

# Return & Reunion Workshop



**MC CS**  
**MARINE CORPS**  
**FAMILY TEAM BUILDING**

# What's the Plan?

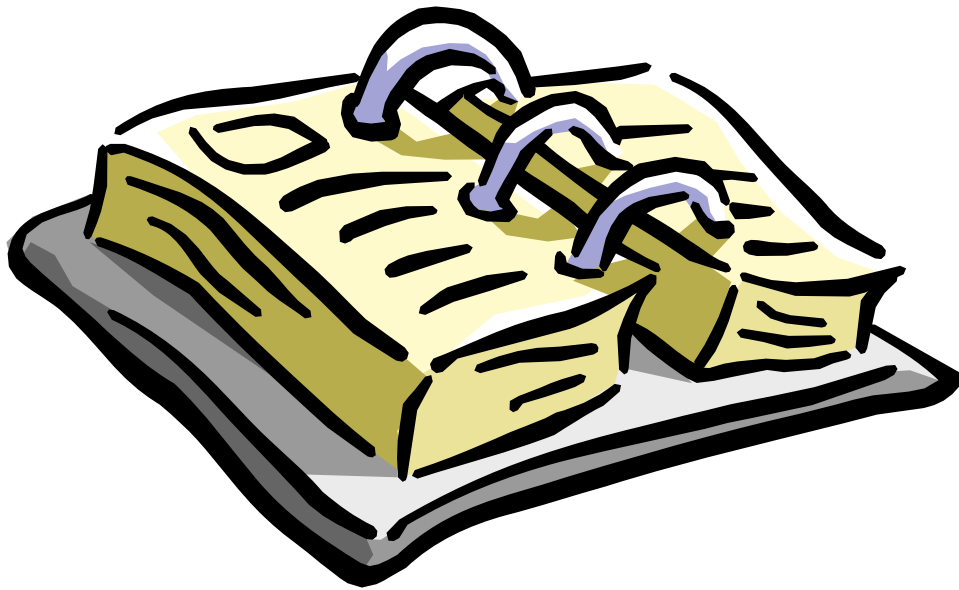
My Reunion Plan \_\_\_\_\_

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Your Marine's Plan \_\_\_\_\_

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# Communication



# Communication

How have you and your Marine communicated during the deployment?

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What have you missed by not having Face 2 Face Communication?

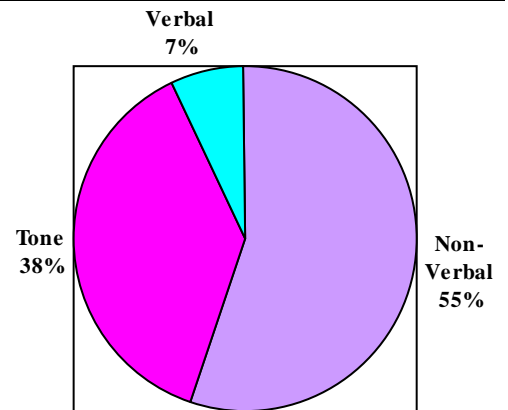
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List personal factors:

- Verbal
- Non-Verbal
- Gender



55% of our message is received from Nonverbal Communication.

38% of our message is received from Tone.

7% of our message is received from Verbal Communication.

My Communication List

“I can’t wait to tell you about...”

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
5. \_\_\_\_\_  
7. \_\_\_\_\_  
9. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
4. \_\_\_\_\_  
6. \_\_\_\_\_  
8. \_\_\_\_\_  
10. \_\_\_\_\_

# Tips for Helpful Communication

It's beneficial to remember that any kind of separation or deployment can heighten our emotions and our reactions to comments.

Remember to think about what you are saying:

- Organize your thoughts

- Make a communication list

- Don't try to talk about different topics at the same time

- Careful of use of personal triggers, or "buttons"

Messages can be delivered in many ways:

- Statements that don't usually require a response

- Questions when you are looking for an answer

- Commands can be thought of as forceful

- Warnings can cause alert

Body language can send a different message:

- Voice you use

- Touch

- Silence says a lot without saying anything

- Gestures and expressions

Language:

- Be careful of the words you use

Timing effects communication:

- Make sure you speak in a clear voice



Adapted from "Improving Your Communication Skills"-Channing L. Bete 1999

# Deployment Stress



# WHAT IS STRESS?

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Prolonged exposure to situations that produce stress can cause your body to experience negative consequences. Stress releases hormones that prepare us for action (to fight or take flight/flee). If we don't take action to resolve the stressor, the stress response can lead to both physical and psychological health problems.

