

Post-Deployment Resilience Training for Spouses/Couples
081-RTO02007 / Version 1
15 July 2011

SECTION I. ADMINISTRATIVE DATA

All Courses Including This Lesson

<u>Course Number</u>	<u>Version</u>	<u>Course Title</u>
None		

Task(s) Taught(*) or Supported

<u>Task Number</u>	<u>Task Title</u>
None	

Reinforced Task(s)

<u>Task Number</u>	<u>Task Title</u>
None	

Administrative/Academic Hours

The administrative/academic hours required to teach this lesson are as follows:

<u>Academic</u>	<u>Resident Hours / Methods</u>	
Yes	1 hr 40 mins	Conference/Discussion
Yes	0 hrs 0 mins	Test Review
Yes	0 hrs 0 mins	Test
<hr/>		
Total Hours:	2 hrs 0 mins	

Test Lesson Number

<u>Hours</u>	<u>Lesson Number</u>
None	

Prerequisite Lesson(s)

<u>Lesson Number</u>	<u>Lesson Title</u>
None	

Clearance Access

Security Level: Unclassified
 Requirements: There are no clearance or access requirements for the lesson.

Foreign Disclosure Restrictions

FD5. This product/publication has been reviewed by the training/educational developers in coordination with the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research (WRAIR) FD authority. This product is releasable to students from all requesting foreign countries without restrictions.

References

<u>Number</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Additional Information</u>
0-7679-1191-1	The Resilience Factor, Karen Reivich, Ph.D and Andrew Shattè, Ph.D	14 Oct 2003	
Adler, A.B., Bliese, P.B., & Castro, C.A. (Eds.)	Deployment Psychology: The Impact of Combat on Mental Health. American Psychological Association: Washington D.C.	2011	
Castro, C.A., Adler, A.B., & Britt, T.W. (Eds.)	Military Life: The Psychology of Serving in Peace and Combat, Vol. 3: Military Family. Praeger Security International: Westport, CT.	2006	
ISBN: 0-609-80579-7	Gottman, J.M. & Silver, N. The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work	1999	

Student Study Assignments

Before class: none.

During class: participate in group discussions.

After class: fill out critique sheets (*where applicable*).

Instructor Requirements

One Army Community Service (ACS) Master Resilience Trainer (MRT) Course qualified instructor per specified group.

Additional Support Personnel Requirements

<u>Name</u>	<u>Stu Ratio</u>	<u>Qty</u>	<u>Man Hours</u>
None			

Equipment Required

<u>Id Name</u>	<u>Stu Ratio</u>	<u>Instr Ratio</u>	<u>Spt</u>	<u>Qty</u>	<u>Exp</u>
6515-01-1706 COMPUTER SYSTEM	0:0	0:0	No	1	No
6730-00-224-9819 SCREEN, PROJECTION	0:0	0:0	No	1	No
6730-01-471-2476 PROJECTOR, MULTIMEDIA	0:0	0:0	Yes	1	No
7510-01-424-4867 EASEL, (STAND ALONE) WITH PAPER	0:0	0:0	No	1	No

(Note: Asterisk before Id indicates a TADSS.)

Materials Required

Instructor Materials:

081-RTO02007/1 Lesson Plan (LP); 081-RTO02007/1 PowerPoint Presentation; Video Clip: "Marriage Coach.wmv" (2 min 41 sec).

Student Materials:
081-RTO02007/1 Student Handout (SH).

**Classroom,
Training Area,
and Range
Requirements**

17120
ORGANIZATIONAL CLASSROOM

**Ammunition
Requirements**

<u>DODIC- Name</u>	<u>Exp</u>	<u>Stu Ratio</u>	<u>Instr Ratio</u>	<u>Spt Qty</u>
None				

**Instructional
Guidance**

NOTE: Before presenting this lesson, instructors must thoroughly prepare by studying this lesson and identified reference material.

Before Class:

Review and become familiar with *The Resilience Factor, Karen Reivich, Ph.D and Andrew Shattè, Ph.D, 14 October 2003* and *The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work, J.M. Gottman and N. Silver, 1999.*

Read and study this Lesson Plan (LP) and be prepared to conduct this training. This training is designed to be presented as a single, two-hour event or as two, one-hour events.

The resilience training material is intended to be presented using a facilitated discussion methodology thereby creating a student-centered learning experience. The linked PowerPoint slides are intended to structure the discussion and reinforce key points. An easel with butcher block paper for listing participant (student) responses has been listed in Section I, Equipment Required for Instruction; however, a blackboard/ whiteboard or equivalent may be substituted.

Instructor must ensure pre-classroom checks have been completed (audiovisual equipment, microphone/PA functioning, video sound check). Ensure sufficient Student Handouts are available for each participant.

During Class:

Conduct the training in accordance with this LP.

This LP notes a possible ten-minute break during Enabling Learning Objective (ELO) B, Learning Step/Activity 1 (after Slide 25) for use when this training is conducted as a single, two-hour event.

After Class:

Collect all recoverable materials and issue/collect completed critique sheets (*where applicable*).

**Proponent
Lesson Plan
Approvals**

<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Date</u>
Michael E. Rinehart	DJ-03	Training Specialist	15 Jul 2011

SECTION II. INTRODUCTION

Method of Instruction: Conference/Discussion
Instr Type (I:S Ratio): MRT Qualified Instructor (Military or Civilian) (1:30)
Time of Instruction: 5 mins
Instructional Strategy: Small Group Instruction

Motivator

Show Slide 1 (Post-Deployment Resilience Training for Spouses/Couples).

This resilience training module was developed by the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research (WRAIR) and is based on concepts developed by the Gottman Institute and the Master Resilience Trainer (MRT) curriculum developed by the University of Pennsylvania.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Availability of Post-Deployment Resilience Training for Spouses/Couples is mandated as part of the Army Deployment Cycle Support (DCS) Checklist (DA Form 7631, March 2007) and Army Directive 2007-02. This and other DCS resilience training modules can be found at www.resilience.army.mil.

As an ACS MRT, you can prevent this important training from becoming just another “check-the-block” event in the Soldier and Family member’s eyes. The outline contained in this LP and the instructor notes included with the PowerPoint presentation should be considered guidelines; however, take the opportunity to make this training your own and address the key points in the most effective way that is applicable to the participants receiving the training.

Post-Deployment Resilience Training for Spouses/Couples is part of a series of Operational (*Deployment-Cycle*) resilience training modules designed to prepare Soldiers, leaders and Family members for the unique challenges and demands of Army life and combat and operational deployments.

Terminal Learning Objective

NOTE: Inform the students of the following Terminal Learning Objective requirements.

At the completion of this lesson, you [the student] will:

Action:	Describe the post-deployment reintegration process for Soldiers and Family members and apply skills and techniques to mitigate problems and build relationship resilience
Conditions:	In a classroom environment, given a group of military Spouses and/or military Spouses and Soldiers (Couples) having recently completed a deployment in support of combat or other military operations
Standards:	Described the post-deployment reintegration process for Soldiers and Family members and applied skills and techniques to mitigate problems and build relationship resilience. This consisted of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identifying the wide range of thoughts and feelings associated with long separations and the reintegration process• Identifying techniques of improving relationship resilience by maintaining and strengthening a Sound Marital House

Safety Requirements

Conduct a safety brief prior to training as required IAW organization and local installation policies. Address all safety issues that are unique to the environment in which the training will be conducted (e.g., fire evacuation plan, heat/cold weather concerns, emergency situations, etc.).

Risk Assessment Level

Low - Ensure, prior to the commencement of training, Risk Assessments have been completed IAW with local policies and FM 100-14, have been approved and are available on-site.

Environmental Considerations

NOTE: It is the responsibility of all Soldiers and DA Civilians to protect the environment from damage.

Based on its commitment to environmental protection, all instruction will be conducted in ways that minimize environmental impacts. Instructors will comply with all environmental laws and regulations. This includes all federal, state, local, and Host Nation laws, some of which are outlined in TC 3-34.489, *The Soldier and the Environment*, 26 Oct 2001, App. B and the environmental risk assessment checklist found in TC 3-24.489, App. A.

Evaluation

Post-Deployment Resilience Training for Spouses/Couples invites discussion and personal insights from all participants receiving this training. This resilience training module encompasses instructor facilitated discussions and activities designed to stimulate analysis and identify any areas that may require extra emphasis or review.

Instructional Lead-In

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: As a reminder, prior to the commencement of training, have all participants ensure they turn off cell phones, Black Berrys and any other electronic device(s) that may interfere with training.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Greet the participants: *Good morning/afternoon, this resilience training module is designed to be interactive. We encourage you to participate in the activities and discussions and to ask questions in order to make this training more meaningful and valuable for everyone. Please turn off any electronic devices (cell phones, Black Berrys, etc.) and give me your attention.*

Today we're going to focus on the deployment you completed as a Family. It's been said that "*When a Soldier joins the Army, so does his/her Family.*" It's also true that "*When a Soldier goes through a deployment, so does his/her Family.*" We're going to talk about the "ups and downs" some Couples experience during reintegration. We'll discuss the wide range of thoughts and emotions that are common for both Soldiers and Spouses during the reunion. We'll also talk about the changes that may have occurred during the deployment that affect the entire Family. We'll also discuss the Signature Family Strengths that impact relationships and can strengthen relationship resilience.

It would be helpful if all of you who have completed previous deployments share some of your experiences with the other Spouses and Couples attending today. It's important to learn from one another so you can benefit from someone else's experiences without having to make your own mistakes.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Occasionally participants may express the sentiment that, since they've already attended Post-Deployment Resilience Training for Spouses/Couples following a previous deployment, there's nothing to be gained from them attending this training again. In such cases it may be helpful to suggest to the Spouse/Couple that some circumstances may be different regarding their deployment, such as: the environment, location and/or mission. The circumstances of their personal life may have also changed since the previous deployment. For example, they may have PCSd (*Permanent Change of Station*) since they last received this resilience module. They may be a new parent or their children are in a different stage of development. It may also be a benefit to suggest to them that sharing their previous deployment/post-deployment experiences with other Spouses/Couples may be valuable to the group.

