

# MINDLINES

## *Train the Trainer*

### *Taking CgOSC Throughout Navy Medicine*

By *Cmdr. Jean Fisak, NC, USN*  
Deputy Director, NCCOSC

Being a caregiver can be a stressful and demanding job. Being a Navy Medicine caregiver facing the added demands of military service coupled with maintaining a harmonious work-life balance, can be even more challenging. Mitigating these stresses early enables us to maintain the resilience required to provide the quality care our beneficiaries deserve.

At the Naval Center for Combat & Operational Stress Control (NCCOSC), we've revitalized the Caregiver Occupational Stress Control (CgOSC) program. CgOSC is a comprehensive, standardized program that is designed to promote peer intervention, foster resilience among caregivers, strengthen unit cohesion, and develop supportive work environments where caregivers are comfortable seeking help. The end goals: reduced burnout and compassion fatigue, increased job satisfaction and retention, military caregivers who are prepared and ready for the operational and occupational demands of their profession, and maintenance to the quality and safety of patient care.

To meet these goals, we've rolled out CgOSC instructor training to healthcare providers and pastoral care staff at San Diego, Calif., Portsmouth, Va., and OCONUS East military treatment facilities (MTFs). But we're not stopping there; we plan to roll out this training across the rest of Navy Medicine enterprise. The CgOSC instructor training course is intensive, informative, and designed to be an interactive approach to CgOSC. Lesson plans feature resilience, self-care, Caregiver and Occupational Stress



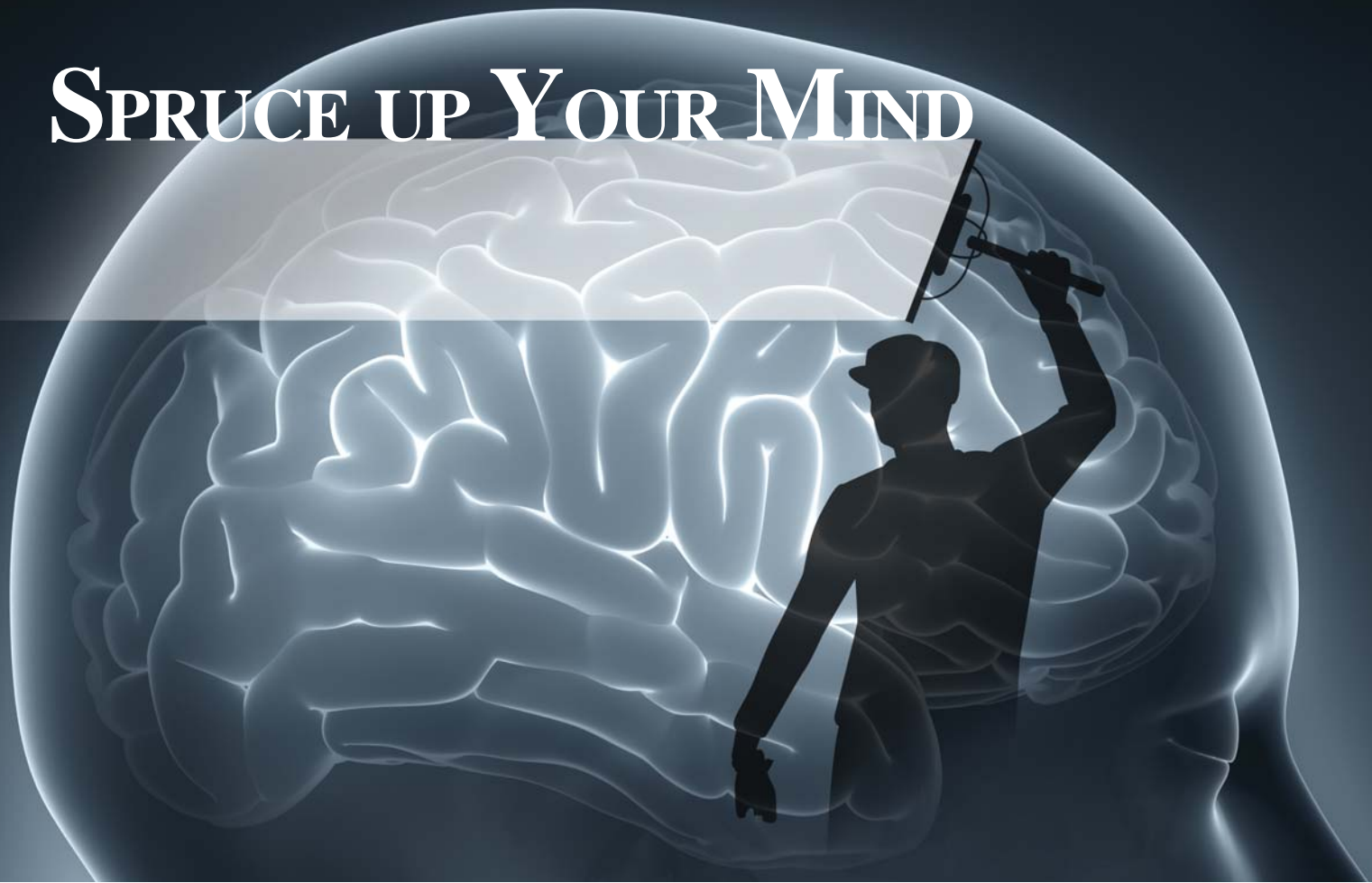
*Cmdr. Jean Fisak, Deputy Director, Naval Center for Combat & Operational Stress Control, discusses the curriculum pertaining to the Caregiver Occupational Stress Control (CgOSC) program at a workshop on Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif. Photo by Joe Griffin.*

