



MALS-12 COMMANDING OFFICER'S POLICY ON COMBAT AND OPERATIONAL STRESS CONTROL



We must be ready to "**fight and win tonight**." In order for us to accomplish that we must have the ability to train and sustain a combat ready and resilient force capable of accomplishing our mission. Combat and Operational Stress Control (COSC) concepts assist us in maintaining warfighting capabilities.

Stress is the process by which we respond to mental, physical, spiritual and emotional challenges; stress is a daily part of Marine Corps life. Understanding stress reactions and proactively addressing stressors increases mission readiness, preserves the force, and promotes the long-term health of our Marines and Sailors. We must all find ways to address it for ourselves, our Marines/Sailors, our families, and our squadrons in order to promote psychological resilience.

The COSC five Core Leader Functions will form the foundation for our command COSC program:

Strengthen: Leaders will use existing tools for training and developing Marines to strengthen mentally, physically, spiritually and socially against the negative effects of combat or operational stress. This includes tough training already being conducted to develop technical proficiency and increase unit cohesion (to include families). Leaders also build strength through their own conduct and example, setting high standards and demanding excellence and by giving clear information and guidance.

Mitigate: Risk mitigation also applies to stress. Many stressors can be avoided through planning and the impact of others can be reduced, giving Marines a greater reserve to address those stressors that cannot be avoided. Leaders should be aware of the effects of stress on each Marine and help them develop their own coping strategies in order to empower decision making and build resilience.

Identify: Promptly identifying and addressing signs of stress in our Marines before escalation is critical. Know and use the Stress Continuum and stress decision flowchart.

Treat: Treatment is about taking action. It begins with self-care and peer support. This may range from addressing personal issues while manageable, talking to a Marine about an upcoming event to share lessons learned, or may lead to referring the Marine for further help from a chaplain or medical professionals.

Reintegrate: Regardless of the level of a Marine's treatment, they will be assisted during the process and will be received into the unit completely and respectfully once recovered. The expectation is that Marines with stress issues are and will continue to be effective members of the unit.

In conclusion, we must recognize stressful situations and how our Marines react to those situations, which will vary among each individual Marine.

Semper Fidelis,

Michael R. Lupient

Lieutenant Colonel, United States Marine Corps
Commanding Officer, Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 12