SECTION III. PRESENTATION

NOTE: Inform the students of the Enabling Learning Objective requirements.

A. ENABLING LEARNING OBJECTIVE

ACTION:	Identify the wide range of thoughts and feelings associated with long separations and the reintegration process
CONDITIONS:	In a classroom environment, given a group of military Spouses and/or military Spouses and Soldiers (Couples) having recently completed a deployment in support of combat or other military operations
STANDARDS:	Identified the wide range of thoughts and feelings associated with long separations and the reintegration process. This consisted of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognizing the contradictory feelings associated with the Combat Veteran’s Paradox and the Reunion Paradox • Describing the Soldier and Family member changes that will require adaptation during the reintegration process • Describing the role Signature Family Strengths play in adapting the roles and responsibilities and reinforcing Family connections

1. ELO A – LSA 1. Learning Step / Activity 1. Soldier and Family Reintegration

Method of Instruction: Conference/Discussion
Instr Type (I;S Ratio): MRT Qualified Instructor (Military or Civilian)(1:30)
Time of Instruction: 0 hrs 15 mins
Instructional Strategy: Small Group Instruction
Media Type: PowerPoint Presentation
Security Classification: Unclassified

Show Slide 2 (Coming Home).

- a. It took resilience to get through the deployment. Long separations associated with a deployment can be hard on Families and relationships. The fact you’ve gotten through it successfully demonstrates that you are a resilient Family.

When Soldiers return home from a deployment, Couples often report there are some “ups and downs” during the reintegration phase.

What can you expect now during reintegration?

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. If this training occurs more than a few days after the Soldier has returned, a better question might be, *“What has the reintegration been like so far and how do you expect the reintegration to go in the next few months?”* Encourage group discussion for this slide (Slide 2), encouraging the participation of Spouses and Couples who have gone through deployments before. Potential answers might include: happiness now that the Soldier is home, nervousness about how the Soldier or Spouse may have changed during the deployment, a “honeymoon period” where everything is great, emotional ups and downs during the transition period, possibly

arguing or fighting about who did more during the deployment, missing each other, etc.

Show Slide 3 (Combat Veteran's Paradox).

- b. When returning home, Soldiers may have a wide range of feelings. At times they will be happy to be back with the Family, may be proud of their service, proud of what their Spouse was able to accomplish while they were gone, etc.

At other times the returning Soldiers may be on edge, withdrawn, easily irritated, angry etc. This inconsistency in feelings has been termed the "Combat Veteran's Paradox" (a paradox means two things that are inconsistent happening at the same time).

How about the Spouse, might there be some mixed feelings for the Spouse as well?

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Use the above question simply as a transition to the next slide (Slide 4).

Show Slide 4 (Reunion Paradox).

- c. Family members will also have a wide range of feelings during the reunion; feelings ranging from happy and excited to anxious or frustrated. This inconsistency in feelings in Family members has been called the "Reunion Paradox."

Family members may also be proud of what they've accomplished at home and proud of their Soldier. Some Family members may be anxious about the reunion: losing their independence, being second-guessed, sharing parenting roles again, how the Soldier or the Spouse may have changed during the deployment, etc.

While being both happy and concerned appears contradictory (that's why it's called a paradox) it's a normal and predictable occurrence. Spouses are often most concerned about how the Soldier might have changed over the course of the deployment. These changes may require some time to adapt (transition) to the home environment although some of the changes may be positive.

Show Slide 5 (Soldier Changes).

How might some Soldiers be different [following a deployment]?

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Outline their responses on butcher paper, blackboard/whiteboard or equivalent **before** revealing the list. Mention things on the list that weren't offered.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Left-click mouse to advance text.

- d. Soldiers may feel more appreciative of what matters to them, they may feel proud of what they've accomplished, and they may also have developed close friends (battle buddies) who helped them get through the deployment successfully.

Soldiers may also have developed combat skills that helped them during the deployment but that may need to be adapted back home. For example:

- (1) Being vigilant (startle easily, hyper-alert) helped keep the Soldier aware of changes to the environment and possible dangers. The Soldier may still be vigilant for a while after they get back home, and it may take some time to transition this skill to the home environment.
- (2) Being emotionally numb may have helped keep the Soldier mission-focused but that same skill may also take a while to get adapted.
- (3) Driving in a combat environment required a different set of techniques in order to help keep the Soldier safe (for example: straddling the center line, weaving, driving fast, avoiding objects left on the road side). It may take a while for Soldiers to adapt to driving in the home environment.
- (4) Some Families also report other changes such as the Soldier being easily irritated (having a low threshold for things that bother them) and alcohol use (sometimes to help reconnect with friends, to help calm down, feel numb, and get to sleep).
- (5) Many Soldiers also report having sleep disruptions for the first several months after they return home. Recognize that although being able to function on little sleep and sleeping lightly may have been a helpful skill during deployment, it takes a while to readjust sleeping habits.
- (6) There are also positive changes like pride in what Soldiers and their units were able to accomplish while deployed.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Left-click mouse to advance text.

Which of these changes may have helped the Soldier during the deployment [combat skills]?

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Discuss things that were helpful in keeping the Soldier safe and mission effective (desirable combat skills) during the deployment and how they might need to be adapted back home.

Just as Soldiers may be different, Family members may also be different.

Show Slide 6 (Family Member Changes).

How might some Family members be different [following a deployment]?

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Again, begin by outlining their responses on butcher paper, blackboard/whiteboard or equivalent **before** revealing the list. Mention things on the list that weren't offered.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Left-click mouse to advance text.

- e. Spouses may feel more appreciative of what matters to them and they may feel proud of what they've accomplished. For example:
 - (1) Being independent (for example: being able to manage the household on their own) and developing new friends (for example: expanding their social support networks) may have been helpful in coping successfully during the

deployment. The Spouse may have to adjust these skills during reintegration in order incorporate the Soldier back into the Family.

- (2) Some Families also report other changes such as being tired (for example: from all the responsibilities) and ready for help with the household.
- (3) Many Families also report that their children need time to adjust to the returning Soldier. This adjustment may be different depending on the developmental age of the child (for example: younger children may be anxious or even afraid, teens may appear disinterested).
- (4) Once again, just like Soldiers, Spouses may have pride in what they and the Family were able to accomplish during the deployment.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Left-click mouse to advance text.

For those of you on your 2nd, 3rd or 4th deployment, are the transitions after deployment the same each time?

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Discuss (with veteran Spouses/Couples) the unique differences from one deployment to the next.

Show Slide 7 (Individual Patterns of Reintegration).

- f. Take a look at the chart on this slide (Slide 7). While this chart shows made-up data, it's a good example of the "ups and downs" for each Family member during reintegration.

The timing of and reasons for the ups and downs may be different for each Family member (including the Family pet). Talking about these ups and downs and anticipating them together can help you support one another.

Keep things in perspective and learn to go easy on yourself. Remember, if you're the Spouse at home, you may have done the job of both Mom and Dad, the plumber, lawn care specialist, head chef, etc. If you're the Soldier who deployed, you may have faced a challenging environment, encountered difficult combat-related demands, missed key Family events, missed being home, etc. Bottom line – don't judge yourself (or the dog!) too harshly.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: It may become necessary to point out that referencing the Family dog is meant to be humorous.

Every military Family goes through the transition home after a deployment in their own way but each one of them is likely to experience some rockiness from time to time. It may take time to reconnect emotionally. Every Family member will have times that go well and times that go – not so well. Controlling your emotions is more than just shutting off your emotions. Controlling emotions means showing the right emotion at the right time, being careful not to overuse strong emotions like anger (would you want to be around someone who is angry all of the time?).

Practice putting the ups and downs in perspective. Learn to ask yourself, "How could that have been better?" "How might it have been worse?" "How much of it can I control?"

Practice the skill Hunt the Good Stuff* – “*What is the “Good Stuff?”* You might recognize it as “counting your blessings” or “appreciating what you have.” Whatever you call it, it’s finding the positive things, large or small, that matter to you on a daily basis. Things like a kind word or deed from someone you know, your Spouse making you breakfast in bed on a Saturday morning, or something one of your children says or does that creates a lasting memory for you.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: **“Hunt the Good Stuff”* is a term used in the Army’s Master Resilience Trainer (MRT) Course, developed by the University of Pennsylvania.

Show Slide 8 (Activity: Individual Patterns of Reintegration).

- g. This is an activity to help you think about how the transition has gone for you or will go for you. It can be helpful to anticipate positive times where things go well during the transition and it can also help to acknowledge that the transition may not feel smooth all the time. That way, when the Family experiences some “bumps” along the way, they can remember lots of Families go through this and it’s expected.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Have the participants divide into two person teams; Couples should conduct this activity together. If there is an odd number of participants, one of the teams can have three people. Have the teams work through the “Individual Patterns of Reintegration” activity (page 2) in their student handout. Ask them to draw in lines to represent how each Family member is doing in the transition and how they expect it to go during the next few months. Have them use different lines (for example a line with dots or a line with squares) for each Family member. They can add more lines to represent other Family members. Let participants know that there is no right or wrong answer in this activity. Total time for this activity should not exceed 5 minutes. Take a few minutes to debrief the students by having 1-2 Couples (volunteers) share their lists with the class. Discuss the importance of accepting the ups and downs as normal (predictable) and being gentle with themselves as a Family. Acknowledge that Family members may not each have the same pattern (this difference can be useful because Family members can help each other when down) or it may feel like they are not in sync with one another (this can feel stressful, although expected). Introduce the idea of keeping an eye out for one another and paying attention to each other’s transition experience.

The goal of this activity is to help Families develop accurate expectations about reintegration.