First Aid (COSFA), unit assessments, and buddy care. While the lesson plan is structured, we encourage and expect proactive participation to help bring the training home for attendees. We strive for active group discussions and multidisciplinary

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# SPRUCE UP YOUR MIND



## *with Spring Cleaning*

**S**pringtime brings a host of sensory delights: the smell of fresh-cut grass, canopies of greenery above, and a bounty of beautiful blooms below. Animals awoken from their long rest and emerge from their winter hideaways to explore these new wonders. Everywhere, and in every way imaginable, life begins anew.

These new beginnings, as seen in nature, parallel a similar opportunity for humankind. A *tabula rasa*, or clean slate. A chance to step back and take stock of our lives and finally commit to the changes we'd envisioned in the cold winter months. For some, those changes come in the form of a fitness goal, like beating your last Physical Readiness Test (PRT) score, or a promise to yourself that you'd slim down

and finally fit into that swimsuit you bought for your post-deployment family vacation to Hawaii.

For others, spring presents an opportunity to clear the cobwebs, rid ourselves of the old and seldom-used, and make room for the new. Rolling up your sleeves and setting about the task of spring cleaning—the annual ritual of systemically scrubbing, scouring, steaming, shining, and separating the useful from the *useless* in our homes—brings a sense of satisfaction in knowing everything has been made fresh and is in its proper place. Studies have shown that

## Cluttered minds can't recall information as well as organized minds

simplifying and de-cluttering our homes can help us feel organized and in control, leading to lower levels of stress, increased optimism, and a general sense of peace. Many people use a permanent change of station (PCS) move as an excuse to pare down their belongings and rid themselves of items that have outlived their usefulness. Getting organized can be done at any time, and it's valuable because if you know where everything is, you don't have to waste time digging through the chaos to locate important items. This means more time for the activities you enjoy most, like spending valuable time with your loved ones.

Just as you tidy and reorganize the closets in your home, your mental closets deserve the same attention, so the clutter in them—the jumble of memories, various bits of information, ideas, and so on—doesn't become overwhelming. A 2010 study published in *The Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology* found that cluttered minds can't recall information as well

as organized minds. Not surprising, considering all the demands placed on the average active-duty service member: financial worries, family concerns, and stress over an upcoming deployment, among others. One psychologist, Dr. Daniel Tomasulo, devised a method during a recent psychodrama workshop to help visualize cleaning out your personal closet. He created the acronym C.A.R.P.E. through a four-step process that involves making a list of **C**ategories, assigning an **A**ction for each task, **R**anking the order, and then highlighting your **P**ositive **E**xperiences. The outcome: *carpe*, as in *carpe diem*, meaning “seize the day;” or in this case, “seize the closet.”