## HOW DOES DEPLOYMENT STRESS AFFECT YOUR FAMILY?

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Normal day-to-day stress can be challenging enough. Now you have added the stress of deployment on top of this. Multiple deployments bring even more stress, as the changes pile one on top of the other. In addition, just as you finally get into a routine, it is time for the stress of Return and Reunion.

Here are some of the challenges of homecoming for family members:

- Getting to know (and trust) each other again
- Your Marine spouse has changed
- You have changed
- Fitting Marine spouse back into family routines
- Money problems: "Where did it all go?"
- Marine spouse wanting to spend time with buddies
- How much should you ask? How much can you listen?

# COMBAT OPERATIONAL STRESS

Your Marine has been under stress too. However, the stressors your Marine has experienced have been different from yours. Extreme stress can cause neurologic changes that affect the way your Marine responds to you and the environment. Sometimes these changes are mild and sometimes they are severe.

The Marine Corps views combat operational stress for Marines along a continuum or spectrum. Each zone represents how a Marine functions with stress. It ranges from green (ready) to yellow (reacting) to orange (injured) and red (ill). Marines in the orange and red zones need medical evaluation and treatment to improve the quality of life for themselves and their families as quickly as possible.

## Combat Operational Stress Continuum for Marines

READY	REACTING	INJURED	ILL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good to go</li> <li>• Well trained</li> <li>• Prepared</li> <li>• Fit and tough</li> <li>• Cohesive units, ready families</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distress or impairment</li> <li>• Mild, transient</li> <li>• Anxious or irritable</li> <li>• Behavior change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More severe or persistent distress or impairment</li> <li>• Function is altered, may leave a scar, but is not irreversible</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Injuries that don't heal on their own</li> <li>• PTSD</li> <li>• Depression</li> <li>• Anxiety</li> <li>• Substance abuse</li> </ul>
Leader Responsibility		Chaplain & Medical Responsibility	

Recognizing Stress injuries: It's important to recognize stress injuries in your Marine. You may see:

- Personality changes (emotional regulation, temperament, over-reaction, withdrawal)
- Problems with sleep, nightmares, hyper-vigilance
- Increased destructive, dangerous, or addictive behavior



## Common Stress Symptoms for Marines

READY	REACTING	INJURED	ILL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Calm and steady</li> <li>•Confident and competent</li> <li>•Getting the job done</li> <li>•In control</li> <li>•Sense of humor</li> <li>•Sleeping enough</li> <li>•Eating the right amount</li> <li>•Working out, staying fit</li> <li>•Playing well and often</li> <li>•Active socially, spiritually</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Feeling anxious, irritable</li> <li>•Worrying</li> <li>•Cutting corners on the job</li> <li>•Short tempered or mean</li> <li>•Grouchy</li> <li>•Trouble sleeping</li> <li>•Eating too much/little</li> <li>•Apathy, loss of interest</li> <li>•Keeping to oneself</li> <li>•Negative, pessimistic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Loss of control of body, emotions, or thinking</li> <li>•Can't fall or stay asleep</li> <li>•Recurrent vivid nightmares</li> <li>•Intense guilt or shame</li> <li>•Attacks of panic or rage</li> <li>•Inability to enjoy activities</li> <li>•Disruption of moral values</li> <li>•Serious suicidal or homicidal thoughts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Stress injury symptoms that last for <u>more than 60 days</u></li> <li>•Symptoms that get <u>worse</u> over time instead of better</li> <li>•Symptoms that get better for awhile but then come back worse</li> </ul>

If you see these signs and symptoms, it will be important to know when to get professional help for stress injuries. If you see that the stress is affecting sleep, motivation, judgment, etc and affecting the Marine's ability to function socially or on the job, then additional outside help may be required to address the problem before it worsens.