If Spouses or other Family members (kids) experience significant and prolonged periods of difficulty (such as depression, anxiety, anger, or withdrawal for more than a month), there are many resources available to help them. Such resources include Army Community Service, Social Work Services, Chaplains/clergy, Military and Family Life Consultants, Military OneSource, and School Counselors.

CHECK ON LEARNING: Conduct a check on learning and summarize the learning activity.

2. ELO A – LSA 2. Learning Step / Activity 2. Relationship Strengths

Method of Instruction: Conference/Discussion
Instr Type (I;S Ratio): MRT Qualified Instructor (Military or Civilian)(1:30)
Time of Instruction: 0 hrs 20 mins
Instructional Strategy: Small Group Instruction
Media Type: PowerPoint Presentation
Security Classification: Unclassified

Show Slide 9 (Dream vs. Dream).

a. Let's talk about expectations in more detail.

What are (or were) your expectations for the reintegration?

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Discuss how they either readjusted or will readjust their roles to include the Soldier in those roles.

How quickly do you plan to let others be part of the reunion?

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Discuss examples such as having welcome home parties, visitors, meeting with relatives/friends, etc.

Soldiers and Spouses may have had different images of how the reintegration would go...

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Left-click mouse to advance the first picture.

- (1) The Spouse may have developed an expanding "honey-do" list (a list of household tasks) for when the Soldier returned; but the Soldier may have had another plan.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Left-click mouse to advance the second picture.

- (2) The Soldier may have hoped the Spouse would have developed these particular skills (such as plumbing) while he was deployed.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Take this opportunity to discuss how they share chores around the house. Discuss if this represents a change from before the deployment.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Left-click mouse to advance the third picture.

- (3) Thoughts of intimacy once the Soldier comes back home are common for both Soldiers and Spouses...

What expectations do you have of one another for rekindling intimacy?

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Approach this subject with humor; showing this photograph of fantasy (intimacy) right before the next photograph of reality (kids!).

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Left-click mouse to advance the final picture.

- (4) It can sometimes be difficult when reality intrudes on your fantasy!

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Continue this subject with humor; saying things such as, "No, you can't put the kids to bed at 1800 hours every night for the first month the Soldier is back home!"

Briefly discuss, given the benefit of hindsight, how many of the Couples' expectations (and fantasies) were unrealistic and why.

Show Slide 10 (Relationship Strengths).

- b. Think about the strengths you and your Family used during the deployment that helped you to be resilient.

Which strengths helped you be resilient as an individual and as a Family during the deployment?

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Outline their responses on butcher paper, blackboard/whiteboard or equivalent. Look for themes that connect to the next set of slides. These themes include adapting Family roles, creating and reinforcing connections (bonds), communication, emotional balance, committing to the relationship, sharing experiences, etc.

There are several "Signature Family Strengths." These Family strengths are things you did as a Couple that helped you during the deployment and can help you during reintegration. The key is adapting the strength now that the Soldier is home so that it can help you have a better reintegration. We are going to focus on four specific Family strengths.

Show Slide 11 (Signature Family Strengths).

The four Signature Strengths we want to concentrate our discussion on are: adapting roles and responsibilities, creating and reinforcing connections, committing to the relationship, and sharing experiences. In the next few slides we will ask you to discuss how you used these strengths as a Family during the deployment and how you can adapt them now that the deployment is over and you are in the reintegration phase.

Show Slide 12 (Relationship Strengths).

Strength: Adapting Roles & Responsibilities. During the deployment you and your Family were flexible in adopting new roles and responsibilities. The Soldier was not able to be part of the daily life of the Family and the Soldier's priority had to be maintaining mission-focus. At home, the Spouse had to take on roles and responsibilities that might otherwise have been shared. These changes in roles and responsibilities were necessary. Changing roles and responsibilities during the deployment required the entire Family to be flexible - an important military Family skill.

How can you use the strength of adapting roles and responsibilities in the reintegration phase?

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Discussion should include negotiating which tasks should be handled by each Family member and the timeline for when role shifting occurs. Cover themes such as the need to slowly reintegrate the Soldier back into their role at home and taking on day-to-day responsibilities; having appropriate expectations of each other and the need to negotiate the reintegration; and changing roles and understanding that the Spouse at home may need to "take a break" from Family responsibilities. The topic of future deployments and the impact it may have on this transition may come up. If so, discuss this concern and address the possibility that Spouses and Soldiers may be resistant to "giving up" or adding roles because they may consider this transition to be only temporary.

Renegotiating roles and responsibilities is one way you can get back together as a team. This will take time and requires everyone to communicate, be patient and remain flexible. Speed is not critical – the key is to make sure you both have similar expectations.

What happens if you don't continue to be flexible and adopt new roles again? What happens to the returning Soldier? What happens to the Spouse who was home? How included or supported does the Soldier feel? How understood does the Spouse feel? Some common challenges Soldiers and Families have identified in the past include:

- (1) Some Soldiers may return home and want to take back their old roles and responsibilities without discussing it first. This approach might work in some Families, but might not work in others.
- (2) Some Spouses may want the Soldier to immediately take over roles and responsibilities in order to give them a break. Some Soldiers may also want a break, preferring to ease back into the Family routine at their own pace. This can also create problems if both want a break from everything they experienced.
- (3) During the deployment children may have earned new privileges and have taken on new responsibilities. They may also be resistant to resuming pre-deployment roles.

How should parents handle children and renegotiating roles and responsibilities during reintegration?

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Ask experienced Spouses/Couples to share ideas on how to deal with these kinds of challenges.

It's particularly important for parents to take the initiative in talking with kids about these changes and to be consistent with one another in what they say. Children may have their own pace when it comes to accepting the returning Soldier in the Family role. This will depend on their age(s) and they may take their cue from both parents. Teenagers may resent the idea of returning to "the way it was." Small children may need time to become reacquainted. This will require patience and understanding. Recognize that children find comfort in routine and predictability and may not respond well to change initially, even if it's positive change.

Being able to adapt roles and responsibilities can be a sign of Family resilience.

Show Slide 13 (Activity: Adapting Roles & Responsibilities).

- c. This is an activity covering Adapting Roles & Responsibilities. Remember how each of you had to change roles and responsibilities during the deployment and may now be in the process of changing them again now that the Soldier is home.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Have the participants divide into two person teams; Couples should conduct this activity together. If there is an odd number of participants, one of the teams can have three people. Have the teams work through the "Adapting Roles & Responsibilities" activity (page 3) in their student handout. If the activity is being completed by Couples, the Couple has 10 minutes to complete the activity and list which Spouse did each task before, during and after the deployment. Participants should indicate if the person responsible was the husband, wife, or whether both partners were responsible. If participants want to add a task, they can use the spaces at the bottom of the list. If the activity is being completed by participants who do not have their Spouse present, each participant should interview the other and complete the list – indicating if the husband, wife or both were responsible for each task before, during and after the deployment. Again, if participants want to add a task, they can use

the spaces at the bottom of the list. Each participant should take 5 minutes to create their list. Tell the teams to switch half-way through the activity. Total time for this activity should not exceed 10 minutes.

Show Slide 14 (Activity: Adapting Roles & Responsibilities).

For those of you who conducted the activity without your Spouse, how different would this exercise have been if you'd done the exercise with your Spouse?

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Ask participants who did not have their Spouse present the question above; wait for a diversity of responses (*omit this question if all activity participants are Couples*). Take a few minutes to debrief the students by having 1-2 Couples (volunteers) share their lists with the class. Discussion may address that doing this activity as a Couple may involve disagreements about who does what (whereas individual participants won't have to deal with such contradictions) and may provide an opportunity to negotiate roles.

Completing this activity without your Spouse may involve hearing other people's good examples of how roles change across the deployment-cycle and may normalize your own experience.

Show Slide 15 (Relationship Strengths).

Strength: Creating & Reinforcing Connections. During the deployment, Soldiers developed strong ties with their fellow Soldiers. These bonds resulted from shared experiences and the need to depend on team members for mission success and survival. At home, Spouses may have also made new friends, and strengthened existing relationships with Family and friends. They may also have become more active within the Army community. These connections were important for helping get through a challenge like being deployed or having your Soldier deployed, but now need to be adapted for the reunion of the Couple and Family.

How can you use the strength of creating and reinforcing connections?

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Discussion should include the skill of creating bonds both for the deployed Soldier and the Spouse at home. Cover themes such as the need to talk with the Soldier to negotiate how much time he/she should spend with his/her deployment buddies and how much time the Spouse should spend with his/her new friends/new activities (balance), introducing new friends to your Spouse and appreciating those who helped your Soldier/Spouse during the deployment.

What can happen if you don't get to know your Spouse's new friends?

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Discussion may include the fact that the Spouse may feel left out or feel rejected, or get angry because of new friends, etc. Reiterate how these actions are important for both the Soldier who deployed and the Spouse who remained home.

Having new friends (new sources of social support) should be viewed as a sign of strength, not a rejection by your Spouse.

Show Slide 16 (Relationship Strengths).

Strength: Committing to the Relationship. During the deployment, both Spouses may have needed reassurance that they were each committed to the relationship.

How did you express your commitment to each other during the deployment?

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Discussion might include, “*We e-mailed each other every day.*” “*We talked with each other on the phone at least weekly.*” “*I avoided going to places like the club to avoid potential problems.*” “*We said we loved each other and kept each other’s spirits up.*”

What are some ways you can demonstrate your commitment during reintegration?

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Discussion might include showing appreciation for one another, making quality time for each other, being physically affectionate, surprising each other with small gifts, etc.

You can show your appreciation for each other by using “I” statements that demonstrate what you appreciate about your Spouse. For example: “*I like the way you repainted the living room.*” “*It made me happy to receive letters/cards from you during the deployment.*” “*I appreciate that you made my favorite dinner.*”

Another way to show appreciation is demonstrated by actions; for example: pitching in with chores around the house or yard that you wouldn’t normally do, taking care of the little things, etc.