As you go about the task of spring cleaning your mental closet—and your physical ones, as well—it's important to practice constructive methods to prevent the stress associated with those tasks from getting out of hand. Some methods we recommend here at NCCOSC to mitigate the detrimental effects of stress include **optimism** (positive expectations, beliefs and reactions); **flexible thinking** (the ability to find the good in a bad situation and consider other perspectives); **behavior control** (using relaxation techniques or other methods to regulate your actions and prevent destructive behaviors); and **positive coping** (facing your fears, actively working toward a constructive solution to a problem, and accepting the emotions that accompany it). A **strong social support** network and nurturing your **spirituality** can help calm the chaos and restore harmony.

By spring cleaning your soul as you would spring clean your home, you create room in your life for new ideas and adventures. Ridding yourself of unnecessary clutter, negative thoughts and emotions, and organizing your mental closet will give you a fresh start, make room for positive experiences, and allow you to fully appreciate the moments and the people that truly matter. 🧼

## C.A.R.P.E.

**Categorize** the things you have been thinking of doing, wanting to do, or need to take care of. Such categories may include *Work, Around the House*, etc.

**Action** assigned to each task—like *Wash Car, Study for Advancement Exam*, etc. Think of it like organizing your shoes, hats, or other items in a neat row so you can easily find them later.

**Ranking** these items in order of priority. This helps you remember the order in which tasks need to be completed, and helps you stay focused.

**Positive Experiences** - Create a ‘vault’ in your personal closet where you can store all your happy memories for easy access when you need a pick-me-up.







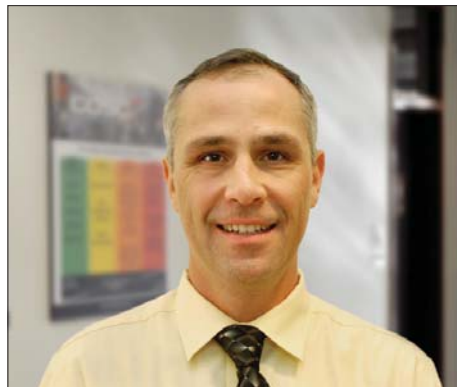
# *Resilience* *is Important for* *Operational Readiness*

## *How Do You Stay Resilient?*

**R**esilience is vital for today's service members. In an ever-changing global climate filled with uncertainty, service members are often forced to do more with less, deploy for extended periods of time, and cope with constantly changing demands. Coupled with personal stressors, like worry over finances, adequate time with family and friends, and the challenges of professional development, serving in today's military is no easy feat.

We recently had the opportunity to speak with a group of active-duty sailors, who, as a collateral duty, serve as suicide prevention coordinators at their respective commands under Navy Region Southwest's 21st Century Sailor office. They had a lot to say about the value of resilience for today's service members, and shared their methods for keeping themselves resilient.

Sailors were encouraged to wear civilian attire to help promote an environment of open and free discussion. 🇺🇸



**Cmdr. Eric Johnson**  
Director, 21st Century Sailor Office  
Navy Region Southwest

“In this operational environment, our sailors continue to perform at high levels with less and less resources. Resilience is important in order to help them adapt to changes easily, and perform as a 21st century sailor. I stay resilient by running with my wife.”



**Lt. Cmdr. John Van Dyke**  
Deputy Command Chaplain  
Naval Support Activity Monterey

“Without resilience, unit and personal integrity is compromised. I liken it to a physical structure that has to have structural integrity. Resilience is the ability to flex and adjust. I stay resilient by nurturing my faith, my family relationships, and my physical readiness.”



