

U.S. Marine Corps Culture



Podcast for
"Essentials for Those Who
Care for Military Children
and Families"

William P. Nash, M.D.
Captain, Medical Corps, U.S. Navy (Ret.)

**Families OverComing Under
Stress (FOCUS) Project**

UCLA Semel Institute for Neuroscience
and Human Behavior
Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery **FOCUS**



Overview

- What defines the Marine Corps
- What Marines do: mission and roles
- Who Marines are:
 - Core Values
 - Other traits that affect help-seeking
- Marine Corps approach to psychological health
 - Leader responsibilities: five core functions
 - Stress Continuum Model: four stress zones






Marine Corps Defining Features

- Smallest military branch: 202,000
- Homogeneous and exclusive culture
- Marines take Core Values seriously
- Long basic training: 17 wks (MCRD+MCT)
- "Every Marine is a rifleman"
- Light armor, small footprint, mobile
- Distributed authority: "strategic corporal"
- Innovation
- High proportion of one-term members



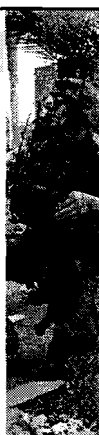
FOCUS **Marines Corps Mission and Roles**

- **Marine Corps mission**
 - “Making Marines and winning battles”
 - Returning good citizens to society
 - Taking care of fellow Marines — for life
- **Marine Corps roles**
 - Mobile, rapidly deployable, self-contained (air-ground-logistics) expeditionary units
 - Littoral warfare (from the sea)
 - Long history of counterinsurgency (COIN)




FOCUS **Marines Corps Core Values**

- **Honor**
 - Warrior ideal of selfless service
 - Integrity, respect, honesty
 - Purchased with the blood of past Marines
- **Courage**
 - Physical courage: run toward danger
 - Moral courage: stand up for what’s right
 - “Pain is weakness leaving the body”
- **Commitment**
 - *Semper fidelis*: always faithful
 - Lifelong belonging that transcends rank and time
 - Lifelong pursuit of excellence



FOCUS **Marine Traits That Affect Help-Seeking**

- **Stoicism**: never complain, seldom even think about one’s own suffering
- **Toughness**: High tolerance for suffering
- **Strength**: Avoid weakness or appearing weak, physically or emotionally
- **Action**: Communication through behavior and symbols rather than words
- **Autonomy**: do it yourself, for yourself
- **Selflessness**: own welfare is often the last priority



Marine Leaders Must Drive Psychological Health (PH)

Only line leaders can:

- Prepare service members for stressors
- Limit stressor exposures
- Recognize who's been harmed by stress
- Make help available and a priority
- Reduce barriers of stigma

Five PH leader functions:

- Strengthen
- Mitigate
- Identify
- Treat
- Reintegrate




MCRP 6-11C: "Combat and Operational Stress Control"

Stress Continuum Model: Four Stress Zones

READY ZONE		INJURED ZONE	ILL ZONE
DEFINITION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective • Well being • Adaptive FEATURES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In control • Calm & steady • Getting the job done • Sense of humor • Sleeping, resting • Ethical & moral behavior 	DEFINITION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mild, transient distress or loss of function • Many stressor causes FEATURES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anxious, down, or irritable • Worrying • Cutting corners • Poor sleep • Poor mental focus • Change in social behavior 	DEFINITION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More severe & persistent distress or loss of function CAUSES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life threat • Loss • Moral injury • Wear-and-tear FEATURES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of control • Behavioral change • Panic or rage • Shame or guilt 	DEFINITION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clinical mental disorders • Unhealed stress injuries DIAGNOSES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PTSD • Depression • Anxiety • Substance abuse FEATURES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Symptoms persist and/or worsen • Disability

Thank you for your attention

Questions or comments:
william.nash@opstress.net



Impact of Marine Culture on Spouses and Children



Presented by:
Jessica T. Moore-Tyson, MA
Site Director FOCUS Project
Camp Lejeune, NC
jtyson@focusproject.org



Impact of Marine Culture on Spouses and Children

- Marine Spouses and Children are impacted in nearly every aspect of their lives by the military culture.
- As a result, Marine family members adopt many of the same qualities expected of their "Warrior".
- Family members are expected to be strong, resilient, patriotic, and flexible.



Marine Spouses

- Marines Spouses take pride in serving their families, peers, community, and country.
- Marine Spouses often feel a heightened sense of responsibility for their families.
- Spouses become responsible for running every aspect of the household out of necessity in their Marines' absence.

FOCUS **Roles for Marine Spouses**


- Marine Spouses are expected to take on multiple roles in and out of the home.
- Expected Roles:
 - Head of Household
 - Volunteer /Community Leader
 - Coach/ Teacher
 - Peer Mentor/Social Planner
 - Advocate for Military families
- Spouses are expected to acquire & relinquish without hesitation.

FOCUS **Challenges for Marine Spouses**

- Marine spouses face challenges due to the nature of the military lifestyle:
- Limited Career/ Educational Opportunities
 - Isolation from Family of Origin
 - Geographic/Emotional distance from spouse as a result of deployment
 - Parenting difficulties
 - Personal needs secondary to the “needs of the Corps”
 - Reluctance to seek mental health services for fear of seeming “weak” or harming spouses’ career

Positives for Marine Spouses

- Pride
- Tradition
- Security
- Community



Marine Culture for Children

- Marine children are faced with many challenges due to their parent's career choice.
- Marine children learn to be resilient early in life.



Challenges for Marine Children

- Marine children are impacted by separations from their military parent.
- Marine children always cope with transitions.
- Marine children are expected to mature quickly and take on additional responsibilities at home.
- Marine children often face pressure to set the example and not add additional burdens to the family.



Positives for Marine Children

- PRIDE
- VALUES
- INDEPENDENCE
- STRONG SIBLING RELATIONSHIPS
- CULTURAL AWARENESS



Marine Families

- Marine families are not one size fits all, but there are common values, goals, experiences, challenges, and strengths that set them apart from other families.



Resources for Marine Families

- Military OneSource
- FOCUS
- Marine and Family Services
- Child, Youth, and Teen Programs
- Exceptional Family Member Program
- New Parent Support Program
- Lifelong Learning
- NMFA
- Transition Assistance Program
- Marine Corps Family Team Building
- Chaplains
- Family Readiness Officers
- Military Family Life Consultants
- School Liaison Officers
- Marine Corps Community Counseling Centers
- Family Member Employment Assistance Program