How can you make sure you have quality time as a Couple?

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Discussion might include making time to do activities together that both of you enjoy (such as going for walks, having date night, etc.).

In terms of physical affection, it can be helpful to learn (or even re-learn) what kind of physical touch makes your Spouse feel loved. Often physical touch can be more powerful than saying “*I love you.*” Sometimes people do things that they think show love, but showing love is best when it’s about what works for your Spouse.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: This may be another opportunity to inject some humor by saying something to the effect, “*Learning (and re-learning) what kind of physical touch makes your Spouse feel loved can be a worthwhile study; set-up a few ‘study sessions’ to practice getting it right!*” or “*It’s always a good practice to grade on the curve...*”

What other ways can you show commitment to one another?

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Discussion might include other ideas such as surprising each other with small gifts, genuinely complimenting your Spouse in front of others, etc.

Couples can and will have problems at times. When this happens, seek help early - protect your investment in (commitment to) each other and your Family.

What can happen if you don’t demonstrate your commitment to your Family during reintegration?

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Discussion might include the potential misunderstandings, worries and jealousies that might occur and how that can create a negative emotional environment.

The fact that you’ve endured the year of deployment as a Family, is a sign of resilient commitment.

Show Slide 17 (Relationship Strengths).

Strength: Sharing Experiences. Soldiers often report they don't tell their Spouse everything that happens during the deployment. Spouses may also regulate the content of what was shared.

What are some of the reasons Couples may not share everything during the deployment?

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Discussion may include that some Soldiers may not want to tell their Spouse all the details to protect them from being worried, one partner may not be comfortable sharing or hearing information about the deployment, or one may have thought an event was not significant enough to discuss.

One reason for withholding details might be to protect the other partner or some other Family members from certain events. Others may choose to keep the deployment separate from home life so it doesn't get "contaminated" with deployment-related memories. Finally, there may also be Operational Security (OPSEC) issues to consider.

This approach to communication may have been a strength during the deployment. It may have helped each Spouse focus on what was important, it may have prevented each Spouse from worrying about things beyond his/her control and it may have also been a way of protecting one another.

Recognize that every Family member will have a deployment story to share. When pieced together, each individual's story becomes a part of the larger Family story and helps to keep you connected as a Family.

Soldiers and Families may need time to reflect on the deployment and how it impacted their lives. It may be important to understand that the Soldier may not be ready or comfortable sharing some of the deployment experiences. Determining how much of the story and when it will be shared is an individual decision. There's a balance between taking time to be comfortable with the story and the Family's need to hear at least some part of the story.

What are some ways you can share experiences during reintegration?

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Another question can be directed to Spouses who have multiple deployment experiences: "*How did your Family share their deployment stories?*" Discussion should include the fact that each Family will come up with their own approach. Some possibilities include setting aside a time to talk about the deployment when the Couple has time alone, letting the topic come up in the context of everyday life, showing pictures or mementos as a way of prompting the story, co-telling the story with a Battle Buddy or, for the Spouse, a friend or Family member.

Remember that Spouses and Family members may repeat some stories or add information to a story; you should avoid saying, "*You already told that story, we've heard it before.*" This may shut down the person who is recalling or giving new details to their story. Some Soldiers also report that telling their story to someone close to them is helpful in facilitating the adjustment home.

What can happen when you don't tell your Spouse your story?

What might they think?

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Ask students the questions above; wait for a diversity of responses. Discussion may include things like your Spouse and Family may think you don't love (or even trust) them anymore or you don't care enough to share that part of your life with them.

A possible consequence of not sharing experiences is that the memory can get “bottled up inside” and get in the way of emotionally reconnecting. Sharing experiences is a great way to rebuild intimacy and maintain connection.

Show Slide 18 (Signature Family Strengths).

As we've discussed, these signature strengths (adapting roles and responsibilities, creating and reinforcing connections, committing to the relationship, and sharing experiences) helped Couples during the deployment and can be adapted to help Couples through the reintegration.

Are we missing any strengths you feel should be on the list?

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Possible additions may include keeping perspective, spirituality, giving/sacrifice, etc. If appropriate and time permits, you can match these strengths with the University of Pennsylvania Values In Action (VIA) Character strengths (<http://www.authentic happiness.sas.upenn.edu/Default.aspx>): *Curiosity/Interest, Love of Learning, Open-mindedness/Judgment, Originality/Ingenuity/Creativity, Perspective, Bravery/Valor, Industry/Perseverance, Integrity/Honesty, Zest/Enthusiasm, Love/Intimacy, Kindness/Generosity/Nurturance, Social Intelligence, Citizenship/Duty/Loyalty/Teamwork, Equity/Fairness, Leadership, Forgiveness/Mercy, Modesty/Humility, Prudence/Caution, Self-control/Self-regulation, Appreciation of Excellence/Beauty, Gratitude, Hope/Optimism, Humor/Playfulness, Spirituality/Religiousness.*

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Left-click mouse to advance text.

Which is your best strength as a Family [either from this list or one of your own]?

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Ask students the question above; briefly discuss.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Left-click mouse to advance text.

Now we want to talk about some new tools that you might be able to use during the reintegration or any time to make your relationship better; to reinforce your Family's resilience through what we call the “Sound Marital House”...

CHECK ON LEARNING: Conduct a check on learning and summarize the learning activity.

B. ENABLING LEARNING OBJECTIVE

ACTION:	Identify techniques of improving relationship resilience by maintaining and strengthening a “Sound Marital House”
CONDITIONS:	In a classroom environment, given a group of military Spouses and/or military Spouses and Soldiers (Couples) having recently completed a deployment in support of combat or other military operations
STANDARDS:	Identified the techniques of improving relationship resilience by maintaining and strengthening a Sound Marital House. This consisted of describing the elements of strengthening or building a Sound Marital House through: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Re-Connecting as a Couple, Spouse Re-Mapping and Fondness and Admiration• Confronting and resolving relationship problems through Repair Attempts, Gentle Starts and avoiding The Four Horsemen• Your Positivity Ratio, Active Constructive Responding and Effective Praise and other relationship skills

1. ELO B – LSA 1. Learning Step / Activity 1. Your Sound Marital House – One

Method of Instruction: Conference/Discussion
Instr Type (I;S Ratio): MRT Qualified Instructor (Military or Civilian)(1:30)
Time of Instruction: 0 hrs 15 mins
Instructional Strategy: Small Group Instruction
Media Type: PowerPoint Presentation
Security Classification: Unclassified

Show Slide 19 (Reinforcing Your Sound Marital House).

- a. As some of you may recall from Pre-Deployment Resilience Training for Spouses/Couples, we discussed improving relationship resilience by preparing for the ups and downs, by increasing your daily dose of compliments and encouragement for one another and by working on communication.

The next step for improving relationship resilience is strengthening or building your “Sound Marital House”*. There are several key structural elements to the Sound Marital House: creating a loving friendship that enables your relationship to thrive, learning to confront problems successfully so they do not destroy the quality of the relationship and increasing “Your Positivity Ratio” (we’ll talk more about this in a moment).

The Sound Marital House helps Couples withstand the difficult experiences that all Couples have from time to time. Reinforcing a Sound Marital House is important because research has shown that Couples who have a loving friendship and know how to successfully confront problems tend to have strong marriages that last for years.

Increasing Your Positivity Ratio is about increasing your positive thoughts about your Spouse, and doing more of the good things you do for your Spouse. As we said, we'll cover the details on that later.

We've already talked about how Families go through a transition period during post-deployment; now let's focus on the importance of re-connecting as a Couple and as a Family in order to Re-Create a Loving Friendship. Notice that the re-connecting part of the Sound Marital House is a staircase – it's the key to connecting parts of the house together.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: The “Sound Marital House” is a term coined by *Dr. John Gottman of the University of Washington and his research about happy and successful marriages. He coined the term and its principles based on the interviews and observations of hundreds of couples.

**John and Julie Gottman founded the Gottman Relationship Institute in Seattle, Washington. Their research, conducted at the University of Washington, has enabled them to predict with a high degree of accuracy which couples will succeed or fail in their relationships. Some of the terms and concepts used in this training are borrowed from the Gottman Institute and blend with the terms and concepts of the MRT course.*

Show Slide 20 (Re-Connecting).

- b. “Re-Connecting” after a deployment means reuniting as a Couple and re-establishing the Couple as a team. There are several ways to re-connect as a Couple. You probably have your own favorites, and some ways may appeal to you more than others. Some important ways to re-connect are by doing loving things for your Spouse, saying loving things to your Spouse and listening to your Spouse. By re-connecting on a daily basis, you start re-building your “emotional bank account” with each other.

Even happy, successful Couples will experience some conflict. Depositing daily goodwill in your Couple's emotional bank account can act as a buffer when you have a disagreement. The end result is that the Couple experiences shorter periods of being at odds with one another and less intense arguments. This, in turn, helps make the relationship more fun and stable.

In order to make sure you are doing things for your Spouse that he/she appreciates, you have to know about your Spouse's preferences. After a deployment, there may be a period of time where you need to re-learn each other's preferences - we call this process “Spouse Re-Mapping.”

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: The phrase “Spouse Re-Mapping” is used in this module; however, Gottman refers to the process as “Love maps.” The concepts are the same.

Show Slide 21 (Re-Create a Loving Friendship).

- c. As we discussed, both the Soldier and the Spouse may have changed following the deployment. In order to get to know each other again, you may need to re-map your Spouse's preferences. Spouse Re-Mapping is about paying attention and making the effort to “refresh” your awareness – it's knowing what your Spouse likes, what your Spouse doesn't like and what matters to your Spouse. It is devoting part of your brain to thinking about how to make your Spouse happy (you can know what makes your Spouse happy if you know your Spouse's preferences).

