

Marine Aviation Weapons and Tactics Squadron One

Commander's Combat and Operational Stress Control (COSC) Policy



Introduction: The Marine Corps develops totally fit leaders resilient in body, mind, spirit and social areas of life; enabling them to assume progressively greater responsibilities. Stress is the process by which we respond to mental, physical, spiritual and emotional challenges, Stress is a daily part of Marine Corps life. We use stress to build strength. Understanding stress reactions and proactively addressing stressors increases mission readiness, preserves the force and promotes the long-term health of our Marine. All Marines must find ways to address it for themselves, their Marines, their family and their unit in order to promote psychological resilience.

We must have the ability to train and sustain a combat ready and resilient force capable of accomplishing any mission. The Operational Stress Control and Readiness (OSCAR) Teams will assist us in maintaining our warfighting capabilities by addressing the impacts of stress in the unit. We will each participate in Combat and Operational Stress Control (COSC) activities, enhance force preservation, readiness and the long-term health and well-being of Marines and their families.

The COSC five Core Leader Functions promote principles of wellness, prevention, early intervention, identification, reintegration, reduction of stigma and will form the foundation for this command's COSC program. The five Core Leader Functions are:

1. **Strengthen:** Leaders will use their 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. Unit cohesion also includes families, who will be offered COSC events in order to strengthen them against the stressors of military life. Leaders also build strength through their own conduct and example, setting high standards and demanding excellence and by giving clear information and guidance.
2. **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. This is not a pass from difficulty or from tough training but is simply good leadership; 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, effective planning and build resilience. This will also help Marines prepare for future stressors.
3. **Identify:** Promptly identifying and addressing signs of stress in their Marines before they escalate is critical for leaders. Know and use the Stress Continuum and stress decision flowchart. This is an important aspect of good small unit leadership and combat skills.

4. 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. If a Marine is referred for medical intervention, leaders must remain involved and aware of that Marine's ongoing requirements throughout the treatment cycle. This includes those transitioning out of the Marine Corps.

5. 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. This may require further mentorship and possibly some understanding of limitations imposed by their recovery. The expectation is that Marines with stress issues are and will continue to be effective members of the unit.

Semper Fidelis,



Eric D. Purcell
Commanding Officer