

Pre-Deployment Resilience Training for Circle of Support



PRE-DEPLOYMENT RESILIENCE TRAINING FOR CIRCLE OF SUPPORT

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WRAIR

Walter Reed Army Institute of Research

This DCRT module was developed by the Research Transition Office (RTO) of the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research (WRAIR). Comments or suggestions for the improvement of this DCRT module, Pre-Deployment Resilience Training for Circle of Support, v.3 August 2021 should be made to WRAIR at:

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Pre-Deployment Resilience Training for Circle of Support

Intent

This DCRT module is provided to members of a Soldier's Circle of Support (e.g., Spouse, significant other, parent(s), siblings, extended family, friends, mentors) around the same time frame that their Soldiers receive the Pre-Deployment Resilience Training for Soldiers module. According to AR 350-53, DCRT must be offered to Circle of Support members whose Soldier is deploying for 90 days or longer for purposes other than training. This module is recommended to take place 1 to 6 months prior to a deployment, ideally around the 3-month mark. The module aims to prepare Circle of Support members for the realities and challenges commonly encountered prior to and during a deployment.

The format of this module resembles that of the pre-deployment module for Soldiers and is ideally given around the time that the Soldier receives that module so that Circle of Support members have similar knowledge of the things they should discuss together.

The module contains practical strategies that can be used by Circle of Support members to strengthen and maintain resilience during the pre-deployment and deployment phases of the deployment cycle. In addition to these practical strategies, the module aims to increase participants' resilience by discussing common challenges experienced by Circle of Support members during the pre-deployment and deployment phases. Being aware of common challenges in advance allows the Circle of Support member to put the challenges in perspective when / if they do occur. If they are not aware of the common challenges, then they may think that they are alone in experiencing them and make faulty assumptions about their relationship with their Service member. This could put additional strain on the relationship and on individuals during an already challenging time.

As with all of the DCRT modules, Circle of Support members are encouraged not to see the deployment phase simply as something to get through. Rather, it is an opportunity to grow by developing new skills and forming new friendships. Indeed, it is hoped that new friendships and support networks may be established among those attending this class.

Pre-Deployment Resilience Training for Circle of Support

Overview and Flow of Module Sections

Part 1: Realistic Expectations

- Discuss the realities of the deployment cycle, specifically of the pre-deployment and deployment phases, in order to help Circle of Support members establish realistic expectations.
- Emphasize that the deployment cycle is an opportunity for Circle of Support members and Soldiers to grow personally and relationally.
- Encourage Circle of Support members and their Soldier to create a communication plan that considers ways to overcome communication challenges.

Part 2: Resilient Strategies

- Discuss strategies that can help Circle of Support members navigate the challenges of the deployment cycle and maintain strong connections with their Soldier and others.

Part 3: Support & Resources

- Discuss the value of Circle of Support members leaning into their own support system.
- Provide an overview of professional resources available to Circle of Support members and their Soldier.








Part 4: Draft a Resilience Plan

- Reflect on key take-aways from the training and draft a plan for applying the lessons learned.
- Create a goal plan for something they wish to accomplish or make progress toward during the deployment cycle.

Pre-Deployment for Circle of Support SmartGuide Symbols

This SmartGuide for Pre-Deployment Resilience Training for Circle of Support has been designed to be user-friendly while containing as much information as possible to help you present this training. The following symbols are used throughout.

Training Module Symbol Guide

Symbol	Represents	Explanation
	Timing	This symbol indicates the amount of time allotted for a given section of the material.
	Target / Intent	This symbol indicates the main function or rationale for a given slide.
1.	Key Point	Numbers are used to indicate the main points that must be addressed in order to meet a given slide's target / intent.
•	Sample Talking Point	Bullets are potential talking points that a trainer can choose to use to elaborate on key points or to simply provide context.
[TEXT]	Note to Trainer	Bracketed text indicates a note to the trainer which is not intended to be read aloud. These provide hints on how to present the material and tips to avoid potential issues that may arise within a given topic.
	Multimedia	This symbol indicates the use of supplementary audio/video files. To avoid down-time or technical difficulties, keep an eye out for these and plan accordingly.
	Handouts	This symbol indicates that the participants will use handouts at a given point in the training. To avoid down-time, keep an eye out for these and plan accordingly.
	Exercise	This symbol indicates the start of an exercise or activity. To avoid down-time, keep an eye out for these and plan accordingly.
	Continue	This symbol indicates that the training material for a given slide continues onto the next page.
	Stop	This symbol indicates that the training material for a given slide ends on this page.





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DEPLOYMENT CYCLE RESILIENCE TRAINING (DCRT)



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Pre-Deployment Resilience Training for Circle of Support: 2 hours



Introduce yourself and welcome participants to Deployment Cycle Resilience Training (DCRT).

1. Welcome participants to the training and introduce yourself.

- Welcome to Deployment Cycle Resilience Training (DCRT).

[NOTE: Provide a brief introduction of yourself. Explain how you came to be facilitating Deployment Cycle Resilience Training. Along with the professional information, consider sharing a little about yourself personally. This can help build rapport and create a safe, trusting environment for the training.]

- DCRT is a series of operational resilience training modules designed to prepare Soldiers, leaders, and Soldiers' Circles of Support for the unique challenges of Army life at each stage of the deployment cycle.
- The Soldier's Circle of Support includes anyone that the Soldier considers to be a priority within their support system, such as a Spouse, significant other, parent, sibling, other Family member, mentor, and friend.
- You are here because your Soldier values your support and you value supporting your Soldier.

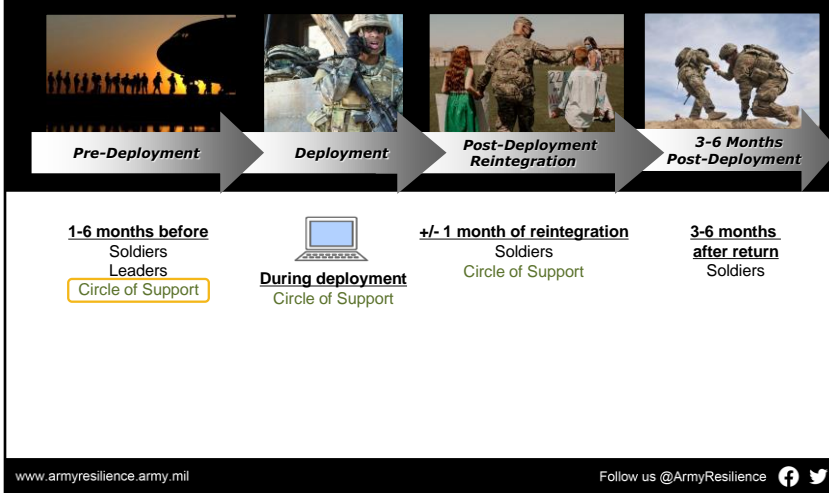
[NOTE: This is a natural transition to the next slide.]



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DCRT Modules: Timeline



Record your own notes here:

[NOTE: This slide provides overall awareness to Circle of Support members regarding the support available to them and their Soldier throughout a deployment cycle.]



Briefly review the DCRT modules and the respective timeline.

1. Introduce the DCRT modules timeline.

- Before we get started with today’s module, let’s briefly review the DCRT modules offered through the deployment cycle.
- According to AR 350-53, DCRT must be offered to Circle of Support members whose Soldier is deploying for 90 days or longer for purposes other than training.

2. Briefly review the DCRT modules offered during the pre-deployment phase.

- One to six months prior to deployment, DCRT offers three distinct training modules: one for Soldiers, one for leaders, and one for Circle of Support members. The interactive modules are meant to support one’s mental, emotional, and physical preparation for the deployment cycle with specific attention to the pre-deployment and deployment phases.
- The leader module is designed to help leaders establish a resilient unit climate and provide practical strategies for supporting their Soldiers’ comprehensive resilience.
- Each respective pre-deployment module focuses on establishing realistic expectations; reviewing common challenges Soldiers, leaders, and Circle of Support members may expect to face; and discussing resources available to support them through the challenges.



- Each module also covers practical strategies that can enhance one's ability to cope with stress, overcome challenges, and experience growth.
- Pre-Deployment Resilience Training for Circle of Support is the module we will be working through today.
- The Circle of Support modules closely mirrors the training that your Soldier will be receiving (or already has received). Having a common language can help promote a unified effort toward managing deployment cycle challenges and can provide an opportunity for personal and relational growth.

3. Briefly mention the online training offered to Circle of Support members that can be accessed at any time but may be particularly useful during the deployment phase.

- Circle of Support members have access to online modules that target specific challenges that they may experience during the deployment phase. While these modules provide support during the deployment, they are always available and can be accessed any time. More information on how to access the modules along with what they entail will be covered at the end of today's training.

4. Briefly review the DCRT modules offered during the post-deployment phase.

- Plus or minus one month of your Soldier's return home, DCRT offers a training for Soldiers and a training for Circle of Support members that focus on effectively navigating the reintegration process.
- Like the pre-deployment module, the Circle of Support training closely mirrors the training that your Soldier will be receiving.
- Your Soldier will receive further training around 3-6 months after returning home. The 3-6 month module is largely a "progress check" to see how the Soldier's ongoing transition is progressing and provide additional support during the reintegration process.

5. Transition.

- Each phase of the deployment cycle has its own unique challenges. Although distinct phases, how well you and your Soldier cope during each phase will influence the next phase and how you experience the cycle overall.



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Introduce the module; get to know the participants in the room.

1. Introduce the module and instill a sense of pride within the Circle of Support member for attending the training.

- Today, you are receiving the Pre-Deployment Resilience Training for Circle of Support.
- It has been said that “When a Soldier joins the Army, so does their Family.” Well, it can also be said that, “When a Soldier deploys, so does their Family.”
- Soldiers who may be deploying for the first time may not know what to expect or what to tell their Circle of Support about the deployment. Even seasoned Soldiers who have experienced deployment may be unsure or unaware of how to prepare their Circle of Support for the challenges they will face back home during the deployment.
- You being here will not only help you personally but also shows your Soldier that you are invested in being a strong, resilient person they can count on for support.



2. Get a feel for the audience such as their connection to the deploying Soldier (e.g., role within the Soldier's Circle of Support).

[NOTE: Time permitting, have each participant introduce himself/herself. For efficiency, provide a framework for introductions (e.g., name, hometown/home-base, years connected to the military, number of deployment experiences, and a "fun fact"). This can help build rapport and connections amongst participants as well as provide context for the perspectives and insight the participants share throughout the training.

If time does not allow for individual introductions, ask broad questions with a "show of hands" response to gauge the perspectives and experiences in the room (e.g., Anyone a parent of the deploying Soldier? Spouse? Other? Anyone experienced a deployment before?)]

3. Establish that this is an interactive module and that both those with deployment experience and those without can add value to the training.

- This is an interactive module. Your participation is key to the success of this training. The more you put into this training, the more you will get out of it.

[NOTE: Address Circle of Support members who have experienced a deployment before.]

- Those of you who have experience with deployments add value to this training by sharing from your past experiences, such as how you made it through the deployment cycle, what worked well, and what was most challenging or unexpected. You also can provide insight as we establish realistic expectations of the deployment cycle.