Part of Spouse Re-Mapping is knowing who is important to your Spouse. For example: when Soldiers return home they may want to continue to have close relationships with their Battle Buddies. Spouses who were back home may also want to continue supportive friendships they formed with members of the community during the deployment. Re-mapping helps Couples be aware of these important relationships. These new friends can continue to be a source of strength and support for both of you as you transition your primary focus back to one another. Focusing on each other is part of re-starting your “we-ness.” “We-ness” is seeing and thinking about yourselves as a Couple with common goals and dreams, shared responsibilities and commitment to each other and your Family.

What are some the ways to rekindle the romance?

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Discussion may include doing some of the things you did when you first met each other, going out on dates (if possible), holding hands, doing things for each other, sending love notes or text messages, etc. Washing the dishes can also score big points.

Show Slide 22 (Loving Friendship).

How much do you know about your Spouse?

If I asked you, could you tell me who your Spouse’s friends are?

Do you know what your Spouse’s dreams and goals are?

What they like or don’t like? What their worries or concerns are?

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Ask students the questions above; wait for a diversity of responses. Allow a few minutes for this discussion and begin revealing the examples on the slide (Slide 22).

- d. Spouse Re-Mapping is thinking about your Spouse. It’s about paying attention to the details of your Spouse’s life, being familiar with his/her world. Notice there is a wife and a husband in the picture. How much are they aware of what the other one likes and dislikes? Of how much they’ve changed over the deployment?

As we go through the slide, notice how the Spouse Re-Mapping thoughts alternate between what the wife is thinking about her husband and what the husband is thinking about his wife. Point out which preferences have changed, which have remained the same, and what they still have in common.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Left-click mouse to advance text (x2).

- (1) She’s thinking he loves the kids; he’s thinking she also loves the kids...

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Left-click mouse to advance text (x2).

- (2) She’s thinking he’s now into weight lifting; he’s thinking she’s given up Wii Yoga...

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Left-click mouse to advance text (x2).

- (3) She's thinking he's into Mountain biking; he's thinking she has two new good friends...

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Left-click mouse to advance text (x2).

- (4) She noted he switched [from Earl Grey] to green tea; he's thinking she still likes coffee, but switched to skim milk...

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Left-click mouse to advance text (x2).

- (5) She's thinking about how he switched to boxer shorts [from previously "going commando"]; he's thinking she's still a bargain hunter...

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: "Going commando" is slang for the practice of not wearing underwear under one's clothing.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Left-click mouse to advance text (x2).

- (6) She thinking he's having sleep problems; he's thinking about her new hobby; painting [instead of wood-working]...

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Left-click mouse to advance text (x2).

- (7) She's thinking he can't even look at broccoli anymore [he didn't even want to think about asparagus]; he thinks she still doesn't like peas...

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Left-click mouse to advance text (x2).

- (8) She thinks he now prefers to watch sports at home – not go to the movies [even for Raisinettes]; he thinks she now prefers DVDs at home rather than going out to the movies [even for popcorn]...

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Left-click mouse to advance text (x2).

- (9) She still enjoys the fact that he likes sex and spooning; he's enjoying the fact that she still likes sex and spooning!

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Spooning is like a "horizontal hug" where the Couples lie back to chest, fitting together like "spoons" in a drawer.

Couples who have good "Spouse Maps" know each other, know what their Spouse likes or dislikes, what their concerns are, what their dreams and aspirations are, etc. They keep updating their Spouse Maps (Spouse Re-Mapping) with new information about one another. This updating may be challenging after a deployment, and may require time.

What is the benefit of Spouse Re-Mapping for a Couple?

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Possible responses might include: *"It helps build resilience to weather marital storms."* *"Couples are better prepared to cope with deployments, or other stressful events in their lives."* *"It promotes and improves the love between a Couple."*

Show Slide 23 (Activity: Spouse Re-Mapping).

- e. As we've discussed, a Spouse Map is knowing what your Spouse likes and dislikes – essentially, you mentally map their preferences. Spouse Re-Mapping includes getting to know what matters to your Spouse both before the deployment (old) and now, after the deployment (new).

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Have the participants separate into two person teams; Couples should conduct this activity together. If there is an odd number of participants, one of the teams can have three people. Have the teams work through the “Spouse Re-Mapping” activity (page 4) in their student handout. Have each team member interview their partner to find out as much as possible about their likes and dislikes and if these likes and dislikes have changed since before the deployment. “Like” and “Dislike” examples may include: favorite color, food, place to eat, sports to play, sports to watch, thing to wear, place to vacation, chores, cars, clothing, etc. Each participant should take 5 minutes to create their list. Tell the group to switch half-way through the activity. Total time for this activity should not exceed 10 minutes.

Show Slide 24 (Activity: Spouse Re-Mapping).

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Take a few minutes to debrief the students by having 1-2 Couples (volunteers) share their lists with the class. You may wish to outline their responses on butcher paper, blackboard/whiteboard or equivalent. Acknowledge that there is an artificial quality to having to track specific preferences, to having a time limit, or mapping/re-mapping someone who you don't really know (if applicable).

This activity required curiosity and interest, you have to care and listen to your Spouse or other person, asking follow-up questions if necessary.

What is the value of knowing all of the “nitty gritty” about your Spouse?

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Discuss that this kind of knowledge can help you anticipate what to do for one another, and what to avoid.

How can “re-drawing” your map become a post-deployment strength and skill?

What is the value of taking the time to re-establish what's important to your Spouse?

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Ask students the questions above; wait for a diversity of responses. Discuss some possible answers such as: “I can be of more help with the things he/she might struggle with as a result of the deployment.” “I can gain an appreciation of what he/she did while I was away.” “I might realize that his/her deployment was complicated just like mine.”

How does it feel to know that your Spouse has changed?

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Discuss that changes can be exciting but that they can also feel disconcerting and even disorienting. Change happens even without a deployment, but the cumulative changes from a year apart can be a particular challenge. Recognize that there certain core elements that are the same and you can re-build your map around these core components of what matters to your Spouse.

Re-Mapping your Spouse can help you move into the next part of re-building a loving friendship: expressing “Fondness and Admiration.”

Show Slide 25 (Loving Friendship).

- f. Fondness and Admiration is about honoring and respecting your Spouse's contributions to the relationship. It's about remembering what he/she contributes to the Family relationship, how he/she supports your career, etc. Fondness and Admiration is the emotional or "feeling" part of building a loving friendship.

Fondness and Admiration help us to recall the things that attracted us to our Spouse – to remember the things that we admired about him/her that lead to committing your life to him/her. Fondness and Admiration comes from honoring and respecting your Spouse's past and present contributions to the relationship and is reinforced each time you think about it.

As with Spouse Re-Mapping, Fondness and Admiration needs to be updated and refreshed by new experiences. Adding the new experiences to your old Fondness and Admiration memories can enrich the marital relationship. Talking about your history together can help you re-create a sense of "we-ness" as a Couple. Couples that can recall the fond memories they share are more likely to stay together. Talking "a walk down memory lane" can help you recognize the Admiration and Fondness you have for each other.

Fondness and Admiration helps re-build a loving friendship, the cornerstone of the Sound Marital House.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: If this training module is to be presented in two separate one-hour blocks, this is a good time to break in order to allow participants to stretch and to visit the rest room.

CHECK ON LEARNING: Conduct a check on learning and summarize the learning activity.

2. ELO B – LSA 2. Learning Step / Activity 2. Your Sound Marital House – Two

Method of Instruction: Conference/Discussion
Instr Type (I;S Ratio): MRT Qualified Instructor (Military or Civilian)(1:30)
Time of Instruction: 0 hrs 20 mins
Instructional Strategy: Small Group Instruction
Media Type: PowerPoint Presentation
Security Classification: Unclassified

Show Slide 26 (Reinforcing Your Sound Marital House).

- a. The first part of the Sound Marital House was about learning about Re-Connecting and how to Re-Create a Loving Friendship. We talked about Spouse Re-Mapping and Fondness and Admiration. Now we are going to turn our attention to learning how to confront problems successfully.

When combined with creating a Loving Friendship, learning how to successfully confront relationship problems will help ensure your relationship will continue to grow and overcome any obstacles life throws your way.

Show Slide 27 (Confronting Problems).

As we've already discussed, everyone (and every relationship) has problems or conflicts from time to time. There are many ways to approach resolving these problems or conflicts. We're going to address "Repair Attempts" and "Gentle Starts" to make relationships more resilient when problems arise. Some of you may remember these concepts from your Pre-Deployment for Resilience Training for Spouses/Couples.

Show Slide 28 (Confronting Problems).

- b. There are times when even our best intentions get off track, and even happy, successful Couples have disagreements and argue. What separates successful Couples from those in trouble is how they confront the disagreement and how they manage their "Repair Attempts."

A Repair Attempt is the way a Couple tries to put the "brakes on" during an argument. It's an attempt by one or both Spouses, to defuse the event, calm the situation down and re-connect with one another. When conflict arises – *and they will* – Repair Attempts prevent negativity from getting out of control.

Repair Attempt methods vary with each Couple; what may be successful for one Couple, may not work for another. The situation can also influence what works – what may work for one argument, may not work for another.

Some examples of Repair Attempts are: saying you agree to disagree, sticking out your tongue, making a face, saying funny things like, "*Drop and give me twenty*," engaging in gentle banter, accepting your partner's influence, make-up sex, etc. If the Repair Attempt is successful, the Couple can move on and the disagreement is either minimized or resolved.

Does anyone have another example of a Repair Attempt that they would like to share with the group?

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Briefly discuss the "uniqueness" (if applicable) of any examples offered.

As we said, part of resolving conflict also means being willing to accept the influence of the other person. Accepting influence is both an attitude and a skill that involves compromise.

One key to Repair Attempts is that they are something that you need to practice, so that when you need them, you're ready to use them – they feel familiar, comfortable and part of your "we-ness" as a Couple.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: If time permits or if the topic comes up, discuss that the word "repair" implies that something is broken that needs fixing, but relationships aren't necessarily broken just because of a conflict. "Defusing" might actually be a better word for some Couples. Discuss that each Couple may want to choose their own word that's synonymous with "repair."