There are three basic mechanisms involved in Stress Injuries:

1. **Biological changes** affect the way the brain handles information and emotions, and changes "set points" for mood and reactions. As a result, they may seem moody, irritable, over-reactive, and impulsive - not the same Marine who went to war
2. **Psychological changes** include difficulty making sense of what is happening to them, grief, guilt, lost sense of safety, and questioning of personal values and beliefs
3. **Social changes** include feeling isolated and that nobody else understands, questioning of society's sense of right and wrong, loss of moral compass, and loss of social support systems

## POSTTRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER (PTSD)

Not all combat operational stress symptoms add up to PTSD. It takes a certain set of stress injury symptoms, for a prolonged period of time, severe enough to affect job performance and relationships, plus formal diagnosis by a qualified doctor, to be called PTSD.

# TOOLS FOR MANAGING STRESS

Some stress reducing tips: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Here are some extra tips for taking care of yourself if your spouse has a stress related problem:

- Remember the good times
- Remember your spouse needs you to be strong
- Accept that you can't take away your spouse's grief, stop their pain, or make them change, but you can help them decide to get help
- Be calm and patient
- Find someone safe to talk to (friend, family, chaplain)
- Talk to others in your situation – find out you're not alone
- Consider a support group
- Open up at your own pace and comfort level
- Learn about PTSD and other disorders
- Remember there is no wrong or right way to feel
- Know your resources and use them
- Get additional help if things are not getting better

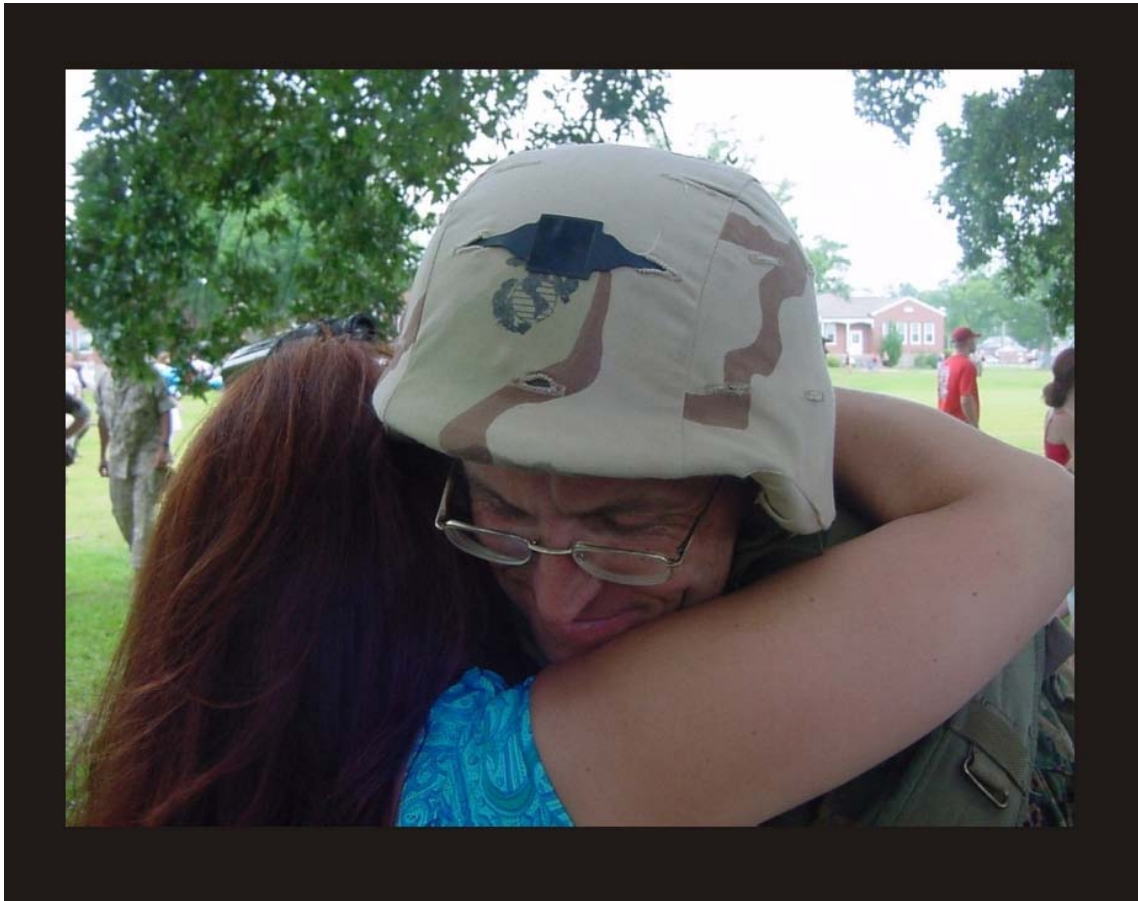
Here are some things to avoid:

