Operational Stress Control
OSC Agenda

- Stress Defined
- The Stress Continuum Model
- Taking Action
- Leadership Functions
- Principles of Resilience
- Resources
What Is "Stress"?

“The process by which we respond to challenges to the body, mind or spirit.”

Relevant Training, Expectation Management, and Leadership Support are foundations for effective Operational Stress Control.
# Stress Continuum Model

**READY**
- Effective communication
- Socially, spiritually active
- Calm and confident
- Strong, cohesive units and families
- Emotionally and physically healthy

**REACTING**
- Changes from normal behaviors
- Poor focus, loss of interest
- Irritable and pessimistic
- Temporary and mild distress

**INJURED**
- Unresolved loss, trauma, wear and tear, inner conflict
- Social isolation
- Sleeplessness and self medicating
- More severe and lasting effects

**ILL**
- Constant and disabling distress
- Depression, severe anxiety
- Symptoms get worse or get better then worse again
- Relationships and work suffer

## To Stay Mission Ready
- Keep fit, eat right, relax

## To Recover and Build Resilience
- Get adequate sleep, talk to someone you trust

## To Begin Healing
- Talk to a chaplain, counselor, or medical provider

## To Get Help
- Seek medical treatment

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**Unit Leader Responsibility**

**Individual, Shipmate, Family Responsibility**

**Caregiver Responsibility**
The Goal of Navy OSC is to move towards GREEN
In Other Words…

Check the Oil?  (Prevention)  OR  Repair the Motor?  (Intervention)
Green Zone – Ready and Healthy

READY

Sailors:
- Calm and steady; Confident
- Well-trained and qualified
- Healthy rest and diet
- Regularly working out, staying fit
- Physically/socially/spiritually active

Commands:
- Positive command climate
- High morale; strong cohesion
- Good order and discipline

Families:
- Active parenting
- Engaged in family routines/activities
- Children functioning well at home and in school
Yellow Zone - Recognizing Stress

REACTING

Sailors:
- Feeling anxious, irritable, worrying
- Cutting corners on the job
- Poor diet or trouble sleeping
- Apathy, loss of interest

Commands:
- Deferred maintenance
- Minor discipline problems

Families:
- Children having trouble in school
- Couple not communicating well
- Family time compromised
- Reduced intimacy
Stress Reactions
- Very common
- Always temporary
- Mild distress or loss of function
- Usually self-correcting

Stress Injuries
- Uncommon
- May leave lasting changes
- More severe distress or loss of function
- May heal faster with help
What Are “Stress Injuries”? 

- Wounds to the mind or brain caused by intense or prolonged stress:
  - **Impact** → **Trauma**
  - **Wear and Tear** → **Fatigue**
  - **Loss** → **Grief**
  - **Inner Conflict** → **Injury to Core Beliefs**

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Orange Zone: Recognizing Stress Injuries

**INJURED**

**Sailors:**
- Loss of control; panic or rage
- Can’t fall or stay asleep
- Intense guilt; Disruption of moral values
- Suicidal or homicidal thoughts

**Commands:**
- Low morale, divided camps
- Equipment out of service
- Significant discipline problems

**Families:**
- Loss of closeness/intimacy
- Verbal or physical abuse

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Red Zone: Stress Illnesses

- Stress injury symptoms that persist

- Symptoms that get worse over time instead of better

- Symptoms that get better for awhile but then come back worse

All stress illnesses MUST be referred to Medical for evaluation

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**OSC Decision Matrix**

**Sailor Under Stress**

**Ready:**
- Maintain
- Monitor

**Reacting:**
- Rest
- Manage
- Discuss

**Injured:**
- Safe / Calm
- Rest (24-72 hrs)
- Refer
- Mentor

**Ill:**
- Refer
- Comply
- Mentor
- Reintegrate

**DISTRESS or LOSS OF FUNCTION?**
- YES
- NO

**Is it SEVERE?**
- YES
- NO

**Has it PERSISTED?**
- YES
- NO

**Distress**

- SEVERE Distress
- PERSISTENT Distress

**Decision Matrix**

- Operational Stress Control
- www.navynavstress.com
Operational Stress Control Assessment and Response (OSCAR)
Assessing the Psychological Health of Your Unit

**Observe** - Actively observe Sailors.

**State Observations** – Share observations with member *in behavioral terms*, relate to mission and interpersonal issues.

**Clarify Role** - State why you are concerned about the behavior; *validate why you’re addressing the issue*.

**Ask** - Seek clarification; try to *understand* the other person’s perception of the behaviors.

**Respond** - Clarify concern if indicated; discuss desired outcomes in behavioral terms; *identify options/resources*. 
Take Action

WHAT DO I DO?

1. Sleep and Rest
2. Eat right, stay hydrated
3. PT
4. Spend time with people you like and trust
5. Attend Spiritual needs
6. Take your mind off worries you can’t fix
7. Encourage self and others
8. Leaders:
   - Do positive after-action reviews
   - Recognize and reward accomplishments

1. Administer Stress First Aid (COSFA Model)
2. Talk with Leadership
3. Seek guidance from chaplains, counselors, or medical staff
4. Leaders:
   - Take immediate action to address command problems
**Combat Operational Stress First Aid (COSFA)**

**Seven Cs of Stress First Aid:**

1. **CHECK**
   - Assess: observe and listen

2. **COORDINATE**
   - Get help, refer as needed

3. **COVER**
   - Get to safety ASAP

4. **CALM**
   - Relax, slow down, refocus

5. **CONNECT**
   - Get support from others

6. **COMPETENCE**
   - Restore effectiveness

7. **CONFIDENCE**
   - Restore self-esteem

**Diagram:**
- Primary Aid
- Calm
- Connect
- Competence
- Confidence
- Wellness
- Continuous Aid
- Cover
- Check & Coordinate
Core Leadership Functions

Strengthen: (“Train like you’re going to fight”)
- Create Confidence
- Forewarn
- Expose to stress in training
- Foster Unit Cohesion

Identify: (“Know your people”)
- Know crew stress load
- Recognize reactions, injury

Mitigate: (“Work smarter, not harder”)
- Remove unnecessary stressors
- Ensure adequate sleep/rest
- After-Action Reviews (AARs)

Treat: (“Use your resources”)
- Rest and Restoration (24-72 hours)
- Chaplain
- Medical
- FFSP Programs

Reintegrate: (“Expect success”)
- Keep with unit if at all possible
- Expect return to full duty
- Don’t allow retribution or harassment
- Communicate with treating professionals (both ways)

Successfully handling a stressful event builds resiliency!
**Principles of Resilience**

- **Predictability** - Adverse effects less likely when event is predictable

- **Controllability** - Sense of control leads to positive results

- **Relationships** - Strong relationships increase resilience to stress

- **Trust** - Sets positive expectations, decreases stress

- **Meaning** - Provides greater sense of purpose
Additional Resources and Support

- Shipmates
- Chain of Command
- Chaplains/RP’s
- Providers (MDs, PAs, NPs)
- Corpsmen
- USO / MWR
- MST / MCT