

# Integrating Family/Relationship Wellness and COSC



**Shane Arnett, LCSW, CAP Supervisor  
&  
Yemanja Krasnow, MA, Prevention Specialist**

# Objectives

---

- ❑ **Raise awareness of the transition from theater to garrison faced by warriors and its effects on family**
- ❑ **Establish the significance that family relationships can have on reducing or intensifying COS reactions.**
- ❑ **Identify strategies for integrating families and key players into post deployment programs**
- ❑ **Understanding available resources and strategies for collaboration.**

# From Theater to Garrison:

## Understanding the Context of transition

---

- ❑ Transition from a high tempo theater environment to a less threatening and lower tempo Garrison setting.
- ❑ The purpose and magnitude of responsibilities and actions in theater can overshadow and minimize the value of routine tasks involving work and family.
- ❑ Emotional detachment required to cope in a theater environment can be a hurdle to reintegrating in the family.

# Integrating Relationship Wellness

---

- 1. The context of transitioning from Theater places warriors are at a higher risk for relationship problems:**
  - ❑ Transitioning from theater to garrison will exacerbate existing relationship problems and dysfunction.
  - ❑ You can't assume that families have the skills to manage or navigate through the transition
  - ❑ Initiates a dialogue, normalizes conflicts, and provides a set of coping skills that can be used in other areas of disagreement after the "Honey moon" period ends.

# Family Relationships and Wellness

---

- 1. Interpersonal and Family relationships have a significant impact on the resolution or exacerbation of COS reactions:**
  1. High levels of social support have the capacity to decrease the severity of combat stress reactions.
  2. Providing services interpersonally with couples increases cohesion and supportiveness, and creates a shared understanding. It can assist spouses in not personalizing behavioral responses related to combat operational stress reactions.
  3. Well equipped couples and families can insulate warriors and provide an environment to manage COS reactions, before they intensify.

# Relationship Wellness and Warriors

---

- 1. Creates a safety net for warriors if COS reactions surface or intensify:**
  1. You can't assume warriors will recognize when they are struggling with COS reactions, and spouses and families will probably be the first to recognize. "Can't see the forest for the trees"
  2. Other Warriors may not be the best equipped to recognize these reactions as they may be struggling themselves
  3. Relationship workshops help establish rapport with counselors and helping professionals in a manner that is accepted and has minimal stigma. It can also create an avenue for warriors to seek further assistance if needed.

# II. Key Players Involvement

---

**CO / Families / Services**

# Selling to the CO

---

## Focus on long-term outcomes

- ❑ Reduction of Family Disruption
- ❑ Reduction of FAP cases/alcohol incidents
- ❑ Reduction in Detention
- ❑ High Unit Morale
- ❑ Unit Effectiveness
- ❑ Unit Readiness
- ❑ Flexibility: Families will be integrated based on each unit pre and post deployment training/program set up (i.e., as part of WRT, welcome dinner night, retreat, return & reunion etc.)

# Data

MCCS Demographics Update, December 2007: The Marine Corps “ A Young and Vigorous Force.”

---

- ❑ 179,862 dependants, w/45% of Marines married (68% officers, 42.5% enlisted).
- ❑ Average age of Marine at first child birth is 23.5 years.
- ❑ A high operational tempo associated with the “long war” and an active duty dependant population that is 96% of the active duty service member population.
- ❑ The need for effective family readiness/wellness programs relative to CO Stress is self-evident and over due.

# Selling to the Military Families

---

- ❑ Ongoing education on the effects of CO stress on the family before, during and after deployment
- ❑ Making the case without causing panic
- ❑ Marketing (food, day care availability, fun family activities, FROs, key volunteers etc.)
- ❑ Easy sell if leadership has made these events and opportunities part of the unit culture

# Services, Collaboration, Resources

---

- ❑ Collaborate/use resources available to your Unit (MCCS Personal Service Center, MCCS Counseling & Advocacy Program, FOCUS Project, FROs, Family Team Building, Key Volunteers, Navy-Marine Relief Society, Red Cross, OSCAR Team, Chaplains, Military One Source etc.)
- ❑ Close the Gap between services.

# III. Plan of Action

---

## Key Components

# Key Components

---

- ❑ **Command Emphasis** — Commanders must establish full participation in family wellness programs as the norm, and make every effort to invite, encourage and provide incentives for their unit members and families / close relations to take part.
- ❑ **Reinforcement** — providing on-going education and support to family members / close relations during an operational deployment.
- ❑ **Reintegration** — providing a relationship enhancement opportunity, (workshop, retreat, etc) in the immediate post-deployment phase.— No “death by power point”, No “check in the box” briefs,
  - INTERACTIVE
  - Solution Focused
  - Skill based
  - Tie in mutual education on COS and transition
- ❑ **Intervention** — insuring an array of intervention services, ranging from informal counseling to family education (ie FOCUS) to formal family therapy (CAP), are readily available and well publicized.

---

**Question / Answer / Feedback**