- Don't keep everything to yourself
- Don't expect things to change quickly
- Don't blame yourself or your spouse for past decisions and actions leading up to the present situation
- Don't think your spouse can just decide to get better
- Don't think that your spouse's distance or irritability is your fault
- Don't think your spouse wants or likes to feel this way
- Don't tolerate abusive behavior
- Don't turn to addictive substances or behaviors yourself (reduces your options)
- Don't just keep hoping things will get better if they are getting worse

It's important to help the Marine understand that a stress injury is an **injury**. Stress injuries:

- Deserve to be fixed like any physical injury.
- Were incurred in dedicated service and the Marine deserves to feel better.
- Are treatable. For the sake of the Marine's family, buddies, and self, s/he needs to get back on track by getting care and getting better.

# Re-Integration



# Re-Integration

This can cause joy or confusion. Physically you are together as a couple but emotionally; it may take a bit longer.

Definition:

1. Bring into a whole
2. To complete

What does this mean to you and your family?

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List some possible “Blockers” to your successful Re-Integration

- |          |           |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 6. _____  |
| 2. _____ | 7. _____  |
| 3. _____ | 8. _____  |
| 4. _____ | 9. _____  |
| 5. _____ | 10. _____ |

Is there any one common “Blocker” within this group? What is it?

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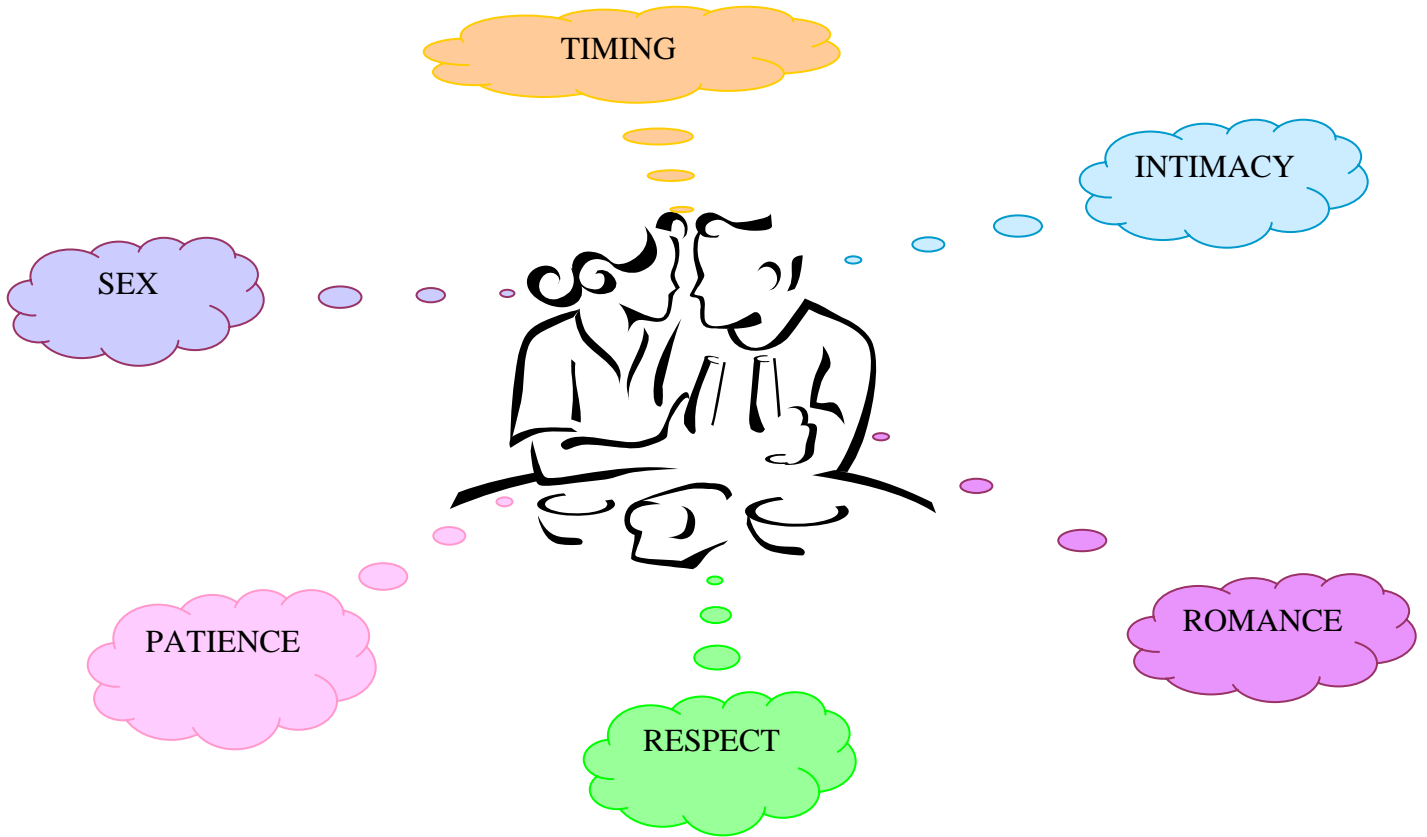
Solutions?

