)
- Until it happens – it may not happen
- Don’t necessarily accept the first answer – get a second opinion and/or get it writing
- Keep your sense of humor
- The Army UALOA

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Key Points:

1. This list covers is a behind-the-scenes look at what can help Family members in the event of a deployment.

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

2. Learn to network. Keep a ‘finger-tip’ card file of resources and connections you can refer to in the future. Use your FRG.
3. The “truth” is a moving target. Policies change and events happen that can alter information or the “truth”.
4. Make sure your source is credible. Most people have an opinion but that opinion may not be one you should bank on.
5. 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.
6. Have all of your documents with you, 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 provide protection in the event you have a house fire.
7. When Soldiers deploy, units play havoc with the schedule. 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.
8. Try to keep your sense of humor – you may need it.
9. 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.



Thank You



Key Points:

1. Ask if they have any questions and encourage them to either ask the question in the group or afterwards. Ensure you have time set aside after the training to be available.
2. Be sure to thank the participants. For example: *“Thank you for your time today and thank you for your service as an Army Family. Thank you for your Family’s commitment to our nation – Army Strong.”*

A Lesson Plan (LP), [081-RTO02003 Pre-Deployment Resilience Training for Spouses/Couples](#) is being developed for this Resilience Training presentation.

The “Key Points” outline included with the PowerPoint presentation should be considered guidelines; make this training your own and address the key points in the most effective way that is applicable to the participants receiving the training.

Record your own notes here: