

A photograph of four Marines in full combat gear, including helmets and vests, walking through a debris-strewn urban area. They are carrying equipment and appear to be in a tactical movement. The background shows damaged buildings and a dusty ground.

Commanders Guide For the Utilization of Operational Stress Control and Readiness (OSCAR) Mental Health Professionals

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Photograph of 3rd Bn, 1st Marines, by Lucian Reed, Fallujah, November 2004

**I Don't Know What This Thing Does,
But I Don't Think I Want One**



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Background on OSCAR

1999	Operational Stress Control and Readiness (OSCAR) established in 2d MARDIV
2004	MROC established OSCAR as small pilot in three active divisions (nine MH providers)
2006	HQMC, BUMED, and MEFs began development of CONOPS to expand OSCAR and POM for it
2007	MH Task Force (MHTF) reported to Congress: “Embed mental health providers in units.”
2007	DoD response to MHTF: “We will embed MH professionals... rely on USMC OSCAR model.”
2007	Three MEF CGs signed Urgent Universal Need Statement (UUNS) for OSCAR personnel
2008	MCCDC and N1 made implementing OSCAR the highest priority for medical support of FMF

Where's the Data?

- **Data proving the effectiveness of embedded MH teams have been hard to come by**
- **Center for Naval Analyses (CNA) 2006 study of USMC OSCAR Pilot:**
 - Implementation across MEFs and time inconsistent
 - OSCAR Program Logic Model seemed valid
 - But no conclusions about efficacy could be drawn
- **Navy has found that psychologists organic to carrier task forces reduce MEDEVACs**



What Is the Need?

- **Need a culture of support for psychological health (PH) in all operational units**
 - To reduce stigma
 - To promote prevention
 - To recognize and treat stress problems early
 - To promote wellness of body, mind, and spirit
- **Need better access to MH care everywhere Marines train and fight**
- **Need MH professionals who understand the specific mission and challenges of each unit**
- **Need a full partnership between unit leaders, chaplains, and medical and MH professionals**



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Organic Assets Work For You

- **The OSCAR Program extends the idea that has already worked well for organic medical and religious ministry personnel to the area of mental health**
- **Objectives of organic OSCAR**
 - Force preservation and readiness
 - Long-term health and well-being of service members and families
- **OSCAR is a two-way bridge between operational and MH cultures**

OSCAR Mission and Capabilities

- **Mission:** to support commanders' psychological health requirements through consultation, training, prevention, monitoring, early intervention, and clinical mental health service capabilities
- **Personnel:** mental health teams made up of
 - One psychiatrist, psychologist, social worker, or clinical nurse specialist (all licensed practitioners)
 - One or more psychiatric technician corpsmen
- **Organization:** assigned to unit medical officer
- **Doctrine:** to be published by HQMC & BUMED
- **Training:** to be provided by HQMC & BUMED
- **Facilities and Materiel:** minimal



Core OSCAR Elements (from DoD WG)

- **Doctrinal**
- **Organizational**
- **Functional**



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Core OSCAR Doctrinal Elements

- **Organic and fully integrated into life of units**
- **Clearly defined role in both training and operational environments**
- **Must be present in the field during training and operations at least at company level**
- **Must be visible and become known and trusted by unit members**
- **Primary focus must be to improve PH of the unit as a whole**
- **Secondary focus is to identify and treat individuals with MH problems**
- **Multidisciplinary team approach**



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Core OSCAR Organizational Elements

- **Line commander ownership in units**
- **Teams assigned at level of regiments, groups**
- **Overseen and supported at programmatic level by multiple departments & agencies:**
 - HQMC M&RA
 - MCCDC, TECOM
 - Health Services
 - Religious Ministry Services
- **Multidisciplinary staffing of teams**
- **Active and Reserve integration**
- **Supported by large enough professional communities to sustain op tempo and career progressions**



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Core OSCAR Functional Elements

- **Command consultation**
- **Outreach, presence in the field**
- **Surveillance, identification, monitoring**
- **Resilience promotion**
 - Deployment cycle COSC training
 - Mentoring
- **Liaison with other sources of support & care**
- **Intervention**
 - Advanced stress first aid
 - Unit level interventions
 - Individual treatment
- **Care-giver support**



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Commander's Role in OSCAR

- **Welcome OSCAR personnel into units and staffs**
- **Learn OSCAR team's capabilities and limitations**
- **Train OSCAR personnel in unit's mission, capabilities, and culture**
- **Give clear guidance**
- **Give clear feedback**
- **Submit Lessons Learned regarding OSCAR**



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Questions?