Show Slide 29 (Activity: Repair Attempts).

Remember, Repair Attempts are things Couples say and do to prevent negativity in an argument from getting out of control. Let's spend a few minutes practicing identifying and developing Repair Attempts now.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Have the participants divide into two person teams; Couples should conduct this activity together. If there is an odd number of participants, one of the teams can have three people. Have the teams work through the “Repair Attempts” activity (page 5) in their student handout. Each team member has 5 minutes to interview their partner and find which Repair Attempts they and their Spouse use. For example: do they stick out their tongue, make a funny face/goofy smile, a quick embrace, saying, “*Let’s take a break.*” “*Can you rephrase that?*” “*Wait, I need a minute to calm down.*” “*Ok, ‘Exalted One’ you’re right and I’m wrong, as usual.*” “*Airborne, come to at ease in the harness.*” List which Repair Attempts each person and their Spouse use. Rate how much stress each person feels before, during and after the Repair Attempt (*from 0 being “no stress” to 5 being very stressed*). What are other typical feelings before, during and after? Total time for this activity should not exceed 10 minutes.

Show Slide 30 (Activity: Repair Attempts).

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Take a few minutes to debrief the students by having 1-2 Couples (volunteers) share their lists. Ask, “*How do you normally interact when using a Repair Attempt?*” “*Is it difficult to detach enough from the argument to try a Repair Attempt?*” “*How do you feel afterwards? Is it immediately rewarding?*” Discuss the benefits of getting good at Repair Attempts and that some people are better at them than others. It may not always be fair, but both members of the Couple should practice, and can even make a game out of being the first to engage in a Repair Attempt.

- c. Some people may feel like they need a “coach” to talk with their Spouse during stressful conversations. This video clip is about a guy who has a coach telling him what to do – see *what you think*.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Left-click on the box “*Marriage Coach*” to run the video clip (“*Marriage Coach.wmv*”; 2 min 41 sec) of communication between husband and wife.

Show Slide 31 (Activity: Marriage Coach).

What strengths did the Couple have together?

What strength did they each have?”

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Begin debriefing the students by asking the questions above; wait for a diversity of responses. Discuss possible strengths such as love and affection, desire to make someone else happy, he was mapping her work concern, she was willing to keep trying, etc.

What did you think of his first attempt to listen to her – when she says she doesn’t feel like talking and he walks away?

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Discuss that in the first attempt, the wife contributes to the miscommunication attempt by saying “No.”

Why might she have done this?

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Discuss the possibility being because he had done such a bad job last time.

Her initial response of “No” is also a kind of “Stonewalling” (one-word answers); remember The Four Horsemen from Pre-Deployment Resilience Training for Spouses/Couples? Perhaps not – we’ll talk about them again in a few moments. He also didn’t have her well mapped in terms of what matters to her (work, and how she gets along with others at work).

What did you think of his second attempt to listen to her – when he tries to fix the problem by drawing out a solution?

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Discuss whether his wife wanted him to fix the problem, whether this kind of “fix-it” behavior is pretty typical and whether she made it clear what she wanted from him. Discuss how the husband engaged in what might qualify as a type of Repair Attempt. (He said, “*On second thought, I think I’ll just listen*” and she responded with, “*Thank you*”). Discuss whether this was a good approach and the importance of the wife’s response (including her simple acceptance of the Repair Attempt). Discuss the final conversation attempt when he listened to her describe her perception of the work problem.

Was this better? What was her response?

What could the husband have done to do an even better job in the final conversation?

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Ask students the questions above; wait for a diversity of responses. Offer that he could have asked follow-on questions and reflected how she felt emotionally rather than just listen and say he’d listen any time she wanted.

In what way did they use timing communication right?

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Offer that it was a quiet time when they were alone, at the end of the day.

Should he have waited until after she was done with the dishes?

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Note also that they did a good job of tolerating each other’s weaknesses (she let him keep trying, he tried to understand her even though she wasn’t being direct), and soothing each other (they hugged at the end), etc. Offer that they also used a respectful tone of voice throughout – *how we say things matters*.

Show Slide 32 (Confronting Problems).

- d. How Couples say things to one another is important in terms of building a Sound Marital House. That includes tone of voice and non-verbal behaviors. Take a look at the pictures on the slide (Slide 32).

What do you think is happening with the two Couples and what leads you to believe that?

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Some possible responses might be: “*The Couple on the left is having a fight, they are not happy with each other. He’s looking away and not talking. Her body language says she is angry and closed to further conversation.*” “*The couple on the right is happy, maybe he just asked her to marry him. They are both smiling and touching each other in a positive and affectionate way.*”

Part of any interaction is the emotional tone – the tone of voice we choose to deliver our words and the non-verbal message our body language sends. It's everything we say and do to deliver our message. Emotional tone relates to the affective or emotional quality of a conversation. It enables the receiver to understand how the sender is feeling about the conversation (such as angry, happy, sad, excited, etc.).

Examples of negative emotional tone include: closed body posture (like in the picture on the left), poor eye contact (like in the picture on the left), interrupting the other person, mocking the other person, being sarcastic, and mimicking the other person.

Examples of positive emotional tone include: smiling, open body posture, good eye contact, active listening, a calm voice or positive touching.

Show Slide 33 (Confronting Problems).

- e. How you say things is important when you have to confront problems with your Spouse; so is how you introduce the problem you want to talk about. You might want to try what Gottman refers to as the “Gentle Start” for addressing a conflict.

A Gentle Start is a strategy for reducing the tension in a discussion by starting off in a way that sets you up for success. Gentle Starts lower the intensity and make it easier for a Couple to find a resolution to the problem or come to an understanding or compromise they can each live with. Next time you want to talk to your Spouse about something you disagree on, try these simple suggestions:

- (1) Pick the right time to have your discussion. Don't insist on having “the conversation” when your partner is pressed for time and cannot focus. Don't force the conversation for the sake of “clearing the decks.” It may be that your Spouse needs time to cool down or rethink his/her position. Words spoken in anger and haste are often difficult to take back.
- (2) Limit your concern to a specific complaint; *complain, don't blame*. Describe what you think is happening without judging.
- (3) Storing up your arguments or complaints and then unloading them all at once can overwhelm your partner and make it more difficult to resolve the problem. Don't keep rehashing the same argument over and over. Some problems may not be solvable. The goal for the unsolvable problem or argument is to find a happy medium you can both live with.
- (4) Use “I” statements wherever possible. Speak clearly about what you need. Be polite and give ample amounts of appreciation. “I” statements make your comments personal and focused. They convey what you (the speaker) feel, need or think about a specific event or circumstance. Try using the following sentence structure, “*I feel (insert a feeling) when you (insert a description of a specific behavior). I would prefer it if you (insert a specific request for a reasonable change).*” For example, in the video clip the wife could have said: “*I feel misunderstood when you try to solve my problems at work. I would prefer if you would just listen and be supportive without offering solutions.*”

When you do have an argument or disagreement, choose an emotional tone that will lead to a successful resolution. Engage in the conversation while always remembering the person you're talking to is someone that you love. Sometimes it

can be difficult to keep perspective; on those occasions, people tend to use “Harsh Starts” or other negative ways of relating.

Show Slide 34 (Confronting Problems).

What is a “Harsh Start?”

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Discuss possible responses and emphasize that a Harsh Start is when one or both individuals begin a disagreement or conflict with an accusatory or negative emotional tone that includes criticism, sarcasm or contempt. For example: “*You’re never around when I need you. You’re not a very good father.*”

How an argument begins often predicts how it will end. If it starts off on a negative tone it generally ends on a negative tone.

Why do you think it is so difficult to keep a Harsh Start from ending on a negative note?

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Some possible answers might include: “*It may be difficult for one or both people to stop and change their emotional tone in the middle of a heated argument.*” “*They may be more likely to dig in or press on with the attack in an effort to win the argument.*” “*The Harsh Start builds more resentment and anger.*”

Harsh Starts typically involve beginning with a negative tone and jumping to criticism or contempt (contempt is a kind of disrespect). Couples who engage in Harsh Starts also typically move to what Gottman calls “The Four Horsemen.”

Show Slide 35 (The Four Horsemen).

- f. The Four Horsemen are behaviors that are particularly detrimental to relationships; they are:
- (1) Criticism. Attacking your Spouse’s personality or character.
 - (2) Contempt. Attacking your Spouse’s sense of self.
 - (3) Defensiveness. Seeing yourself as the victim.
 - (4) Stonewalling. Withdrawing as a means to avoid conflict.

Gottman found that each of The Four Horsemen may pave the way for the next and when Couples frequently interact using them, they may be headed for serious conflict, and may even be more likely to separate or divorce.

Show Slide 36 (Criticism vs. Kindness).

Let’s begin with the first of The Four Horsemen: Criticism.

In terms of the Four Horsemen, Criticism is regarded as a “global” complaint that typically includes a personality or character attack; a complaint however, addresses a “specific” action or problem.

Let's work through an example of Criticism: The Soldier promised to take out the trash but didn't. The Spouse responds with, "*You're a terrible husband; you don't care about this Family.*"

What makes this response Criticism?

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Offer that this is a global statement that includes a character attack.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Left-click mouse to advance text.

The way to counter criticism is to make a Kind (and specific) Request. Make it kind by acknowledging what the other person has already contributed (or acknowledge other factors, etc.). The second part of the Kind Request is to be very specific.

How could you change this Criticism so it isn't a global character attack?

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Discuss possible options; note when an option is an example of a specific request and one which is kind/empathic. So, in this example a Kind Request might be, "*I know you have a lot going on. I would appreciate it if you took out the trash.*"

Criticizing is fairly common in some relationships and doesn't necessarily mean the Couple is headed for a separation or divorce. However, if Couples get into a pattern of always criticizing each other, this may lead to the other three Horsemen which can be even more toxic to the relationship.