[NOTE: Address participants who are experiencing a deployment for the first time.]

- Those of you who are experiencing a deployment for the first time, you have a lot to offer to this training too. This is a safe place to get your questions asked and to share your thoughts and feelings about the upcoming deployment.
- Every deployment is unique and can be experienced differently. That means that one person's experience does not mean it will be your experience. And, if you have had previous experience with deployment, this current deployment may be experienced quite differently so please keep an open mind.
- Let's start off by establishing some common ground.

[NOTE: This is a natural transition to the next slide.]

Record your own notes here:





Challenges of Military Life



What are some challenges of military life?

- Frequent military moves
- Frequent military deployments
- Frequent training exercises
- Frequent change of "plans"
- Long duty days
- Weekend duty
- Fear of death and/or serious injury
- Distance from extended Family
- Family separations
- Waiting on orders, dates

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**Set the tone for an engaging, interactive training:
Discuss common challenges of military life.**

[SLIDE BUILDS]

1. Discuss challenges of military life.

• **[ASK]** What are some of the challenges of military life?

[NOTE: Allow for responses before revealing examples; steer the conversation back if it begins to turn into a venting session; keep the discussion productive.]

[CLICK TO ADVANCE]

[NOTE: Examples may include

- Frequent military moves, PCS every few years or so;
- Frequent deployments (childcare issues, etc.);
- Frequent training exercises; some local, some not;
- Long duty days, before the sun comes up/after the sun goes down; weekend duty, staff duty, or CQ;
- Career interruptions for Circle of Support members;
- Fear of death and/or serious injury (the Army always stresses safety, but Army life can be inherently dangerous);
- Distance from extended Family;
- Family separations where Family members have to take on additional roles and responsibilities (e.g., having to adopt both "mom" and "dad" roles);
- Waiting on orders, dates, etc.;
- Frequent change of "plans" (e.g., deployment departure date changes, PCS location changes).]



Record your own notes here:

2. Acknowledge the additional stress that the challenges previously mentioned can bring about (e.g., second- and third-order effects).

- As if these challenges weren't enough, they each can bring about additional stress—physically, mentally, and emotionally. In other words, these challenges can have second- and third-order effects.
- **[ASK]** What are some stressors of military life that can accompany the challenges we've just mentioned?

[NOTE: *Examples may include*

- *The emotional ups and downs of getting ready for deployment;*
- *Missing each other;*
- *Being a single parent when the Soldier is deployed;*
- *Not knowing details about the household or household tasks that the Soldier might be normally responsible for;*
- *Communication concerns while the Soldier is deployed;*
- *Work conflicts (specific for ARNG & USAR);*
- *Reduced income (specific for ARNG & USAR);*
- *Drill on "bad" weekends, such as Father's Day, Mother's Day, or other holidays (specific for ARNG & USAR).]*

3. Transition.

- Although there are certainly challenges that come along with being a member of the Army Family, there are many benefits of military life too.

Record your own notes here:





Benefits of Military Life



What are some benefits of military life?

- Financial stability
- Retirement benefits
- Health care
- Commissary and PX privileges
- Community, sense of belonging
- Education and job training
- Various resources (e.g., ACS, Military OneSource)
- New experiences
- Opportunity to serve, sense of purpose

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Create a positive tone for the training by shifting focus on the benefits of military life.

[SLIDE BUILDS]

1. Discuss benefits of military life.

- **[ASK]** What are some of the benefits of military life?

[NOTE: Allow for responses. Enlist the aid of participants who have been affiliated with the Army for several years.]

[CLICK TO ADVANCE]

[NOTE: Examples may include

- Financial stability and other perks like military discounts, grants, scholarships, tax breaks, VA loan;
- Retirement benefits, as few careers allow full retirement at “twenty years and a wake-up;”
- Commissary and PX privileges, especially when there’s a large disparity in the cost of goods on-post vs. off-post;
- Availability of 24/7 health care;
- Community and a sense of belonging;
- Education and job training at Army Education Centers, career counseling and assistance;
- Various resources (e.g., ACS, Military OneSource);
- New experiences and opportunities such as living in different parts of the country or world and experiencing other cultures or unique places;
- Opportunity to serve and a sense of purpose.]



Record your own notes here:

2. Acknowledge other positive aspects that the military benefits previously mentioned can bring about (e.g., second- and third-order effects).

- Just as we discussed in regard to challenges, there are also second- and third-order effects of the military benefits—physically, mentally, and emotionally.
- **[ASK]** What are some other positive aspects of military life that come along with the benefits we've just mentioned?

[NOTE: *Examples may include*

- *Developing lasting friendships and connections;*
- *Having a support system spread across the country and the world;*
- *Respect from others, public recognition;*
- *Civilians offering support (e.g., meals, childcare, lawncare, help around the house);*
- *Personal and relational growth;*
- *Travel benefits;*
- *Sense of pride;*
- *Greater appreciation for other military Families and Service members.]*

[NOTE: *This is a natural transition to the next slide.]*

Record your own notes here:







Growth from Military Life



How have your military life experiences—both the challenges and the benefits—fostered your personal, professional, and relational growth?



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Facilitate a discussion about the growth that Circle of Support members have experienced through their military life experiences.

1. Discuss growth that Circle of Support members have experienced as a result of military life.

- **[ASK]** How have your military life experiences, both the challenges and the benefits, fostered your personal, professional, and relational growth?

[NOTE: Allow for discussion. Examples may include

- *Professional growth: acquired education, degrees, certificates, job-training, career counseling;*
- *Personal growth: discovered new strengths and skills, increased confidence from overcoming adversity, strengthened connections with military community;*
- *Relational growth: strengthened bond through overcoming adversity together.]*

2. Transition.

- The deployment cycle is a unique subset of military life and therefore warrants special attention. So, today we will focus specifically on the challenges, benefits, and growth that can be experienced through the deployment cycle. Just like military life, the deployment cycle offers an opportunity for growth for your Soldier, for you, and for your relationship.
- Let's review the purpose of today's training.

Record your own notes here:



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Training Purpose



To help prepare Circle of Support members for the deployment cycle by establishing realistic expectations and promoting factors to strengthen resilience



Resilience is the ability to face and **cope** with adversity, **adapt** to change, **recover** and **learn** from a setback, and **grow** from an experience

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Review the purpose of the training.

1. State the purpose of the training and define resilience.

- The purpose of this module is to help you, a valued member of your Soldier's Circle of Support, to prepare for the deployment cycle by establishing realistic expectations and promoting factors to strengthen resilience.
- Resilience is a popular term with multiple definitions and interpretations. So, what exactly do we mean by strengthening resilience?
- Resilience is the ability to face and cope with adversity, adapt to change, recover and learn from a setback, and grow from an experience.
- Resilience is like a muscle; the more you exercise it, the stronger it gets. So, whatever your current level of resilience is, today's training can help you grow stronger.

2. Transition.

- Discussing the deployment ahead of time and knowing what to expect can help you and your Soldier to prepare for the deployment both emotionally and logistically.
- Now let's review the training outline.

Record your own notes here:



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Training Outline



"The strength of our nation is our Army. The strength of our Army is our Soldiers. And the strength of our Soldiers is our Families. That's what makes us Army Strong."

-GEN Ray Odierno, former U.S. Army Chief of Staff

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Review the training outline.

1. Review the outline by briefly discussing the four main parts that will be covered during the training.

- There are four parts that will comprise today's training.
- In Part 1, we begin by discussing Realistic Expectations of the deployment experience. Unrealistic expectations can cause increased anxiety and unnecessary stress that, in turn, can interfere with your ability to prepare for the deployment. Establishing realistic expectations now can help lower anxiety and improve how you approach each phase of the deployment cycle.
- Next, in Part 2, Resilience Strategies, we will focus on strategies to manage the deployment cycle challenges. You will learn strategies that are proven to support resilience, such as your ability to face adversity, cope with stress and manage your stress levels, adapt to change, and experience growth through the process.
- Then, in Part 3, we will move onto discuss the Support and Resources available to help you navigate the deployment cycle. We will also discuss ways to build-up and strengthen your support network.
- Lastly, in Part 4, you will be given the opportunity to reflect on what you learned or realized during today's training and Draft a Resilience Plan for supporting your resilience during the first two phases of the deployment cycle – pre-deployment and deployment.



Record your own notes here:

- The training will conclude with a goal-setting exercise. You will identify a goal you wish to pursue during the deployment cycle and create a plan to follow that will support progress toward your goal.

2. Acknowledge that the Circle of Support members have control over how they experience the deployment, and state that their resilience impacts their Soldier's resilience.

- Your deployment experience will be greatly impacted by how you approach it mentally.
- You can set the conditions for a deployment experience that fosters personal growth and one that strengthens your connection with your Soldier.
- These optimal conditions are set by establishing realistic expectations, using effective strategies to manage the stress and overcome the challenges, and taking full advantage of the support and resources available to you.
- Your deployment experience also can have great impact on how your Soldier experiences the deployment.
- Former U.S. Army Chief of Staff, General Ray Odierno said: "The strength of our nation is our Army. The strength of our Army is our Soldiers. And the strength of our Soldiers is our Families. That's what makes us Army Strong."
- The stronger, more resilient you are, the stronger, more resilient your Soldier can be.

3. Transition.

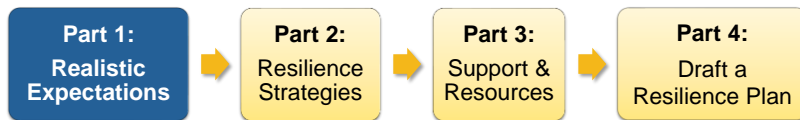
- Let's get started with Part 1: Realistic Expectations.

Record your own notes here:





Part 1: Realistic Expectations



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Part 1: Recommended time is 35-40 minutes



Introduce Part 1: Realistic Expectations.

1. State the aim of Part 1: Realistic Expectations.

- In the context of DCRT, an expectation is simply what one thinks they will experience and *how* they think they might experience it during the deployment cycle.
- The first part of today's training will help you to establish *realistic* expectations and gain greater control of your preparation and overall deployment cycle experience.

2. Review the content that will be covered in Part 1.

- We will begin Part 1 by reviewing how your expectations influence your resilience. Then, we will work through five deployment realities. Acknowledging these realities is vital to establishing realistic expectations.
- We will acknowledge common challenges that you, the Circle of Support member, might experience during the deployment and also offer perspective of what your Soldier might be experiencing. Together this information can help to form realistic expectations.



Record your own notes here:

- Once we have discussed the experiences of both the Circle of Support members and the deployed Soldier, then we will discuss ways to use that information to set realistic expectations together, specifically regarding communication and staying connected to one another.
- At the conclusion of Part 1, you will have not only become more aware of what to expect but you will also have thought through ways to prepare for some of the deployment realities.