**ABFC Michael Mott**  
Naval Air Station Fallon

“Operational demands change all the time and it’s important to be able to deal with the stress and constant changes. Being able to deal with those things and move forward is vital. I stay resilient through routine physical activity.”



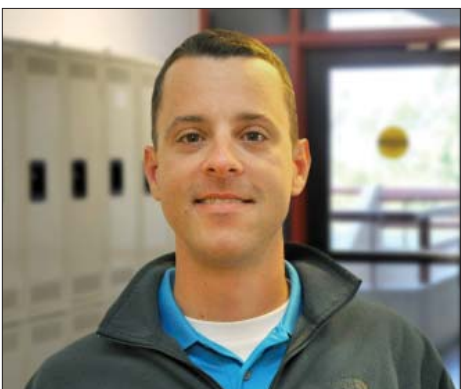
**MAC John Justiniano**  
Naval Weapons Station  
Seal Beach

“Sailors who are affected by stressors will not be at peak performance, which directly affects mission readiness. I stay resilient through counseling and mentorship, along with practicing good coping skills.”



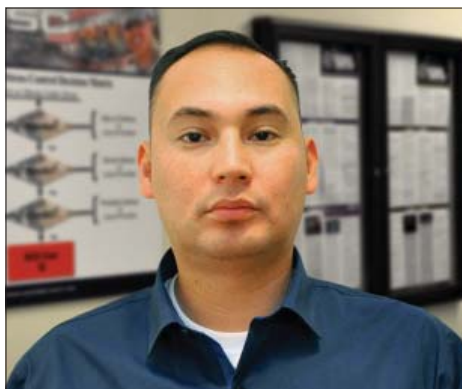
**RPC Franklin Dizon**  
Naval Base Ventura County

“Resilience is key to operational readiness to keep service members from getting over-stressed, and to prevent depression. I stay resilient by praying and spending time with my family.”



**ETC Logan Freeman**  
Naval Air Facility El Centro

“Resilience is important for operational readiness because if everyone practices resilience-building skills and strengthens their resilience, they’ll be ready to accomplish the mission, and will be successful in accomplishing mission objectives. I stay resilient by prioritizing my values and practicing self-care.”



**ABHC Elijah Lonewolf**  
Naval Air Weapons Station  
China Lake

“Resilience is important for operational readiness because it helps personnel stay focused to continue to support the mission regardless of hardships or challenges. I strengthen my resilience by staying focused and being optimistic.”



**YNC Michell Jordan**  
Naval Base San Diego

“It is important for people to stay focused in order to be safe in an operational environment. Part of being focused is the ability to balance personal and professional goals and challenges. Coping with the stress that comes with that is important. I stay resilient by talking with family and friends, working out, and reading.”





## DATES TO REMEMBER

**F**rom auspicious beginnings in a post-civil war era through modern times, Navy psychology has been an ever-evolving and important aspect of Navy Medicine. With dedication and passion in everything from research to patient care, Navy psychologists, leadership, and support staff work diligently and meticulously to provide the highest quality of medical readiness for our sailors and Marines.

As we prepare our service members for the 21st century, we take a look back on some of the most significant dates in Navy psychology history.

*(Adapted from Andre B. Sobocinski, BUMED Historian)*

**1869:** George Miller Beard (1839-1883), a former Civil War Navy medical officer, coins the term "Neurasthenia" for "chronic mental fatigue." Beard later authored the book "Neurasthenia: with Remarks on Treatment" (1879).



*George Miller Beard*

**1938:** Dr. Richard Paynter, Vice President of the American Association of Applied Psychologists (AAAP) proposes mobilizing psychologists in the War and Navy Departments.

**1940:** C.M. Louttit of Indiana University and secretary of AAAP becomes the first psychologist in the U.S Navy. Soon after, the Navy establishes a special branch in the Medical Corps for psychologists and other non-medical specialists. Louttit is appointed as a "hospital-volunteer specialist" or "H-V(S)" in the Navy Reserve.