Show Slide 37 (Contempt vs. Respect).

The second of The Four Horsemen is Contempt.

Contempt is any "biting" statement or behavior that mocks your Spouse with the intention to insult or psychologically "wound" them. This form of attack makes it seem that you think you are better than your Spouse is. Some examples of Contempt are insults and name-calling.

Here's a specific example of Contempt: The Spouse makes a mistake in the check book. The Soldier says, "*Hey genius, you screwed up the check book again! How come you can't get it right, you've had a year to learn this while I was deployed.*"

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Left-click mouse to advance text.

The way to counter contempt is to make a Respectful Request.

How could you change this contempt statement to a Respectful Request?

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Note possible options.

One possible response might be, "*Honey, you did a good job of taking care of the finances while I was deployed but I noticed the check book is a little off. Can we sit down and figure this out?*"

What makes this request respectful?

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Discuss emphasizing appreciation, keeping the request specific and acknowledging contributing factors (such as finance may have made an error in the Soldier's pay). Again, keep the request specific. Acknowledge that sometimes Couples might tease one another in the spirit of playfulness, which can be beneficial. However, if you find yourself teasing your Spouse in a mean-spirited way (as in making fun of something you know they are sensitive about), that's a sign of Contempt.

Show Slide 38 (Defensiveness vs. Acknowledgement).

The third of The Four Horsemen is Defensiveness.

Defensiveness may occur when either Spouse sees themselves as the victim. They attempt to ward off a perceived attack rather than listen to the concern of their Spouse. They may make excuses or justify their behavior by saying things like, "*It's not my fault...*" It might involve cross-complaining or counter-attacking (meeting your Spouse's criticism with a complaint of your own); disagreeing and then cross-complaining "*That's not true, you're the one who ...*" "Yes-butting" – starting off by agreeing but end up disagreeing. It can also be repeating yourself without paying attention to what the other person is saying.

Defensiveness rarely has the desired effect. The attacking Spouse generally does not back down or apologize and it generally ends up escalating the conflict. When being defensive, the Spouse may shut down and not discuss what's really bothering them (and this shutting down can undermine the relationship – we'll get to this behavior pattern in the next slide).

Let's walk through an example of how Defensiveness may end up happening. A Spouse says to the Soldier, "*You're angry all the time since you got back. You're picking fights with everyone.*" The Soldier replies defensively with, "*Leave me alone. If you'd give me some space I wouldn't have to yell at you all the time.*"

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Left-click mouse to advance text.

One way a person can counter being defensive is to Acknowledge Need for Improvement.

How could you change this defensive response to Acknowledging Need for Improvement (and also acknowledging the grain of truth in the Spouse's statement)?

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Discuss possible options.

One possible response that incorporates Acknowledging Need for Improvement might be: "*Sorry, I guess I have been angry a lot lately. They told us this may happen for a while after deploying. If it doesn't improve, I'll go talk to somebody.*"

How difficult is it to acknowledge a grain of truth and not be defensive?

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Discuss that many people find it difficult to not be defensive but by remembering their loving friendship, they can keep their perspective and remember why it's worth avoiding these kinds of destructive patterns.

The problem with Defensiveness is that it doesn't allow you to see your role in contributing to the problem and it's frustrating for your Spouse who may feel like they aren't being heard.

Show Slide 39 (Stonewalling vs. Attending).

The fourth of The Four Horsemen is Stonewalling.

Stonewalling is the intentional withdrawing or walking away from an argument or interaction. This is different than making the good choice to take some time out to cool off if you or your Spouse is angry during an argument. Stonewalling can take the form of "clamming up," not paying attention, sticking your head in the newspaper, "giving the silent treatment," saying, "*Tell it to the hand...*", etc.

Stonewalling is often preceded by "flooding" – the body's physical response to feeling overwhelmed by an argument. Gottman has found that men tend to feel internally overwhelmed or "flooded" in arguments more often than women. They become physically uncomfortable during the argument. In response they "clam up" or stonewall.

Here's an example of how Stonewalling may occur. The Soldier gets another speeding ticket and the Spouse wants to talk about it. The Soldier turns up the TV and looks away from the Spouse, ignoring the request.

How might this type of interaction end up?

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Discuss how the Spouse may end up reacting to this kind of behavior. Responses may include things like – the Spouse being angry, having hurt feelings, etc.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Left-click mouse to advance text.

The way to counter the impulse to Stonewall is by Attending to the Unpleasant Topic of the request.

How could you alter this Stonewalling example and Attend to Unpleasant Topics?

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Discuss possible options.

One possible response is, "*I guess I miss the adrenaline (of combat driving) but you're right, I have been getting too many speeding tickets. I need to slow down.*"

How do you think the Spouse would react to this statement?

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Discuss how the Couple may benefit and reconnect and strengthen their Sound Marital House.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Left-click mouse to advance text.

One possible response that incorporates Attending to Unpleasant Topics might be to pay attention with eye contact and body language. Instead of disengaging as a response to being overwhelmed, try letting your Spouse know you need some time to calm down and plan to return to the conversation when you have.

CHECK ON LEARNING: Conduct a check on learning and summarize the learning activity.

3. ELO B – LSA 3. Learning Step / Activity 3. Your Sound Marital House – Three

Method of Instruction: Conference/Discussion
Instr Type (I;S Ratio): MRT Qualified Instructor (Military or Civilian)(1:30)
Time of Instruction: 0 hrs 20 mins
Instructional Strategy: Small Group Instruction
Media Type: PowerPoint Presentation
Security Classification: Unclassified

Show Slide 40 (Reinforcing Your Sound Marital House).

- a. Let's quickly review. We started building the Sound Marital House by re-creating a Loving Friendship.

Who can tell me the elements that make up the Loving Friendship?

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Acknowledge the correct answer: Re-Connecting, Spouse Re-Mapping and Fondness and Admiration. You may give a clue that the answers to the question are there on the slide (Slide 40).

We then moved from re-creating a Loving Friendship to some suggestions for confronting problems successfully using Repair Attempts, Gentle Starts and countering The Four Horsemen. Let's put the finishing touches on the Sound Marital House by talking about "Your Positivity Ratio."

Show Slide 41 (Your Positivity Ratio).

Your Positivity Ratio is the proportion of the positive things you do for your Spouse on a daily basis compared to the negative things you do. It's not only what your actions are, but also how you think and feel about your Spouse as well as how you connect with your Spouse.

Gottman reports unhappy Couples tend to have a positivity ratio of 0.8:1 (less than one) positive thought, feeling or connection to every negative thought, feeling and connection (and also use Harsh Starts and The Four Horsemen). In contrast, Couples that have at least five (5) positive thoughts, feelings and connections to every negative thought, feeling or connection, have happy, successful marriages that typically last a lifetime.

Some ways to increase Your Positivity Ratio are to take time to think about your Spouse in terms of what he/she likes, dislikes, dreams about, worries about, etc. You can do large or small things to increase Your Positivity Ratio. Also, the things you do to increase Your Positivity Ratio should reflect what makes your Spouse happy, even if they might be things you wouldn't normally do for yourself.

What does this ratio look like in action?

Show Slide 42 (Your Positivity Ratio: Unhappy Couples).

- b. Let's begin by looking at what an unhappy Couple looks like in terms of the Positivity Ratio:

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Left-click mouse to advance text.

- (1) Complained my Spouse forgot to take out the garbage...
- (2) Refilled my coffee but didn't offer Spouse any...
- (3) Watched TV instead of listening to Spouse...
And on the other side of the see-saw...
- (4) Scraped most of the ice from Spouse's car...
- (5) Kissed before leaving for work...

What do you notice about this slide?

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Point out that even unhappy Couples engage in positive thoughts, feelings and actions. It's not about the absence of such positive experiences but about the proportion. Discuss that it's natural to focus on the negative. This is called the "negativity bias" and is why even one negative remark or action can weigh more heavily than one positive remark or action.

Show Slide 43 (Your Positivity Ratio: Happy Couples).

- c. Now let's look at what a happy Couple looks like in terms of the Positivity Ratio:

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Left-click mouse to advance text.

- (1) Complained my Spouse forgot to take out the garbage...
And on the other side of the see-saw...
- (2) Feeling lucky to be married to my Spouse...
- (3) Scraped ice off of Spouse's car...
- (4) Kissed before leaving for work...
- (5) Said "*I love you*" to Spouse...
- (6) Appreciated how much we've gone through together...

What do you notice about this slide?

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Point out that happy Couples engage in more positive thoughts, feelings and actions. Reiterate that it's not about the absence of negative experiences – happy Couples occasionally criticize one another or have negative thoughts about each other. Again it's a matter of proportion.

Notice the focus here is on Your Positivity Ratio because that's what you can control – not on tracking your partner's ratio.

What role does Spouse Re-Mapping have in keeping a healthy positivity ratio?

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Point out that knowing someone's likes and dislikes makes it easier to engage in positive actions and thoughts that build Your Positivity Ratio.

When might it be difficult to maintain a healthy Positivity Ratio?

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Discuss how it might be more difficult to maintain a healthy Positivity Ratio during the deployment. Ask, "*What things did you do during the deployment to make sure you kept a healthy Positivity Ratio?*" Discuss things like sending care packages, snail mail, e-mail, phone calls, etc.

Show Slide 44 (Your Positivity Ratio).

How might Your Positivity Ratio be different after a deployment?

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Discuss how some Couples may compete for who had it worse. They may compare the sacrifices they made and the difficulties they faced during the deployment and this can drive the Positivity Ratio down. On the other hand, some Couples may appreciate each other more after the deployment.

What positive things are you doing now that you are together again?

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Possible answers may be making each other's favorite meals, giving back-rubs, etc.

Up to now, we have talked about what positive things you can do for each other as individuals. These are powerful thoughts, feelings and actions that can help re-connect your relationship. However, notice the picture on the slide (Slide 44), there are two people on each side of the see-saw – that's for a reason.