3. Provide a brief overview of the negativity bias and the importance of being deliberate to counter it.

- At the start of this training, we discussed the challenges and the benefits of military life. You may have found it easier to list the challenges, but that it required a little more effort to list the positive aspects. If so, that is okay. In fact, it is quite normal – it's called the negativity bias.
- The negativity bias is the natural human tendency to notice and place importance on things that are interpreted as negative, bad, difficult, or wrong before you notice or pay attention to what is good, beneficial, or right.
- Sometimes you need to be deliberate in overcoming the negativity bias by seeking out the information that might be missing, such as the positive or even neutral aspects of a situation, or in this case the deployment.
- You may come to notice that throughout today's training we will intentionally counteract the negativity bias for the benefit of establishing realistic expectations.

4. Transition.

- Let's get started with Part 1: Realistic Expectations.

Record your own notes here:





Expectations of Deployment



How do expectations influence resilience?



Your expectations influence your thoughts about the deployment

Your thoughts, in turn, impact the emotions and reactions you are experiencing

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Establish that a Circle of Support member's expectations of the deployment influences their Thoughts, which drive their Emotions and Reactions.

[SLIDE BUILDS]

1. Discuss the question, "How do expectations influence resilience?"

- **[ASK]** How do expectations influence resilience?

[NOTE: Allow for discussion.]

2. Explain that expectations influence a person's Thoughts about the deployment, which drive the Consequences including Emotions and Reactions.

[CLICK TO ADVANCE]

- Your expectations influence the way you approach the upcoming deployment because your expectations influence your Thoughts – your interpretation of events, and the way you perceive a situation. Your Thoughts have Consequences. Your Thoughts trigger how you feel and how you react to events.
- Sometimes your Emotions and Reactions are helpful in the situation, but other times they may be unhelpful and undermine your resilience.

3. Transition.

- Let's take a closer look at the relationship between your Thoughts and the Consequences of your Thoughts by reviewing the ATC Model.



Record your own notes here:

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ATC Model: Resilience Skill Recap



Activating Event:
The trigger:
a challenge, adversity,
or positive event



Thought:
Your interpretations of the AE;
what you say to yourself

Consequences:
Emotions:
Reactions:



Thoughts drive Consequences

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Review the ATC Module.

[SLIDE BUILDS]

1. Introduce the ATC Model.

- If you have ever participated in the Army’s resilience training, you may have come across the ATC model before. For the purpose of today’s training, we will briefly review the model and discuss its application to the deployment cycle.

2. Describe an Activating Event as any situation or event that triggers a Thought.

- An Activating Event (AE) is a challenge, adversity, or positive event. It is something that triggers a Thought.
- An AE is “just the facts” of what has happened. It is the “who, what, when, and where.”
- Example AEs include: “You get a flat tire when you’re running late to an appointment,” or “Your Soldier makes the list for promotion.”
- An AE can be a future event like thinking about the upcoming deployment departure or can be recalling a past event like the argument you had with a Family member last week.

Record your own notes here:



- **[ASK]** What are some AE's that might be experienced during pre-deployment?

[NOTE: Allow for responses. Correct inaccurate responses that include Thoughts/interpretations; praise correct responses by reinforcing the key elements of an AE.]

3. Describe what is meant by Thoughts.

- The Thoughts you have in response to an AE are raw, uncensored, and happen in the heat-of-the-moment.
- Thoughts are your interpretations of the AE, your perception of the event, your understanding of the event, the meaning that you assign to the event. It is what you say to yourself. In other words, it is your self-talk.

4. Describe what is meant by Consequences.

- The nature of your Thoughts, your unique interpretation of the AE that has occurred, is what drives the Consequences, such as your Emotions and Reactions.
- Reactions can include physical reactions like increased heart rate or muscle tension and can also include behavioral reactions like slamming on the car brake or shouting for joy.
- It is common to think that the AE causes you to feel a certain way or react a certain way. But, this would mean that how you feel and what you do would be completely at the mercy of your circumstances, which would give you very little control over your life.
- Thankfully, that is not the case. Instead, it is the Thought—the interpretation, the meaning that you assign to the event—that dictates how you feel and how you react.

[CLICK TO ADVANCE]

- Thoughts drive Consequences. This accurate understanding shows you that your Consequences are ultimately within your control, because you can regulate your Thoughts.

5. Transition.

- Next, we will work through an example to further demonstrate how our Thoughts drive our Consequences.

Record your own notes here:





ATC Model: Example



Activating Event:
Your Soldier tells you that they will be deploying



Thought:
I don't know if I'll be able to handle this

Consequences:
Emotions: Anxiety
Reactions: Rapid breathing; pacing the room



How might recurring **C**onsequences such as these impact you as you prepare for the deployment both personally and professionally?

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Illustrate the ATC Model using a shared example.

[SLIDE BUILDS]

1. Discuss potential **T**houghts that might be triggered by the **A**ctivating Event.

- Let's use an **A**E that each of you have recently experienced.
- The **A**E is, "Your Soldier tells you that they will be deploying."
- You might think, "I don't know if I'll be able to handle this."
- Maybe the **T**hought is in regard to your relationship and how it will withstand the separation. Maybe the **T**hought is in regard to your ability to manage life on your own and take care of things on the home-front.

2. Discuss the **C**onsequences of the **T**hought.

- **[ASK]** What Emotion and Reaction(s) might be driven by this **T**hought?

[NOTE: Allow for responses.]

Record your own notes here:



[CLICK TO ADVANCE]

- A Thought like, “I don’t know if I’ll be able to handle this,” can cause a person to feel anxious and experience reactions like rapid breathing and pacing the room.
- Whether or not this Thought and its accompanied Consequences were helpful depends upon the immediate situation and the task at hand.
- In this one isolated instance, the Consequences, particularly the feeling of anxiety, may propel a person to seek out more information or begin brainstorming how or where they can receive support from others. It can be helpful, even if feeling anxiety is unpleasant in the moment.

3. Discuss the impact of recurring Thoughts and Consequences on a person’s ability to prepare themselves and their relationship with the Soldier for the deployment.

- Imagine, however, if this is a reoccurring Thought that leads you to experience these Consequences on a daily or weekly basis.

[CLICK TO ADVANCE]

- **[ASK]** How would reoccurring Thoughts and Consequences such as these on the slide impact you as you try to prepare for the deployment?

[NOTE: Allow for responses. Encourage participants to consider all aspects such as preparing themselves, their Family/other Circle of Support members, their home affairs, and their relationship with their Soldier.]

- If you are consistently perceiving the deployment with high levels of uncertainty, then you will likely continue to experience high anxiety, agitation, and counterproductive behaviors such as pulling away from your Soldier before actual separation, having trouble focusing on accomplishing critical pre-deployment preparations, or having seemingly random outbursts of anger that create more tension in your relationships.

[NOTE: This is a natural transition to the next slide.]

Record your own notes here:





Thoughts Drive Consequences



There are numerous **T**houghts that could be triggered by the **A**E of a looming deployment



How each individual experiences an **A**E depends upon the unique way that person thinks, perceives, or interprets the event



Your **T**houghts may have shifted from the time you learned of the deployment to now

It is important that your **T**houghts be driven by accurate, realistic information

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Explain that the same **AE can be experienced differently by different people and also by ourselves after time has passed and more information is collected.**

Explain that how each individual experiences an **A**E depends upon the unique way that person thinks, perceives, or interprets the event.

1.

- There are numerous **T**houghts that could be triggered by the **A**E of a looming deployment. And, each **T**hought would drive its own Emotion and Reaction.
- Perhaps when you first heard of the deployment, you experienced unpleasant emotions like anger or sadness. Perhaps this was how your Soldier first experienced the news too. Or, maybe your Soldier experienced pleasant emotions like contentment or excitement because of the career-enhancing benefits of a deployment.
- How each individual experiences an **A**E depends upon the unique way that person thinks, perceives, or interprets the event.

2. Foreshadow the strategy of Shift Your Thinking.

- What's more, the way you **T**hought, felt, and reacted when first hearing your Soldier was to deploy may now have shifted to different **T**houghts, feelings, and reactions.

Record your own notes here:



- Sometimes your Thoughts, interpretations, or perceptions of an AE shift after you gain more information or have more time to process the event. Other times, you may need to deliberately shift to more productive Thoughts in order to drive more helpful Consequences.
- Later in the module, we will discuss a strategy called Shift Your Thinking that will detail how you can go about making a deliberate shift.

3. Transition.

- Because your Thoughts can greatly influence your behavior, it is important that your Thoughts be driven by accurate, realistic information. Let's now turn our focus toward the realities of the deployment cycle.

Record your own notes here:







Realistic Expectations



- | | |
|----|--|
| 1. | The deployment cycle will present challenges |
| 2. | The deployment cycle offers an opportunity for growth—personally and relationally |
| 3. | The deployment experience is unique to each deployment, each individual, and each family unit |
| 4. | Deployed Soldiers may change or develop in ways that allow them to positively adapt to the demands of the deployment |
| 5. | The deployment experience can vary day-by-day and week-by-week |

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Introduce the five deployment cycle realities that Circle of Support members can realistically expect.

1. Introduce the five deployment cycle realities that Circle of Support members can realistically expect.

- We will be covering five realities of the deployment cycle that will help you to establish realistic expectations of the deployment cycle, with specific focus on the pre-deployment and the deployment phase.

[NOTE: Ask for a volunteer to read each of the five realistic expectations of the deployment cycle displayed on the slide.]

2. Transition.

- Let's unpack the first realistic expectation: The deployment cycle will present challenges.

Record your own notes here:



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Expect Challenges: Pre-Deployment



What are some common challenges that you face during the pre-deployment phase?

What are you doing to foster your resilience (e.g., cope with stress, manage stress level, adapt to changes) during pre-deployment?

What might be some challenges your Soldier faces during the pre-deployment phase?

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Discuss common challenges that are experienced by Circle of Support members and Soldiers during the pre-deployment phase.

1. Discuss common challenges that the Circle of Support member is facing during the pre-deployment phase.

- **[ASK]** What are some common challenges that you, as the Soldier's Circle of Support, face during the pre-deployment phase?

[NOTE: Allow for responses. When a participant provides a response, consider asking the follow up question: "What impact has this challenge had on you, and how is it impacting your and/or your Soldier's ability to prepare for deployment?" Examples might include

- Anticipation of your Soldier leaving / overwhelming sadness;
- Last-minute changes / frustration;
- Increased tasks on the to-do list.]

2. Discuss the ways Circle of Support members are currently fostering resilience (e.g., managing stress, adapting to change) during the pre-deployment phase.

- **[ASK]** What are you doing to foster resilience (e.g., cope with stress, manage stress level, adapt to changes) now during the pre-deployment phase?

[NOTE: Allow for responses.]

Record your own notes here:



3. Discuss common challenges that the deploying Soldier might be facing during the pre-deployment phase.

- It can be helpful to gain perspective of what your deploying Soldier is experiencing during pre-deployment.
- **[ASK]** What are some common challenges that your Soldier faces during the pre-deployment phase?

[NOTE: Allow for responses. Examples might include

- Increased workload/taskings;
- Last-minute changes;
- Increased pressure as tasks become more “real”;
- Adjusting to new roles;
- Helping to get everything organized at home;
- Anticipation of separating from Circle of Support.]