**1944:** BUMED publishes "The NP Problem," a pamphlet describing the treatment and administration policy for mental illnesses in the Navy.

**1945:** By war's end more than 500 Navy psychologists (50 of them women) have served in uniform.

**1946:** Naval Medical Research Laboratory (NMRL) is established.

**1948:** James W. Bagby and Robert S. Herrmann become the first clinical psychologists in the Navy's Medical Service Corps.

**1962:** Clinical psychologist Capt. Robert Herrmann is appointed Chief of the Medical Service Corps. He would serve in this role until 1968. Herrmann was the first MSC chief who was not a health care administrator.

**1964:** National Naval Medical Center Bethesda, Md. becomes the first accredited psychology internship program in the Navy.

**1968:** Introduction of the first Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) test for selection and classification within service.

**1974:** Navy Medical Neuropsychiatric Research Unit is redesignated the Naval Health Research Center (NHRC).

**1985:** Navy introduces a fitness program aboard USS New Jersey to reduce combat stress.

**1989:** Department of Veterans Affairs establishes a National Center for PTSD.

**1990:** The term "occupational health psychology" is first coined.

**1991:** Naval Hospitals Portsmouth, Va. and San Diego, Calif. graduate their first class of psychology interns.

**2000:** The Operational Stress Control and Readiness (OSCAR) program is first implemented in the 2nd Marine Division based in Camp Lejeune, N.C.

**2007:** Development of the Combat and Operational Stress Continuum (color-coded) model.

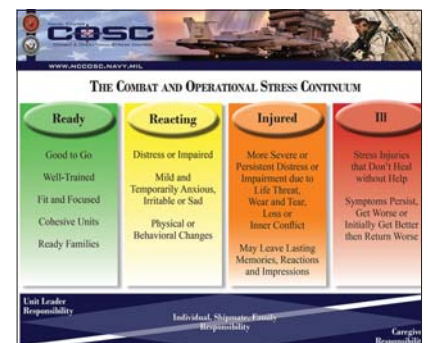
**2007:** Establishment of the Defense Center for Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury (DCoE)

**2008:** BUMED establishes the Naval Center for Combat & Operational Stress Control (NCCOSC). Capt. Paul Hammer, MC, USN, and Capt. John Rothacker, NC, USN serve as the command's first director and deputy director, respectively.

**2009:** Department of Defense (DoD) decides it will not award Purple Hearts to service personnel suffering from PTSD.



*Naval Medical Center Bethesda, Md.*



*Combat and Operational Stress Continuum model*



# *Seven Steps to Super Sleep*

**A** good night's sleep is vitally important for a healthy mind. While the body rests, the mind uses this time to heal, to rid itself of toxins, and to accomplish tasks it isn't always able to do while you are awake and demanding its full resources. But sometimes a good night's sleep is easier said than done. If you're feeling stressed about your work, worried about finances, or anxious about an important operational or occupational task, it can be difficult to quiet your mind. While you can't always control the thoughts that occupy your mind, there's good news: you *can* control the actions you take that can encourage a better night's sleep. Here are some helpful tips to help get you on the road to a better night's sleep.

- 1. Stick to a schedule.** It's not always easy with the daily demands of military life, but try to go to bed and wake up at the same time each day. This will keep your body on a consistent cycle. But if you can't fall asleep within 15 minutes or so, get out of bed, do something relaxing, and go back to bed when you're feeling tired. Forcing yourself to sleep when you aren't tired might actually make it harder for you to nod off.
- 2. Monitor your food and drink intake before bed.** Don't let yourself climb into bed hungry or too full from dinner. Hunger pains or a stuffed tummy can keep you awake. Try not to drink too much before bed, to reduce the number of late-night bathroom trips. Limit nicotine, caffeine, and alcohol consumption before bed. These can interfere with your sleep cycle.
- 3. Create—and stick to—a nighttime ritual.** Doing the same relaxing activities every night, like taking a warm bath, reading a book, or listening to soothing music, will tell your body it's time to snooze. Try to limit your screen time immediately before bed, too—studies have shown that the bright screens on electronic devices like smartphones, TVs, and iPads can actually suppress your melatonin levels. If you must read, choose a physical book instead.
- 4. Get comfy!** Even if you're deployed, there are still several ways to create a restful sleeping space that is ideal and inviting for sleep. For most people this means a cool, dark, quiet room. Need white noise? Grab a fan or pick up a noise



machine on your next shopping trip. Choose a pillow, mattress, and bedding that feels comfortable to you.