If you think about yourselves as a Couple, what do you do to have "Couple-oriented" thoughts, feelings and connections to increase your Couple's Positivity Ratio? For example: you can do things like going out to celebrate important Couple events such as an anniversary (of their first date, the marriage proposal, etc.), going out for a walk together, or reserving intimate time together. Instead of getting each other individual gifts you could get a present for yourselves as a Couple (like a new high-tech coffee maker if you both like coffee).

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: You don't have to focus on the negative things that Couples may do jointly, but if it comes up, here are two examples: both of them do badly as a Couple by each ignoring an important anniversary date or both arguing in front of other people.

Show Slide 45 (Increasing Positivity Ratio).

- d. "Active Constructive Responding" is showing authentic, active and constructive interest when someone tells you good news. Active Constructive Responding is designed to improve relationships and increase a sense of belonging.

By using Active Constructive Responding, Family members feel validated and understood. It's a skill that can be taught to all Family members, even the youngest members of the Family.

Giving Effective Praise is an opportunity to shape behavior, enhance motivation and build optimism and resilience. Effective Praise identifies *what was working* and creates effectiveness and a pattern for future successes.

Now let's talk about the way to do Active Constructive Responding.

Show Slide 46 (Active Constructive Responding).

As you can see by this model, there are four types of responses an individual can give when someone shares a positive experience. The four response categories are:

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: (explain each quadrant, going in a counter-clockwise direction starting with Passive Constructive Responding).

- (1) Passive Constructive Responding. The person offers quiet and understated support; conversation tends to fizzle out. The Family member may feel unimportant, misunderstood, embarrassed, or even guilty. The person is not actively engaged in the conversation and does little to build on the conversation or explore the situation or event.
- (2) Passive Destructive Responding. The person ignores the event; conversation never starts. The Family member may feel confused, guilty or disappointed. The person ignores the event by sidetracking the conversation or switching topics completely.
- (3) Active Destructive Responding. The person squashes the event; conversation comes to a halt. The Family member may feel ashamed, embarrassed, guilty, or angry. The person actively points out the negative implications of the situation and highlights the downsides of the event.
- (4) Active Constructive Responding. The person shows authentic interest and asks meaningful questions; conversation is enhanced. The Family member may feel validated and understood. The person offers praise, asks questions and helps the Family member to elaborate on the positive experience by eliciting more information and asking questions that draw out details of the situation and its meaning.

Show Slide 47 (Active Constructive Responding).

- e. Look at the Active Constructive Responding example on this slide (Slide 47).

Let's say for instance, your Spouse tells you about a great deal she saw on a vacation package for block leave. Let's look at the four different types of responses an individual can use when someone shares such a positive experience.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: The slide builds in a counter-clockwise direction starting with Passive Constructive Responding. Ask for other pertinent responses that correspond with each box.

- (1) There's Passive Constructive Responding. "*That's nice.*"
- (2) There's Passive Destructive Responding. "*I need to get more milk for tomorrow.*"
- (3) Then there's Active Destructive Responding. "*Why did you waste your time. I'd rather go fishing with my buddies. Next time ask before you make plans.*"
- (4) Finally, there's Active Constructive Responding. "*That's fantastic honey, I've always wanted to go there. How did you ever find such a great deal?*"

Which of these responses would make you feel embarrassed or even angry?

Which of these responses would make you feel validated and understood?

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Ask students the questions above; wait for a diversity of responses. Acknowledge the correct answers (Active Destructive Responding: *Which of these responses would make you feel embarrassed or even angry?*) and (Active Constructive Responding: *Which of these responses would make you feel validated and understood?*).

Active Constructive Responding takes practice but many people see the benefits of using it in their relationship right away.

Show Slide 48 (Relationship Strengths).

f. We've talked about the Sound Marital House and skills to focus on in reinforcing your Sound Marital House. There are lots of other relationship skills that are also important. Here's a list of some of them. Take a look and think about which are your particular strengths as individuals and as a Couple.

- (1) Compromise – involves being able to meet your Spouse half-way and being able to de-escalate arguments by negotiating instead of being stubborn and sticking to your individual preference.
- (2) Timing communication right – is about picking the optimal time to have a discussion about important, sensitive topics. These topics may include things you would like your Spouse to change. Timing may also involve knowing when you need to take a break in a conversation that's getting too heated. When you take a break and walk away, explaining why you need a break (that you need to cool off), it keeps the behavior distinct from Stonewalling.
- (3) Tolerating each other's weaknesses – this first involves acknowledging that everyone has an area or areas where they struggle. This area is different for each person and for each Couple. Sometimes Couples get stuck in what Gottman refers to as "*if onlys.*" These "*if onlys*" are things we wish were

different about the other person (for example: “if only” the other person were sexier, more understanding, or a better listener, then life would be fine). This line of thinking is not helpful to building connections but undermines respect and admiration. If Spouses are able to accept each other’s flaws, they can concentrate on thinking about what they appreciate about one another.

- (4) Being a calming influence for each other – involves knowing what to do to soothe yourself and your Spouse when one of you is upset (especially sad or angry).

What kinds of things do you do to help calm your Spouse when he/she is upset?

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Possible examples may include just by being there and listening, giving a foot massage, serving a special food, hugging, etc.

It should be noted that simply telling someone to “*calm down*” usually has the opposite effect. Only you and your Spouse know what works for the two of you; but sometimes you can also ask what the other person would like you to do. Recognize that it’s also important that you are calm before you can be effective in being a calming influence for someone else.

- (5) Hunt the Good Stuff – finding the little things that can bring you joy. This may involve looking for the positives in interactions with your Spouse and in things they have done. Practicing this skill daily can lead to greater optimism, build on Fondness and Admiration and strengthen the relationship.
- (6) Do the little things – this involves doing the small everyday behaviors that remind the person you care (bringing them a cup of coffee, cutting out a funny cartoon from the paper, etc.).

These kinds of actions can help build up Your Positivity Ratio.

Do you have a relationship strength that isn’t on this list?

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Briefly discuss any other relationship strengths that are not listed.

Show Slide 49 (Post-Deployment Family Growth & Development).

- g. Many of the strengths we just discussed help Families develop their Sound Marital House which sets them up to grow from the deployment experience. Tough situations such as the recent deployment can provide the opportunity for both personal and Family growth.

How have you and your Family grown from the deployment?

How has your perspective changed for the better as a result of the deployment?

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Ask students the questions above; wait for a diversity of responses. Discuss how Couples may have more respect for each other, that they may find more meaning in building a Family, etc. They may also appreciate each other more.

How do you show you appreciate each other?

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Discuss options for showing gratitude, including saying the words “*thank you,*” doing little things that show their gratitude (like in the Positivity Ratio), etc.

Are there other ways you have grown as a person and as a Couple from this deployment?

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Ask students the question above; wait for a diversity of responses. Discuss various domains from post-deployment growth including Personal Strength (for example, “*I’m a stronger person than I thought I was.*”), Enhanced Relationships with others (such as, “*I value my Family more.*”), Spiritual Change (such as, “*What I do is meaningful.*”), Appreciation of Life (such as, “*I appreciate what I have in life.*”), and New Opportunities (such as, “*I have started volunteering.*”).

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Source: Tedeschi, R. G., & McNally, R. J. (2011). Can we facilitate posttraumatic growth in combat veterans? *American Psychologist*, 66, 19-24.

It’s important to recognize that, even though the deployment was hard for the entire Family and may have seemed endless, relationships and individuals can grow from the experience. Resilient Soldiers and Families see adversity as an opportunity as well as a challenge.

CHECK ON LEARNING: Conduct a check on learning and summarize the learning activity.

SECTION IV. SUMMARY

Method of Instruction: Conference/Discussion
Instr Type (I:S Ratio): MRT Qualified Instructor (Military or Civilian) (1:30)
Time of Instruction: 5 mins
Instructional Strategy: Small Group Instruction

Check on Learning

Determine if the students have learned the material presented by soliciting student questions and explanations. Ask the students questions and correct misunderstandings.

Review / Summarize Lesson

Show Slide 50 (*Thank-you for your service!*).

As an Army Spouse, you bring experience, strengths and skills that will help you and your Family thrive during the reintegration and beyond. As we've discussed, although Army life can be challenging, it doesn't mean that being a military Spouse and Couple can't be a positive experience.

Thank you for your time today and thank you for your service as an Army Family. We hope this training has started you thinking about ways for your Family to become even more resilient than you already are.

What are your questions regarding this resilience training module?

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Determine if the participants have learned the material presented by asking questions. Correct any misunderstandings that may arise. Encourage participants to either ask the question in the group or afterwards. Ensure you have time set aside after the training to be available.

SECTION V. STUDENT EVALUATION

**Testing
Requirements**

Post-Deployment Resilience Training for Spouses/Couples invites discussion and personal insights from all participants receiving this training. This resilience training module encompasses instructor facilitated discussions designed to stimulate analysis and identify any areas that may require extra emphasis or review.

**Feedback
Requirements**

NOTE: Feedback is essential to effective learning. Schedule and provide feedback on the evaluation and any information to help answer students' questions about the test. Provide remedial training as needed.

Appendix A - Viewgraph Masters

VIEWGRAPHS FOR LESSON 1: 081-RTO02007/1 Version 1

Terminal Learning Objective

Viewgraph, 081-RTO02007/1, Post-Deployment Resilience Training for Spouses/Couples, 15 July 2011

Multi Media Attached! [Click here and then press F9 to view.](#)

Appendix B - Test(s) and Test Solution(s) (N/A)

Appendix C - Practical Exercises and Solutions (N/A)

Appendix D - Student Handouts

HANDOUTS FOR LESSON 1: 081-RTO02007/1 Version 1

Terminal Learning Objective

Handout, 081-RTO02007/1, Post-Deployment Resilience Training for Spouses/Couples,
15 July 2011

Multi Media Attached! [Click here and then press F9 to view.](#)