4. Transition.

- The tension and stress leading up to a deployment has potential to negatively impact the relationship between the Soldier and member(s) of the Circle of Support. But, if you utilize the concepts and strategies within this training, you can change that into an opportunity to strengthen the relationship and grow together.
- Let’s take a look at one unique pre-deployment stressor between a Soldier and Circle of Support member.

Record your own notes here:





Pre-Deployment Stressor: The “Big Chill”



Becoming emotionally distanced from each other to make the separation seem easier



How might the “Big Chill” affect the Soldier’s and Circle of Support member’s preparation for the upcoming deployment?

How might the stress caused by the “Big Chill” impact the Soldier’s and Circle of Support member’s ability to meet their respective demands during the deployment?

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Introduce and discuss the “Big Chill”.

1. Describe the “Big Chill”.

- It is common for there to be heightened relational stress just prior to a Soldier leaving for the deployment. One reason for the relational strain is that Soldiers and loved ones may unintentionally begin to emotionally distance themselves from each other. This is a defense mechanism to make the separation seem easier.
- A strained relationship due to enacting a defense mechanism is called the “Big Chill”.
- Emotional distancing may include withdrawing from one another, giving the cold shoulder, not reaching out, emotionally shutting down, and avoiding critical conversations and communication in general.

2. Provide two examples of the “Big Chill”.

- An example of the “Big Chill” might be a Soldier spending extra time playing video games prior to their departure, which can interfere with quality time spent with members of their Circle of Support. Gaming might be the Soldier’s way of emotionally distancing or be a distraction from their own anxiety about the upcoming deployment. Regardless, Circle of Support members may feel confused, frustrated, or hurt by the Soldier’s behavior and the relationship could be strained.

Record your own notes here:



- Sometimes the “Big Chill” takes the form of a major argument over a seemingly minor issue. For example, a Soldier and his mother might have an argument about the Soldier not texting his mother back within a few hours. This small matter might turn into a big event and lead to the Soldier and his mother not speaking to each other for a couple of days.

3. Discuss the potential impact of the “Big Chill” on a Soldier and Circle of Support member during the pre-deployment phase.

- **[ASK]** Consider both scenarios. How might the “Big Chill” affect the Soldier’s and Circle of Support member’s preparation for the upcoming deployment?

[NOTE: Allow for responses. Examples may include

- Relational conflict may interfere with or impede having productive conversations or accomplishing important tasks (e.g., Power of Attorney) or making important decisions together;
- Miss out on spending quality time with one another that could help to strengthen the relationship prior to the Soldier leaving.]

4. Discuss the potential impact of the “Big Chill”, if unresolved, on a Soldier and Circle of Support member during the deployment phase.

- Unresolved relational stress during pre-deployment can lead to greater stress during the deployment. For example, parting from one another on a “bad note” might lead one or both parties to experience feelings of guilt, concern about their loved one, concern about their relationship, or frustration with themselves for their own actions in what had occurred.
- **[ASK]** How might the stress caused by the “Big Chill” impact the Soldier’s and Circle of Support member’s ability to meet their respective demands during the deployment?

[NOTE: Allow for responses. Encourage participants to consider that the relational stress can consume one’s energy and distract one’s focus which can interfere with one’s ability to meet the demands before them.]

[NOTE: This is a natural transition to the next slide.]

Record your own notes here:





Coping with The “Big Chill”



What might be some helpful ways to productively work through the “Big Chill”?



How can learning about the “Big Chill” help you to maintain a strong connection with your Soldier?

- The “Big Chill” is common; it does not mean that the relationship is falling apart
- Take remedial action to repair the relationship and use the experience to strengthen the relationship

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Discuss productive actions that can be taken if a Soldier and Circle of Support member recognize it is happening.

[SLIDE BUILDS]

1. Transition the discussion from the potential impact of the “Big Chill” to what can be done if a Soldier and Circle of Support member recognize it is happening.

- We have just discussed the potential impact of the “Big Chill”. Now let’s discuss what you and your Soldier can do if you become aware that the “Big Chill” is happening in your relationship.

2. Discuss some helpful ways Soldiers and Circle of Support members could productively work through the “Big Chill” by using the examples presented on the previous slide.

- Consider the example of the Soldier playing video games instead of spending time with the family.
- **[ASK]** What might be some helpful ways that this Soldier and Circle of Support member could productively work through the “Big Chill”?

[NOTE: Allow for responses. An example is that the Circle of Support member could initiate a conversation with their Soldier about what they see happening and discuss ways to allow the Soldier to cope with their stress while also prioritizing the relationship.]

Record your own notes here:



- Now, consider the example of the argument between mother and Soldier over a lack of response to the mother’s text message.
- **[ASK]** What might be some helpful ways that the mother and Soldier could productively work through the “Big Chill”?

[NOTE: Allow for responses. An example is that the mother could recognize her reaction was out of proportion to the event (e.g., she overreacted) and open a conversation with her Soldier about her feelings and concerns about the deployment. This could lead to a conversation about realistic expectations about communication during the deployment.]

3. Discuss how learning about the “Big Chill” can help Circle of Support members to maintain a strong connection with their Soldier.

- **[ASK]** How can learning about the “Big Chill” help you to maintain a strong connection with your Soldier?

[NOTE: Allow for discussion. Cover key points below that were not addressed by the group.]

[CLICK TO ADVANCE]

- If, or when, the “Big Chill” happens, it’s important to remember that it is common and it does not mean that the relationship is falling apart.
- If the “Big Chill” does happen, then you and your Soldier can take remedial action to repair the relationship and use the experience to strengthen the relationship.
- The best way to work through the “Big Chill” is to make effective communication a priority to include seeking to understand the other person’s perspective and clearly expressing your own feelings and perspective.
- Shortly, we will discuss a strategy called Deliberate Communication that can help you and your Soldier communicate more effectively if, or when, the “Big Chill” occurs.

4. Transition.

- Now that you have a handle on stressors you may encounter before deployment, let’s take a look at common stressors you may experience during the deployment itself.

Record your own notes here:





Expect Challenges: During Deployment



What are some common challenges you might face during deployment?

- Increased roles and responsibilities
- Your home/car/others test the "new Sheriff in town"
- Maintaining connection with your Soldier
- Feel or perceive an emotional disconnect
- Communication challenges: unpredictability, different schedules, what to talk about

What are some challenges or stressors your Soldier might face during deployment?

How might becoming aware of the stressors your Soldier might face during the deployment positively impact you, your Soldier, and your relationship?

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Discuss common challenges that are experienced by Circle of Support members and Soldiers during the deployment phase.

[SLIDE BUILDS]

1. Discuss common challenges that are experienced by Circle of Support members during the deployment phase.

- **[ASK]** What are some common challenges you might face during the deployment?

[NOTE: Allow for responses before revealing examples. When a participant provides a response, consider asking the follow up question: "How might this challenge impact you, such as your Thoughts, Emotions, or Reactions?"]

[CLICK TO ADVANCE]

[NOTE: Cover examples that were not brought up by the group, such as

- Increased roles and responsibilities;
- Your home/car/others test the "new Sheriff in town";
- Maintaining connection with your Soldier;
- Feel or perceive an emotional disconnect;
- Communication challenges: unpredictability, different schedules, what to talk about.]

2. Discuss common challenges that the deploying Soldier might be facing during the deployment phase.

- Again, it can be helpful to gain perspective of what your Soldier is experiencing.



Record your own notes here:

[CLICK TO ADVANCE]

- **[ASK]** What are some challenges or stressors your Soldier might face during deployment?

[NOTE: Allow for responses. Examples might include

- The mission at hand;
- Concern for Circle of Support members back home;
- Rough living conditions; cannot escape other Soldiers (e.g., difficult to have alone time);
- Homesick; missing out on celebrations, milestones, and important events back home;
- Dealing with foreign people, language, and customs;
- Changes in the mission or schedule;
- Boredom;
- Concern over civilian job or resentment from civilian co-workers who have to take on an additional workload (specific for USAR & ARNG).]

3.

Discuss the impact of acknowledging the challenges and stressors the Soldier experiences during the deployment.

- **[ASK]** How might becoming aware of the stressors your Soldier might face during the deployment positively impact you, your Soldier, and your relationship?

[NOTE: Allow for responses. Examples might include

- Gain information that can help to set realistic expectations for the deployment;
- Help to see a situation from alternative perspectives other than just your own;
- Knowing the stress your Soldier might be under may lead you to “cut them some slack” or be more patient with them;
- Considering the Soldier’s perspective or experience may help you to refrain from jumping to conclusions or over-reacting, which may protect the relationship from unnecessary stress.]

4. Transition.

- When you have an idea of what you can expect, then you can have an idea of how to prepare. Next, let’s discuss some actions we can take based on the expectations we have already outlined.

Record your own notes here:





Plan and Prepare for Challenges



What are some things that are helpful to prepare in advance?

- Deployment Binder
 - Important contacts for household, medical, moral support, etc.
- Decide on services you may use to help lessen the stress load
- Establish a Communication Plan



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Discuss practical solutions to overcome common challenges in order to mitigate problems and lessen stress.

[SLIDE BUILDS]

Acknowledge that some challenges are outside of the Circle of Support member's and Soldier's control but other deployment challenges can be overcome or minimized with adequate planning and preparation.

1.

- Some of the challenges we've just presented are uncontrollable. For example, missing your Soldier and experiencing sadness from being apart is an uncontrollable part of the deployment.
- Although you may not be able to change some aspects, like being apart from your Soldier, there still may be some things within your control to help you cope mentally and emotionally. In this example, you can lean on your own Circle of Support.
- Some of the challenges you face may be preventable or minimized with planning and preparation.
- So, in respect to some of the challenges we have just discussed, consider the challenges that you might have some control over or can positively influence.
- **[ASK]** What are some actions you can take now to better prepare yourself, your Soldier, and your relationship for the deployment ahead?

[NOTE: Allow for discussion. Cover the following topics/examples if not discussed in great detail by the group.]



Record your own notes here:

2. Suggest creating a 'Deployment Binder' to keep pertinent information organized and accessible in the time of need.

[CLICK TO ADVANCE]

- Knowing ahead of time who to call or where to go when a situation arises can help minimize stress in the time of need. Furthermore, being organized and knowing where to find the information you need can also minimize stress and give a sense of control.
- Consider compiling important information together in one place such as a binder. Some people refer to this as the 'Deployment Binder'.
- **[ASK]** Has anyone created a 'Deployment Binder' in the past? If so, what information did you include and how did it help you?

[NOTE: Allow for participants to share from personal experience. Examples might include

- Soldier's unit information such as contact numbers and email addresses of rear-detachment;
- Personal and professional contacts for support;
- Household information (e.g., school forms);
- Maintenance contacts (e.g., plumber, mechanic);
- Medical information.]
- There are many online resources that provide templates or examples of what to include in the 'Deployment Binder'.

3. Suggest deciding upon and locating services and resources that Circle of Support members may benefit from, to lessen the stress load during deployment.

