

# Psych First Aid

## Prevention and Training for Combat Stress Injury

LCDR Bob Marietta  
Psychiatrist  
3d Marine Division

HM2 (FMF) Travis Sells  
Psychiatric Technician  
3d Marine Division

# Objective

- Development and Evolution of Psych First Aid
- Curriculum of Psych First Aid
- Received Feedback
- Discussion

# Established Need for Training

- OSCAR Doctrine
- Surgeon General
- 3d Division CG and Sgt Major
  - Training at small unit
- 3d Marine Regimental CO
  - Training for Corpsmen
- BUMED
  - Caring for the Caregiver

# Current Training Requirement for USMC

- Marine Corps Order 1510.89B – Individual Training Standards for Marine Corps Common Skills (MCCS)
  - MCCS.08.03 Identify the Five Stresses of Combat
  - MCCS.07.14 Prevention of Suicide
- Marine Corps Reference Publication 6-11C
  - Combat Stress
  - Suicide Awareness
- MARADMIN 112/07
  - Marine Operation Stress Surveillance & Training Program

# Current training for Corpsmen

- **No** section for mental health in:
  - Hospital Corpsman Sickcall Screeners Handbook BUMEDINST 6550:9A
  - Hospital Corpsman 3&2 10669-C, and Hospital Corpsman 1
  - Shipwreck's Go-By

# The Problem

- Marines and Corpsmen
  - Uncomfortable topic
  - Stigma
  - Not optimal training in Mental Health Issues

# We Wanted

- Training packages
  - Marines (small unit leaders)
  - Corpsmen
- Credible
  - Accepted by Marines and Corpsmen
  - Validated by USMC leaders
- Easily remembered and utilized
- Easily incorporated into existing training

# We Wanted

- Reduction of stigma
  - Improve comfort
- Leadership skills
  - Being approachable
  - Knowing your Marines
  - Be accountable for their welfare
- Unit Cohesion
  - Relationship between Marines, Corpsmen and Medical Officers

# Psych First Aid Concept

- Didactics
- Skill Stations
  - Vignettes
- Written and Practical Examination
- Certification Card
  - Similar to Red Cross

# Psych First Aid

- Advanced Psych First Aid for Corpsmen
  - FMF Corpsmen
  - 3 Days
- Psych First Aid for Warriors
  - Marines and Small Unit Leaders
  - 4 Hours

# Psych First Aid for Warriors

- Introduction and 5 R's
  - Didactics
  - Skill Station #1 – Vignettes
- Combat Stress
  - Didactics
  - Skill Station #2 – After Action Review
- Alcohol and Getting Help
  - Didactics
  - Skill Station #3 – Vignettes

# 5 R's

1. Recognize – Identification
2. Remove – Privacy, Safety
3. Reassure – Communication skills
4. Replenish – Basic human needs
5. Refer or Return

# Adv Psych First Aid for Corpsman

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
Introduction	Listening Skills	Body's Response to Combat
Stigma and Privacy	Suicide	Referring and Secondary Resources
Symptom Clusters	Psychological First Aid	Review
Mental Status Examination	Substance Abuse	Practical and Written Examination
Privacy and Stigma	Clinical Vignettes	
Exercise		

# Sample Vignette

LCPL Leatherneck is standing guard by himself in guard post #2 which is located on a rooftop. The area had suffered several mortar attacks in recent weeks. During one attack LCPL Leatherneck was slightly wounded by shrapnel, requiring a few stitches. On another occasion he had suffered a grazing bullet wound to the arm while standing guard in that same post. Despite two close calls he continued to be an upbeat, motivated Marine.

On this day as he was standing guard a Marine squad was ambushed as they were entering the forward operating base directly in front of his position. He engages the enemy with his M16 and the enemy returns fire, impacting his guard post but not wounding the Marine. A few minutes after the firefight, LCPL Leatherneck calls the Corporal of the Guard stating he needs help. The Corporal of the Guard finds LCPL Leatherneck laying in a fetal position in his guard post shaking and crying uncomfortably. There are no physical wounds.

# Sample Vignette

- “Acute combat stress injury”
- Skill Demonstration Checklist:
  - Recognize
  - Remove
  - Replenish
    - “3 hots and a cot”
  - Return or Refer
    - Refer to medical

# Senior Enlisted Feedback

- 13 Course Participants
  - E-8's and E-9's
  - All with prior combat experience except for 1
- Comments
  - Consistent with Marine Corps leadership principles and traits
    - Know your Marines, Look out for their Welfare, Tact
  - Implement at staff academies for all leadership
  - Include in pre-deployment block training

# Warrior Feedback

- Comments
  - This training “opened my mind to a different way of dealing and handling trouble situations”
  - “Some (of the samples) have happened to me with my Marines.” “I know how to identify and know how and where to get help”
  - “Get it established in PME schools”

# Hospital Corpsman Feedback

- Comments
  - I would recommend this training to others because “we do not receive any of the training in corps school or field med”.
  - “It can help personnel understand body/face language while talking to a patient. ‘not every person you see is malingering’”
  - “I feel more equipped to handle mental health issues as opposed to before where I was uncomfortable to help my Marines with their problems”

# Future Projects

- Division Order
- Psych First Aid for Families

# Contact Information

- LCDR Robert Marietta
  - robert.marietta@usmc.mil
- HM2 Travis Sells
  - travis.d.sells@usmc.mil
- DSN: (315) 622-9548