- 5. Limit naps.** While they're tempting, especially on long, tiring days, long naps can keep you from dozing off at night. Try to limit naps to an hour or less during midafternoon.
- 6. Get physical! ....activity, that is.** Regular exercise can help you fall asleep faster and sleep more soundly. But be careful when choosing a time to exercise; if you work out too close to bedtime, you might find yourself too wound up to wind down for the night.
- 7. Manage your stress!** When you've got too much on your mind, your sleep is more likely to suffer as a result. Find healthy ways to manage your stress. Get organized, set priorities, give yourself permission to take a break when you need it, take time to laugh and spend time with friends and family. Keep a pen and notepad by your bed, write down whatever is stressing you out, and then put it aside until tomorrow.

Quality rest is important for your mind to recharge and prepare itself for the challenges ahead. If you aren't rested, your mission will suffer. For caregivers, if you aren't rested you might make mistakes that could place a patient's life in jeopardy. Don't take any risks with your health. If you find you still are unable to get quality restful sleep, contact your health care provider immediately. 📞



## Train the Trainer

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participation. The final day of the course culminates in teach-backs, where we give the students the opportunity to become the facilitator, and prepare for the moment they'll provide CgOSC instruction to their respective commands.

Our primary objective is that each and every student who attends the course will

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be able to explain what CgOSC is and why it's important. Our hope is that they will walk away armed with the tools and the confidence to share what they've learned.

To help validate the CgOSC course, we've been collecting post-training survey data to document participants' knowledge, skills and attitudes toward the importance of CgOSC, the effectiveness of the training

on CgOSC awareness and application, and the attitudes of military health care providers regarding the effects of stigma on the decision to seek help for caregiver stress.

And the response from Navy Medicine caregivers who have attended the course has been overwhelmingly positive. Aspects such as the Five Core Leader Functions and COSFA have really resonated with our students. We hear comments such as "very valuable resources", "great quality course", and "excellent material that is highly needed". The majority of the feedback we've received so far is a testament to the course's value. Over the three courses of CgOSC, 100% indicated that the CgOSC program fits the Navy culture. 100% thought the CgOSC program will be valuable to the Navy, and 100% reported that they would recommend the CgOSC program to their peers. What these numbers show is the value and importance of CgOSC, not only for our caregivers but for the one million beneficiaries they care for.

At the end of the training, we discuss CgOSC program implementation at their respective commands. We emphasize the importance of caregivers taking care of themselves so that they can continue to provide the quality care their patients deserve and depend on. The demands placed on our military are always changing. We

are frequently asked to do more with less. So we must take preventive measures to keep the harmful effects of stress at bay. By doing so, and by encouraging other caregivers to do so, we will be one step closer to ensuring that we are always resilient and ready to carry out Navy Medicine's mission of "World-Class Care...Anytime, Anywhere."



NCCOSC Deputy Director Cmdr. Jean Fisak discusses the teach-back overview during Caregiver Occupational Stress Control Instructor Training for caregivers attached to U.S. hospital ship USNS Mercy (T-AH-19).

**On the Cover:** Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Handling) 1st Class Brian Adams directs an F/A-18E Super Hornet aboard the aircraft carrier USS John C. Stennis (CVN 74). U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Kenneth Abbate.

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**Public Affairs Officer/Dept. Head**  
Amy Rohlfs  
**Senior Strategic Communications Specialist**  
Jenny Collins  
**Junior Strategic Communications Specialist**  
Jessica Tounzen  
**Senior Graphic Designer**  
Joe Griffin

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