- There may come a time during the deployment that you can benefit from support such as local services and/or professional resources that can help lessen or relieve some stress.
- Be proactive by considering what these might be in advance and locating contact numbers if/when the need arises.
- In Part 3, we go over some resources available to you.

4. Transition.

- One of the greatest challenges during a deployment can be the communication between you and the deployed Soldier and maintaining a strong, healthy connection during time apart.

Record your own notes here:





Maintain Connection with Your Soldier




Sharing your experiences via conversation is one way for you and your Soldier to stay connected to one another's life



What are some creative ways to keep your deployed Soldier part of your life, and be part of theirs, during this deployment?

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Discuss creative ways for the Circle of Support member and Soldier to keep one another a part of their lives during the deployment.

1. Discuss creative ways for the Circle of Support member and Soldier to keep one another a part of their lives during the deployment.

- During the deployment, you and your Soldier will be having separate experiences. Sharing your experiences is one way to stay connected to one another's life. Yet, there are other ways to foster connection during your time apart aside from talking or exchanging messages. For example, you might choose to read the same book and discuss your thoughts about it during a weekly phone call.
- **[ASK]** What are some creative ways to keep your deployed Soldier part of your life, and be part of theirs, during this deployment?

[NOTE: Allow for discussion. Examples might include

- Use video chat apps;
- Play online games together;
- Read a book together or watch a show together;
- Have your Soldier record videos that can be played on demand (e.g., kid's bedtime).]

[NOTE: This is a natural transition to the next slide.]

Record your own notes here:



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Setting Realistic Expectations





What are some challenges you've experienced with staying connected with your Soldier during previous separations?



It is realistic to expect that some communication efforts with your deployed Soldier can be difficult or stressful

Creating a plan together that leads to an agreed upon course of action can help to mitigate potential problems

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Emphasize the importance of Circle of Support members discussing communication plans with their Soldier in advance.

1. Discuss communication challenges that Circle of Support members and their Soldiers have faced, and may face, during their time apart.

- This likely isn't the first time you have been faced with the challenge of staying connected with your Soldier during a time apart.

[NOTE: Encourage participation from those who have experience with deployments as well as those who are experiencing deployment for the first time. Most likely they will all have some experience with being separated from their Soldier, like basic training, AIT, their installation assignment, field training exercises, or even the shared experience of social distancing during the COVID pandemic.]

- **[ASK]** What are some communication challenges you've experienced with your Soldier during previous times apart?

[NOTE: Allow for discussion. Examples might include

- Connectivity issues; talking over one another;
- Some phone/video calls don't go as well as you (or they) would like. Or, the call ends on a stressful note;
- Background noise or lack of privacy;
- Timing may be ideal for one of you but not for the person(s) on the other end;



Record your own notes here:

- *Interruptions due to technical and operational reasons;*
- *There may be times when you just don't want to talk on the phone. And, likewise, there may be times that your Soldier doesn't feel like talking.]*

- Maintaining good communication while apart can be a challenge; it is unrealistic to expect all conversations to be positive and uplifting. When you experience difficult or stressful communication, understand that this is normal.
- That said, however, there are things you can do to promote more effective communication such as discussing realistic expectations about communication ahead of time and agreeing on a plan in advance.

2. Discuss the value of establishing tentative communication plans with the Soldier in advance.

- **[ASK]** Has anyone who has gone through a deployment or similar experience set communication expectations with their Soldier before? If so, what did you include and how did it impact your connection with your Soldier?

[NOTE: Allow for responses.]

- A comprehensive plan might include what you and your Soldier will and will not share with each other, how you plan to communicate, and when and how often, connections with your Soldier will ideally take place.
- Creating a plan together that leads to an agreed upon course of action can help to mitigate potential problems such as the other party having different assumptions about the kinds of things they will be kept informed about or hurt feelings for being “left out”.
- You will have problems with communication during the deployment at some point. The agreed upon communication plan can help you work through these problems.
- Setting these expectations and boundaries up front can lead to more sound decisions and, if followed through with, can lead to better relationships throughout deployment and post-deployment reintegration too.

3. Transition.

- Let's work through the nuts and bolts of the communication plan in order to set you up for having the conversation about communication with your Soldier later.

Record your own notes here:





Communication Plan: What To Share



The amount and depth of information that you and your Soldier share with each other during a deployment will vary



Many Soldiers do not want to share all the details of the deployment

- Deployment boundaries *do not* mean the Soldier doesn't care about you

Many Family members and friends back home don't want to burden the deployed Soldier with certain information or details

Agree *in advance* **what** you will and will not share

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Encourage advance planning for what Soldiers and Circle of the Support members will and will not share with each other during the deployment.

1. Explain that the amount and depth of information that Circle of Support members and their Soldier share with each other during a deployment will vary.

- The amount and depth of information that you and your Soldier share with each other during a deployment will vary by preference, the Soldier's mission or need for operational security (OPSEC), and both of your general levels of sharing details.

2. Explain that there may be times when Soldiers might not want to share all of the details of the deployment with certain Circle of Support members.

- Many Soldiers do not want to share all of the details of the deployment with Circle of Support members back home.
- If your Soldier does not tell you something or give you many details, it is best to not read into it or assume that your Soldier is rejecting you, pushing you away, or does not care about you.
- Reasons your Soldier may choose not to share certain information with you can vary, but some examples might be because of OPSEC or because they want to protect you from being unduly worried.



Record your own notes here:

- Another possible reason might be that they want to keep the deployment separate from home life so it doesn't get "contaminated" with deployment-related memories.
- It may be hard to not know everything that is going on with your Soldier or in their life, but it is important to respect your Soldier's discretion in what they can and cannot, and will and will not share with you. What is most important is that they have *someone* that they can turn to discuss and process their experiences.

3. Explain that there may also be times when the Circle of Support member may not want to tell the deployed Soldier the details of what's going on at home.

- There may also be times when you may not want to tell your deployed Soldier the details about what's going on at home.
- Withholding some information or details might be to help your Soldier remain mission-focused and safe, or you may not want to burden the Soldier with home-front problems from thousands of miles away. Just as you make these decisions out of care and concern for your Soldier, your Soldier may be making decisions for the same reason.

4. Explain the importance of agreeing *in advance* what information and to what detail the Circle of Support member and Soldier will communicate to each other during the deployment.

- It is best though to not assume you and your Soldier are on the same page with what should and should not be shared during the deployment. Instead, discuss this and agree in advance what information and to what detail you and your Soldier will share with each other. This way everyone knows what to expect from the start.
- The time to do this is before the deployment, rather than when the Soldier is already in-theater and when one or both of you are likely to be distracted, stressed, or overly exhausted. Being proactive with a communication plan can help maintain a strong connection with your Soldier.

[NOTE: This is a natural transition to the next slide.]

Record your own notes here:







Communication Plan: What To Share



Discuss your and your Soldiers' expectations and preferences for sharing good things that happen during deployment

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Encourage Circle of Support members and Soldiers to discuss in advance how they will approach sharing the positive, good stuff that happens during the deployment.

1. Explain the importance of discussing how the Circle of Support member and Soldier will approach sharing good things that happen during deployment.

- It is easy to let the planning for a deployment focus on the negative aspects like what negative things will be shared with one another during deployment. But it is important to create a plan for sharing the positive things too.
- You or other members of the Circle of Support may think that you should not share good news with your Soldier for reasons like fear that it would distract them from the mission, concern that it will make them even more homesick than they already might be, or concern that it is in some way insensitive to what the Soldier is dealing with over on deployment.
- Likewise, your Soldier may feel hesitant to share good things with you. Knowing that you are dealing with a lot back home, they may feel it is insensitive to share or admit when they had a fun experience or a good day.
- Talk this over with your Soldier ahead of time so neither of you operate based on assumptions and that you can ensure positive news is shared between you.

Record your own notes here:



2. Foreshadow the topics of positive emotions and Hunt the Good Stuff.

- Later in Part 2, we will discuss the benefit of positive emotions and how hunting the good stuff together can strengthen relationships.

[NOTE: This is a natural transition to the next slide.]

Record your own notes here:

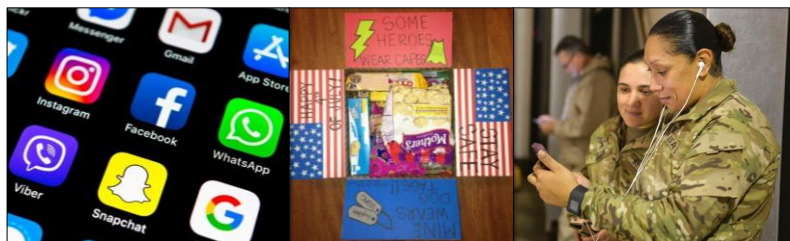




Communication Plan: How



How do you plan to communicate with your Soldier during deployment?



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Emphasize the importance of discussing in advance how the Circle of Support member and Soldier will communicate.

1. Discuss how the Circle of Support member intends to communicate with their Soldier during deployment.

- **[ASK]** How do you plan to communicate with your Soldier during deployment?

[NOTES: Allow for responses. Allow for participants to share ideas of what 'apps' have worked well for them to maintain connection during previous times apart.]

- With technology as it is today, there are several ways to stay connected and communicate with your Soldier.
- Messaging apps are a convenient and efficient way to communicate. Communicating through typed messages may sometimes be the most realistic means.
- When possible, consider incorporating modes of communication that can promote a strong connection for you and your Soldier; hearing one another's voice, seeing one another's face, or having interactive dialogue where you can fully express your thoughts and emotions can go a long way. Sending a care package is also a special way to communicate love to your Soldier.
- Furthermore, when using various communication apps, be sure to do your research as to the privacy and security of the apps you wish to use; when using an approved app, be sure to manage the privacy settings.

[NOTE: This is a natural transition to the next slide.]



Record your own notes here:

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Communication Plan: How





How have you used social media as a tool to stay connected with your Soldier during past deployment or other times you've been apart?

What kinds of things are inappropriate to share with large audiences on social media?



Have a discussion with your Soldier to set expectations regarding social media use

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Discuss social media as a tool maintain connection along with what is inappropriate to share on social media.

1. Discuss productive ways to use social media to stay connected with their Soldier.

- **[ASK]** How have you used social media as a tool to stay connected with your Soldier during past deployment or other times you've been apart?

[NOTE: Allow for responses. Examples may include

- Create a private Facebook page to share milestones or special memories;
- Posting daily activities to keep your Soldier in the loop of current events.]

2. Discuss what kinds of things are inappropriate to share on social media, particularly during a deployment.

- There are benefits to social media such as being able to share information to a vast group of people at once. Many things, however, should not be shared on social media. This is particularly true during a deployment.
- **[ASK]** What kinds of things are inappropriate to share with large audiences on social media, particularly during a deployment?

[NOTE: Allow for discussion.]

Record your own notes here:



[NOTE: Cover key points below that were not addressed by the group.]