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Will your Marine feel the same things?

Let's TALK . . .



Write down what each of these words mean to you .

Sex: \_\_\_\_\_

Romance: \_\_\_\_\_

Timing: \_\_\_\_\_

Respect: \_\_\_\_\_

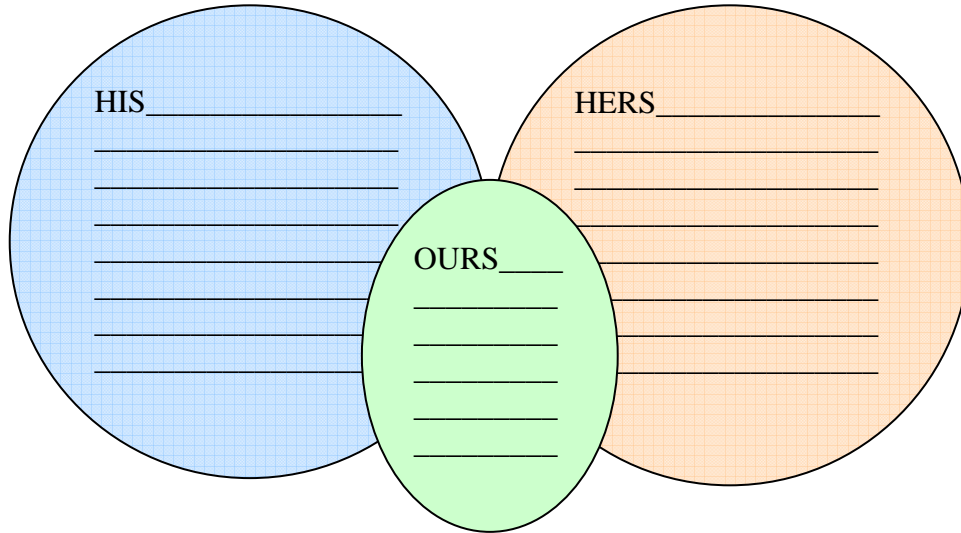
Patience: \_\_\_\_\_

Intimacy: \_\_\_\_\_

Patience is the Key!



# Roles & Responsibilities



Part of roles/responsibilities is to consider the finances of your family.  
What will change?

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Be prepared by identifying your needs and your wants so that you can more easily adjust to a new financial situation. Will this affect your personal choices?

## Independence

How might you lose some independence with the return of your Marine? \_\_\_\_\_

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What's the NEW Plan?

My Family Plan \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_





Bringing it all together...



For those times when things are not going as planned.....

Religious Ministries Services (PREP, CREDO)-----	(760) 725-4954
Chaplains: MCB Camp Pendleton Command Duty Officer-----	(760) 725-5617
MCB Camp Pendleton Command -----	(760) 725-4700
I MEF-----	(760) 725-9032
I MHG-----	(760) 725-6960
MAG-39-----	(760) 725-8180
1 <sup>st</sup> MLG-----	(760) 725-6377
1 <sup>st</sup> Mar Div-----	(760) 725-6692
Family Counseling Services-----	(760) 725-9051
Military OneSource-----	(800) 342-9647
Marine Corps Family Team Building-----	(760) 725-9052
Personal Financial Management Program-----	(760) 725-6098/6209