- For OPSEC reasons, don't post exact dates and locations of your Soldier's deployment or redeployment.
- OPSEC stands for Operational Security and can include factors such as unit location (e.g., where they are physically located), unit specifics (e.g., unit name, unit travel itineraries), and technical information (e.g., military equipment).
- You also must refrain from sharing information that your Soldier may tell you in confidence. There are some things that other members of your Soldier's Circle of Support and other Soldiers' Circle of Support members should not find out through social media. For example, do not post news of Soldiers being injured or killed before it has gone through the proper channels.
- There are things that your Soldier and his/her battle buddies should not find out through social media. One example might be rumors of deployment extensions.
- Lastly, any news that may have a personal impact on your Soldier should be delivered personally rather than have your Soldier see it on social media. This can refer to difficult or bad news as well as good news worth celebrating.

3. Explain the importance of the Circle of Support members setting expectations with the Soldier regarding social media use.

- You and your Soldier may also have different perspectives as to what is appropriate to share on social media. For example, some Soldier's prefer to keep their life private and off of social media.
- Discussing and agreeing in advance what you will and will not share on social media can guide your social media use during deployment and mitigate unnecessary issues or conflicts later.
- Social media and other messaging apps are tools to maintain connection. Be sure to use them purposefully rather than mindlessly.
- In Part 2, we will review the strategy of Deliberate Communication and discuss effective habits when communicating by e-mail, instant messaging, or social media.

[NOTE: This is a natural transition to the next slide.]

Record your own notes here:





Communication Plan: When



Discussing when you can expect to communicate with your deployed Soldier can help to decrease uncertainty and lower stress

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Emphasize the importance of discussing in advance when the Circle of Support member and Soldier will communicate.

1. Explain the value of discussing when Circle of Support members can expect communication with their Soldier.

- Discussing when you can expect to communicate with your deployed Soldier can help to decrease uncertainty and lower stress.
- Your Soldier's Chain of Command can give insight into the communication capabilities to expect on the upcoming deployment, such as the best method and expected frequency to connect with their Circle of Support. Even though you may have to wait until your Soldier is on deployment to know what is most realistic and accurate, it is good to start this conversation in advance.
- When you are able to connect with your Soldier will of course be dependent upon your Soldier's schedule and availability. There is no way to know exactly what the Soldier's schedule will be until they are on deployment, and even then it can change.
- Another thing to consider when discussing *when* you will communicate with your Soldier are times that are and are not ideal for you back home.



Record your own notes here:

- For example, those of you with children may decide dinner time is too stressful of a time to try to communicate or bedtime is not ideal because it might upset your kids and hinder their ability to fall asleep.
- Consider ways you will overcome some of the communication challenges that we discussed earlier, such as different time zones, the ideal (and not so ideal) timing of the conversation for each party, and connectivity issues. Discuss solutions ahead of time.

2. Transition.

- Now let's discuss things to consider about the frequency, such as how often, you will communicate.

Record your own notes here:





Communication Plan: How Often



Together with your Soldier determine what frequency, timing, and modality is best for your may need to unique relationship

- The communication plan may need to be adjusted due to changes in your Soldier's availability or connectivity

How might the frequency you communicate with your Soldier impact the quality of your communication?

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Emphasize the importance of discussing how often the Circle of Support member and Soldier communicate.

1. Encourage the Circle of Support member and their Soldier to determine what frequency, timing, and modality is best for each unique relationship.

- It is natural to want to talk to your Soldier any and every chance you get. Some Circle of Support members and their Soldiers have found that a schedule of *when* and *how* they will communicate allows them to keep their conversations fresh and engaging.
- An example of a communication system might be one phone call per week, one video chat per week, and text messaging in between calls.
- What works best will be unique to you and your Soldier's relationship. It may take some experimenting to find the right recipe of communication frequency, timing, and modalities. Furthermore, the frequency that is just right for you might differ for another person. For example, if you have children, consider what frequency of contact with your Soldier is best for each of them individually.

2. Explain the reality that the communication plan will depend upon the Soldier's schedule and connectivity; therefore, the communication plan may need to be adjusted.

- Throughout the deployment, changes to your Soldier's schedule and availability will likely occur.

Record your own notes here:



- Consider how you will communicate changes to the plan or how you will deal with an interruption to the plan, like missing your once-a-week phone call.
- Also, it is important to communicate with your Soldier regarding realistic expectations of communication capabilities given their specific deployment location and mission. For example, it is possible that a Soldier in Iraq may be able to communicate with more ease or more often than a Soldier on a hurricane relief mission in the USA. This could be due to connectivity issues (e.g., the area where the hurricane hit may not have power) or availability (e.g., mission requirements).

3. Discuss how the frequency of communication between the Circle of Support member and their Soldier could impact the quality of communication.

- **[ASK]** How might the frequency of communication—such as how often you communicate—impact the quality of your communication?

[NOTE: Allow for discussion.]

- Having too little interaction with your Soldier can be a stressor as it limits your ability to share aspects of your lives together.
- Yet, having too frequent interaction may cause you to have fewer things to talk about, which can be another source of stress. For example, a common challenge for Circle of Support members back home is that their deployed Soldier “doesn’t have much to say.” Sometimes, it may even be that you yourself don’t have much to say. When conversations stall out, or never get off the ground, it can be disappointing and frustrating.
- The reality is that the Soldier may not be holding back from sharing anything, but sometimes on deployment the days and weeks can be monotonous and uneventful. Likewise, if you talk to your Soldier on a daily or very frequent basis, then you may also not have much to share during these interactions.

4. Transition.

- Realistic expectations about what, how, when, and how often you will communicate can lower anxiety and stress, mitigate unnecessary problems, and foster stronger connection.
- Let’s move on to the next reality of deployment.

Record your own notes here:





Expect Benefits: Growth



What are some benefits of deployment?

What are some ways, personally and/or relationally, that you have grown from past deployments or similar experiences?

Growth does not happen automatically; it requires intention and effort

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Discuss the benefits that come with deployment and establish that growth is a realistic expectation of the deployment cycle experience.

1. State that along with challenges that come with deployment, there are also benefits such as growth.

- We have just discussed several challenges of the deployment cycle, specifically the pre-deployment and deployment phases.
- Despite the challenges, and sometimes *because* of the challenges, there are also benefits associated with the deployment experience.
- **[ASK]** What are some benefits of deployment?

[NOTE: Allow for responses. Examples may include

- Salary benefits for Active Duty Soldiers;
- New friendships are forged and strengthened;
- Personal and relational growth.]

2. Discuss ways that Circle of Support members might grow—personally and/or relationally with their Soldier and others—because of the deployment experience.

- A key benefit is that the deployment cycle offers an opportunity to grow – personally and relationally.
- For example, many people who have experienced the deployment cycle before have reported that, albeit stressful, the deployment cycle led to a better relationship with significant people in their lives.



Record your own notes here:

- **[ASK]** What are some ways – personally and/or relationally—that you have grown from past deployments, or similar experiences of being apart from your Soldier?

[NOTE: Allow for responses. If necessary, ask participants what areas of growth they can foresee happening as a result of the deployment experience. Examples might include

- Accomplishing personal goals (e.g., career, education, fitness);
- Developing lasting friendships forged under difficult circumstances;
- Experiencing community support;
- Strengthening existing relationships;
- Learn and develop new skills;
- Become more independent;
- Learn how and when to ask for help/support.]

3. Explain that growth is a realistic expectation of the deployment, but it requires intention and effort.

- A realistic expectation of the deployment is that the deployment cycle can strengthen your resilience and lead to personal and relational growth.
- Growth, however, does not happen automatically and should not be left to chance. Becoming more resilient and growing through the deployment experience requires intention and effort.
- In Part 2, we will discuss several strategies that can help support your efforts to not only survive the deployment, but also grow and thrive through the deployment.

4. Transition.

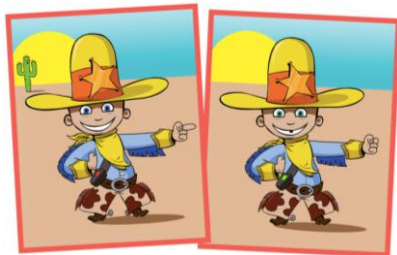
- Let's move onto our next reality of the deployment cycle experience, which is that it is realistic to expect differences between deployments and differences in the way people experience them.

Record your own notes here:





Expect Differences: Deployments



The current deployment will be different than past deployments (or extended time apart)

- Deployments differ (e.g., theatre, mission, level of danger, duration, and communication ability)

What are some potential differences in YOU?

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Examine the differences between the current deployment and past deployments (or other extended periods of time apart from the Soldier) to include differences in themselves.

1. Use the "spot the difference" image on the slide to introduce the slide intent.

- Take a moment and examine the images on the screen. See if you can spot the differences.

[NOTE: Ask participants how many differences they spotted or what differences they found in the images.]

- Although this exercise was for fun, when it comes to managing expectations, there is value in examining the differences between the current deployment and past deployments, or other extended periods of time you've had apart from your Soldier.

2. Establish the realistic expectation that the current deployment will be different than past deployments or other extended periods of time spent apart from their Soldier.

- Expecting this upcoming deployment to be the same as previous experiences is unrealistic.
- When framing your expectations, it is not only helpful to learn from the past experiences and from the experiences of others, but it is also important to acknowledge that this current experience can, and likely will, be different from past deployments or other extended periods you've spent apart from your Soldier. It will likely also be different from the stories you have heard from others.



Record your own notes here:

- Part of the reason it will be different is due to differences between the deployments themselves, such as the place your Soldier is deployed, the mission, the level of danger, the scheduled duration of deployment, and communication capabilities.

3. Discuss potential differences in the Circle of Support member since the last time they experienced deployment or a similar time apart from their Soldier.

- Another key difference between deployments—or from similar experiences where you spent time away from your Soldier like BCT or AIT—is that from then to now you, yourself, are different. As you go through life, your experiences change you.
- Also, things around you and within your family can change, which will lead you to experience this deployment differently, too. Let's acknowledge some of these differences.
- **[ASK]** What are some potential differences in you since the last time you experienced deployment or extended time apart from your Soldier?

[NOTE: Allow for responses. Examples might include

- Familiarity or experience with military life;
- Change in relationships and support structure; changes within your Family;
- Financial situation;
- Physical or mental state;
- Roles and responsibilities (e.g., work, kids).]

4. Encourage Circle of Support members to consider how personal changes will impact how they experience the upcoming deployment.

- **[ASK]** How might the personal change(s) you've experienced from your previous experiences to now impact you during the upcoming deployment?

[NOTE: Allow for responses.]

- Some of these changes may make the upcoming deployment seem easier. Other changes may make it more challenging; yet, others will just make it "different".

5. Transition.

- We've just discussed how there will be differences within you and your own experiences ; now, let's shift our focus to differences between you and others.

Record your own notes here:





Expect Differences: Circle of Support





The deployment cycle experience is unique to each person, each relationship, and each family unit

What are some reasons that people may experience the deployment differently?

- Resist making comparisons
 - Take precaution when engaging in social media

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Prepare Circle of Support members for the reality that the deployment cycle experience is unique to each person, each relationship, and each family unit.

1. Examine how the deployment cycle experience is unique to each person, each relationship, and each family unit.

- Another reality is that the deployment cycle is unique to each person, each relationship, and each family unit. That means that the current deployment will likely be experienced differently by different people.
- No two experiences are the same. This is important to keep in mind when you hear or observe how other people's experiences are going.
- **[ASK]** What are some potential reasons that you and other Circle of Support members may experience the deployment differently?

[NOTE: Allow for responses. Examples might include

- Different emotional timelines;
- Different personalities; different life experiences;
- Different coping mechanisms or communication habits;
- Different financial situations;
- Different support networks;
- Different relationship type and/or quality.]



Record your own notes here:

2. Discuss the impact of acknowledging differences between individuals and relationships in how they experience the deployment.

- **[ASK]** How can acknowledging the differences between you and others support your resilience?

[NOTE: Allow for responses.]

- Acknowledging and accepting differences between you and others can help to minimize making unfair and unhelpful comparisons. Making such comparisons is like comparing apples to oranges because everyone's experiences and circumstances will be unique.
- This includes everyone having a unique timeline of adjusting to the deployment—some adapt to the changes rather quickly while for others, it may take more time; people and relationships progress at different rates.

3. Explain the precautions of engaging in social media and the issue of comparing yourself to others.

- Social media has its advantages, as we discussed earlier. However, if you are not careful, social media can lure you into making unrealistic comparisons.
- For example, it is common to only share the high points and not the low points of one's life on social media; it is "filtered reality". When you compare others' "filtered reality" to your actual reality, it is not a fair or accurate comparison.

4. Transition.

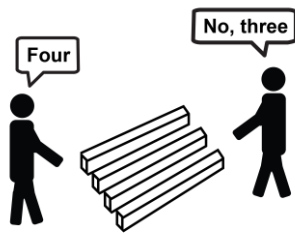
- Each Circle of Support member will be facing their own unique set of challenges and coping with their stressors in a unique way. Focus on your lane while you encourage and support others in their lane.
- This is true of your Soldier as well. On the next slide, we will discuss how the deployment may be experienced differently by you and your Soldier.

Record your own notes here:





Expect Differences in You & Your Soldier



Why might you and your Soldier cope with or respond to challenges of the deployment cycle differently?

- Different personalities and life experiences
- Different coping mechanisms or coping-styles
- Different priorities
- Different perspective, thought-process, or way of interpreting a situation (e.g., an Activating Event)

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Acknowledge that the Circle of Support member and Soldier will experience the deployment differently.

[SLIDE BUILDS]

1. Acknowledge that the Circle of Support member and Soldier will experience the deployment differently.

- You can expect differences in the way you and your Soldier experience the deployment.
- For instance, throughout the deployment cycle, you and your Soldier may encounter the same Activating Event, such as a holiday spent apart or a strained phone call, yet experience it very differently in terms of how you each interpret it and how you both react emotionally and physically.

2. Examine differences between the Circle of Support member and the Soldier that can impact how each responds to and copes with challenges of the deployment cycle.

- **[ASK]** Why might you and your Soldier respond to and cope with challenges of the deployment cycle differently?

[NOTE: Allow for responses before revealing examples.]

[CLICK TO ADVANCE]

[NOTE: Examples might include

- Differences in personalities;
- Different life experiences;



Record your own notes here:

- *Different coping mechanisms or coping styles (e.g., problem-focused vs. emotion-focused);*
- *Different priorities;*
- *Different perspectives, thought-processes, or way of interpreting a situation (e.g., Activating Event), like the slide image portrays.]*

3. Discuss the impact of acknowledging differences between how a Soldier and Circle of Support member respond to and cope with deployment challenges.

- **[ASK]** How can acknowledging the differences between you and your Soldier support your resilience and your relationship?

[NOTE: Allow for responses. Examples might include

- *Help set realistic expectations. It is unrealistic to expect your Soldier to feel what you feel or react how you react. Likewise, it is unrealistic to expect your Soldier to know how you are feeling or understand your reactions.*
- *Acknowledging there are justifiable differences between you and your Soldier may keep you from jumping to conclusions or misreading your Soldier's reactions. This might prevent further issues or relational strain.*
- *When there is confusion or frustration, acknowledging the differences between the two of you may prompt you to engage a conversation with your Soldier to learn their perspective or better understand their feelings and reactions.]*

4. Summarize the positive impact of accepting that differences exist between the Circle of Support member and their Soldier.

- It is impossible to know exactly what it will be like for your Soldier on this deployment. The Thoughts, Emotions, and Reactions experienced by Soldiers during deployments are as varied as the deployments themselves.
- However, expecting and accepting that there are differences between the way you and your Soldier will experience the deployment cycle challenges can decrease stress and promote behaviors that support your personal and relational growth.
- Let's look at the fourth deployment reality.

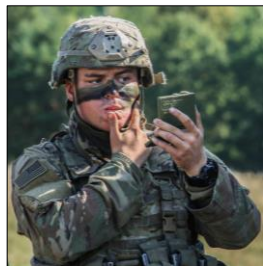
[NOTE: This is a natural transition to the next slide.]



Record your own notes here:





Expect Soldier to Adapt to Deployment



It is realistic to expect Soldiers to change or develop in ways that allow them to positively adapt to the demands of the deployment

- Strong sense of mission
- Comfort level with stressful situations
- Simplistic view of the right way to do things
- Strong need to control their immediate environment

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Prepare Circle of Support members for common ways in which Soldiers may change during a deployment in order to adapt to the demands of a deployment.

1. Explain that it is realistic to expect Soldiers to change or develop in ways that allow them to positively adapt to the demands of the deployment.

- It is realistic to expect Soldiers to change or develop in ways that allow them to positively adapt to the demands of the deployment.
- Out of necessity, deployed Soldiers often develop different priorities and ways of thinking. Some have referred to this as the “deployment mindset” or being in “deployment mode”.
- The following list is not all inclusive, but it illustrates some common ways in which Soldiers might change or develop in order to positively adapt to the demands of a deployment.
 - Soldiers develop a strong sense of mission. This may include Thoughts of maintaining themselves in a high state of readiness and constantly thinking of “one more thing I must do” to ensure mission readiness. This might explain a Soldier’s impatience with those who may have different priorities or don’t have such a single-minded sense of purpose.



Record your own notes here:

- Soldiers may develop a comfort level with stressful situations. This could explain why a Soldier may seem un-phased by something that you yourself are worked up about. If they do not get upset or bothered, it does not mean they do not care.
 - Soldiers may adopt a simplistic view of the right way to do things, often termed “the Army way”. This approach can benefit Soldiers in military environments, but maybe not when dealing with Circle of Support members. For example, it might cause Soldiers to be less patient with who do not do things as the Army dictates (i.e. the wrong way).
 - Soldiers may develop a strong need to control their immediate environment which may include other individuals and personal equipment. This is done intentionally. The more a Soldier can control, the more they can mitigate risk. However, it may also include controlling the interactions and conversations they have with you during deployment.
- Perhaps you’ve witnessed some of these differences already during the pre-deployment phase. If not, it is possible that you will notice changes in your Soldier’s mindset or behaviors when talking to your Soldier during the deployment.

2. Transition.

- Knowledge is power. Now that you are more aware of possible ways your Soldier may change and develop to adapt to the demands of the deployment, let’s review how you can use this information to benefit you and your relationship.

Record your own notes here:





A Soldier's Experience: Perspective



How can you use this information to support your resilience and your relationship during the deployment?

- Be prepared, less alarmed, less likely to assume something is "wrong"
- Accept that changes may benefit the Soldier; resist taking the changes personally
- Use the knowledge to open up a conversation with your Soldier



Plan to take productive action when you encounter differences or changes

- Communicate: Keep lines of communication open, seek for understanding, and consider the other person's perspective

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Discuss ways the Circle of Support members can use the information about their Soldier's possible changes to positively impact their resilience.

[SLIDE BUILDS]

1. Discuss ways the Circle of Support members can use the information about their Soldier's possible changes to positively impact their resilience.

- If taken off-guard, the changes in your Soldier could lead you to feel confused or frustrated.
- **[ASK]** How can you use this information to support your resilience and your relationship during the deployment?

[NOTE: Allow for responses before revealing examples.]

[CLICK TO ADVANCE]

[NOTE: Examples might include

- *Anticipating that there will be changes as your Soldier develops a "deployment mindset" can help you be prepared if it happens; you'll be less alarmed and less likely to assume something is "wrong";*
- *Considering how the changes may be beneficial to the Soldier can help you better accept the changes and resist taking them personally;*
- *Instead of reading into Soldier's actions, making inaccurate assumptions, or jumping to conclusions, you can use this knowledge to open up a conversation with your Soldier.]*



Record your own notes here:

2. Explain the importance of communicating through differences and changes.

[CLICK TO ADVANCE]

- You can also use this information to plan for taking productive action when you encounter differences or changes.
- Although you may never fully understand your Soldier's experience of deployment and vice versa, it is important to keep lines of communication open, seek for understanding, and consider the other person's perspective.
- For example, if your Soldier is not very talkative during your phone calls one week, try to resist making assumptions about what that means. It may have been a mentally and physically exhausting week. Or, maybe nothing at all happened and your Soldier really doesn't have much to say about "how it's going there."
- Resist reading into one or two interactions; when the timing is right, talk it over with your Soldier. Use the ATC model to guide your discussion.
- For example: "Last week you were really quiet and not very talkative (i.e. AE), which I interpreted as you didn't want to talk to me and maybe that you were mad at me for something (i.e. Thoughts). These Thoughts led me to feel sad and hurt (i.e. Consequences). Can you help me understand your perspective?"

3. Transition.

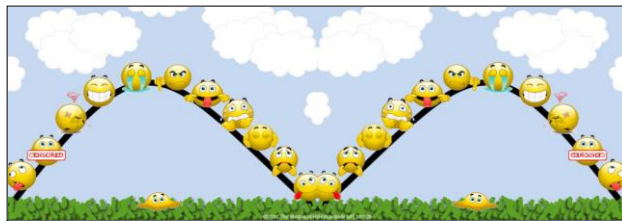
- Let's review the fifth and final expectation we will cover here in Part 1.

Record your own notes here:





Expect Ups and Downs





The emotions you experience during the deployment cycle can vary day to day, week to week, and month to month

Unexpected changes can lead to mixed emotions

Expect strong emotional reactions, and sometimes confusing, unpredictable emotions

- Use strategies to regulate when needed

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Discuss that emotional ups and downs are to be expected throughout the deployment cycle.

1. Explain that it is realistic to expect emotions during the deployment cycle to vary day-by-day, week-by-week, and month-by-month.

- The emotions you experience during the deployment cycle can vary day to day, week to week, and month to month. Also, recall that everyone's emotional timeline is unique.
- Here is an example of how your emotions can fluctuate: The start of the deployment may be marked by emotions like anxiety, being overwhelmed, or sadness. Mid-deployment you may notice feeling content in your new routine and a sense of pride for what you've accomplished thus far. Near the end of the deployment, you might not only feel excitement and relief that your Soldier will be home soon, but also feel anxious or nervous about the reintegration process.

2. Acknowledge that changes are to be expected, and can be a source of emotional turbulence.

- Sometimes it seems that change is the only constant in the Army, and especially during the deployment cycle.

Record your own notes here:



- For example, it is possible that you will experience a change in the date of departure, change in the duration of the deployment, or change in the return date.
- During a deployment cycle, change can be a particularly triggering Activating Event (AE). You may have an array of Thoughts about the same AE that can lead to a mix of Emotions.

3. Explain that the emotions a Circle of Support member experiences during a deployment can often be unpredictable, confusing, and sometimes overwhelming.

- Aside from facing major changes during the deployment cycle, the emotions you experience during a deployment can often be unpredictable, confusing, and sometimes overwhelming.
- At times, it may feel like you are riding an emotional roller coaster with a blindfold on, unable to see the next turn, next climb, or next descent.
- Maintaining realistic expectations will not completely eliminate the emotional ups and downs, but can help to moderate the intensity of them. When unexpected emotions arise, accept that it is normal.
- If strong emotions arise in the middle of a situation where you are needing to maintain composure, then consider using some of the strategies that we will be discussing next.
- For more support in understanding your emotional reactions and processing through them, you might consider reaching out to your resources such as a mentor, a Military Family Life Counselor, or a therapist through Military OneSource. We will review these resources in Part 3.

4. Transition.

- We have completed Part 1. We have covered several realities of the deployment cycle. The one reality I want to emphasize right now is that the deployment cycle is an opportunity for growth.
- The next two sections are designed to empower you with strategies and sources of support that can help you navigate the deployment cycle with resilience and support your personal and relational growth.

Record your own notes here:





Part 2: Resilience Strategies



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Recommended time is 30-35 minutes



Introduce Part 2: Resilience Strategies.

1. Review the content that will be covered in Part 2.

- In Part 2, Resilience Strategies, we will cover exactly what the title implies. We will focus on strategies that can strengthen and maintain your resilience throughout the deployment cycle.
- You will learn strategies that are proven to support resilience. The strategies can help enhance your ability to face adversity, cope with stress and manage your stress levels, adapt to change, and experience growth through the process.

2. Describe the benefit of learning the same strategies that their Soldier was presented.

- The strategies built into this module are the very same strategies that were introduced to your Soldiers in their pre-deployment resilience training.
- Although you and your Soldier will have different experiences during the deployment, the strategies can benefit everyone. Furthermore, sharing a goal of maintaining resilience and supporting one another's efforts can help promote connection and unity.

[NOTE: This is a natural transition to the next slide.]



Record your own notes here:

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Share Strategies





What strategies do you plan to use to strengthen and maintain your resilience during the deployment?

Engage in strategies to support each area of your life: physically, socially, spiritually, mentally, and emotionally

DCRT strategies support your comprehensive resilience, are within your full control, and are available to you at all times



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Encourage participants to share strategies they plan to use during the deployment and explain the advantages of incorporating the DCRT strategies.

1. Ask participants to share strategies they plan to use to strengthen and maintain their resilience during the deployment.

- We began this module by discussing the challenges of military life. We'd be remiss if we didn't acknowledge that you already possess a high level of resilience and likely some strategies to support it.
- Perhaps you have already thought about ways to manage your stress, face adversity, or adapt to the changes you face during this upcoming deployment.
- Let's share some of these ideas with one another now. For those of you who have been through a deployment before, perhaps you have some first-hand experience you can share with the rest of the group.
- **[ASK]** What strategies do you plan to use to strengthen and maintain your resilience during the deployment?

[NOTE: Allow for responses.]

Record your own notes here:



2. Encourage Circle of Support members to have strategies that can support each area of their life: physically, socially, spiritually, mentally, and emotionally.

- It is important to have strategies that can support you in each area of your life: physically, socially, spiritually, mentally, and emotionally.
- Physical strategies might include taking care of your health with regular exercise or proper nutrition. It may also include reducing your work-load and physical demands by hiring a cleaning company or a meal service.
- Social strategies might include having a weekly get-together with a friend or attending a monthly military Family support group.
- Spiritual strategies might include routinely reflecting on your core values or your sense of purpose. If you are religious, then it may include attending regular worship services.
- Mental and emotional strategies are often overlooked. Yet, consider what we have already discussed in Part 1, such as the impact of your expectations and of your Thoughts. Having strategies to support you mentally and emotionally is essential to maintaining resilience. The strategies introduced in this training particularly target your mental and emotional resilience.

3. Transition.

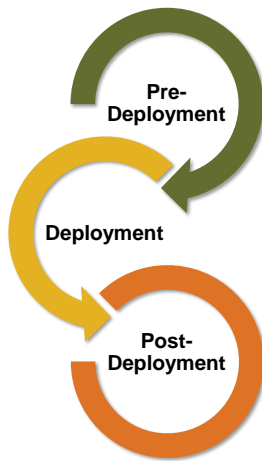
- There are many strategies that can help support your resilience and be effective to lessen the stress load you experience. You have just identified several. Let me introduce you to some others.

Record your own notes here:





DCRT Strategies



- Maintain a Sense of Purpose
- Pursue a Goal Plan
- Deliberate Communication
- Control the Controllables
- Shift Your Thinking
- Hunt the Good Stuff
- Deliberate Breathing

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Review strategies that will be covered next.

Review the strategies that will be covered today and acknowledge that some of the strategies may be familiar from previous training or personal experience.

1.

- There are seven specific strategies that we will be covering today. Many will be discussed here in Part 2; Pursue a Goal Plan will be covered in Part 4.
- If you've gone through formal resilience training, some of the strategies may be familiar to you. If you *are* familiar with these strategies, please share your experience applying them in order to benefit the group.
- Furthermore, some of the strategies may be second-nature to you. That is, you may use these strategies without conscious or deliberate effort. Reviewing them today may serve as a refresher or may help to put words to what you are doing so that you can better assist others to benefit from the strategies as well.

2. Explain that using the strategies now can positively influence each phase of the deployment cycle.

- Today we will *specifically* focus on how these strategies can be used within the context of pre-deployment and deployment.

Record your own notes here:



- Being intentional to approach your challenges with resilience in the current phase of the deployment cycle will benefit the next phase and the next after that.
- In other words, utilizing the strategies now in pre-deployment will positively influence the deployment phase, which in turn will positively influence the post-deployment phase.

3. Highlight the advantages of incorporating DCRT strategies include that the strategies are within a person's control and can be used at any and all times.

- There are some key advantages to incorporating some of the DCRT strategies we are about to cover such as they are within your full control and they are available to you at any and all times.

4. Transition.

- Let's start with a fundamental strategy: connecting to a sense of purpose.

Record your own notes here:





Connect to a Sense of Purpose





Sense of purpose is believing that your current actions contribute to something beyond the moment or even beyond yourself



How have you used commitment to a sense of purpose to help you through challenging times in the past?

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Explain the value of connecting to a sense of purpose.

1. Describe the value of connecting to a sense of purpose.

- A sense of purpose is believing that your current actions contribute to something beyond the moment or even beyond yourself.
- A sense of purpose is instrumental in helping Soldiers and Circle of Support members cope with difficult situations like the stress of the deployment cycle.
- Without a sense of purpose, tasks and actions seem meaningless, and productively coping with challenges can seem pointless and not worth the effort. Having a sense of purpose, on the other hand, gives meaning to what you do and can serve as a source of strength and hope. It is the reason that gets you out of bed and through the day, weeks, and months.

2. Provide examples of a sense of purpose.

- A sense of purpose can be shared by you and your Soldier or it can be unique to you.
- Examples of a sense of purpose include: taking pride in personal sacrifice and service or your Soldier's service, patriotism, personal faith in God or connection with a higher power, being a strong role model, and feeling a sense of belonging within the military community.



Record your own notes here:

3. Discuss ways that Circle of Support members have used commitment to a sense of purpose to help them through challenging times in the past.

- **[ASK]** How have you used commitment to a sense of purpose to help you through challenging times in the past?

[NOTE: Allow for responses.]

4. Transition.

- The next strategy we will discuss can help you and your Soldier to maintain a strong connection and overcome deployment challenges together; it also supports relational growth. Let's discuss the strategy of Deliberate Communication.

Record your own notes here:





Strategy: Deliberate Communication



What	When	How
Communicating openly, respectfully, and clearly in order to promote strong connections with others	Daily, on-going Need to address a challenge Sharing good stuff	Follow through with your communication plan – Re-engage expectations, if necessary Avoid suppressing the hard stuff (e.g., critical incidents); engage someone to talk to, such as the person(s) you identified during pre-deployment Don't dwell on the bad; also talk about the good



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Introduce the strategy of Deliberate Communication and discuss its application during deployment.

1. Describe "what" Deliberate Communication entails.

- Earlier, we spent time discussing the value of setting realistic expectations with your Soldier regarding communication, such as what will and will not be shared along with when and how you will communicate.
- Here, we introduce a strategy that emphasizes the quality of communications that take place within the communication plan.
- The strategy of Deliberate Communication is communicating openly, respectfully, and clearly in order to promote strong connections with others.

2. State "when" to use Deliberate Communication.

- The strategy of Deliberate Communication is encouraged to be used daily, on an on-going basis. It can be especially useful when addressing a challenge or conflict with your deployed Soldier so you can be purposeful and intentional in how you communicate rather than be driven or dictated by emotions.
- The strategy can also be used when sharing good stuff with your Soldier.
- This strategy is useful not just when communicating with your Soldier but also with others you wish to maintain or build strong connections.



Record your own notes here:

3. Explain how following through with the communication plan that is established during pre-deployment can aid resilience.

- Let's review the "how" of Deliberate Communication.
- First, follow through with the communication plan, such as what information will be shared with whom, as well as when and how you will connect with one another. Make adjustments and re-set expectations, if and when necessary.
- Avoid suppressing the hard stuff you experience during the deployment. Maybe you decided with your Soldier that you would not share certain stressors from home. If that's the case, then find someone to share such things with. You do not have to carry the burden alone. Reaching out for support is a resilient strategy.

4. Discuss the importance of communicating about the bad stuff as well as the good stuff.

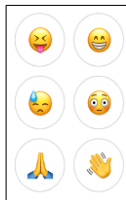
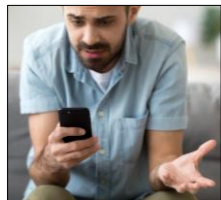
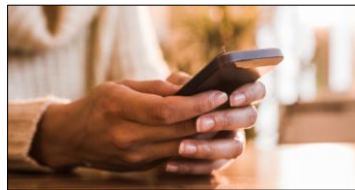
- Deployment stress can unearth problems and challenges for both you and your Soldier. It is important to address the challenges and communicate through them. Furthermore, offering to listen to the challenges someone else is facing will communicate that you are there for them and provides great support to the other person.
- Yet, if you and your Soldier only spend time communicating about what is bad, difficult, or challenging, then you'll be succumbing to the negativity bias. As a result, you'll be bound to experience an unhealthy ratio of negative emotions to positive emotions, which can erode connection over time.
- Bottom line, try to avoid dwelling on the bad; it is equally as important to look for and talk about the things that are going right and going well.

5. Transition.

- Let's continue the discussion of how to engage in Deliberate Communication, communication that is open, respectful, and clear.

Record your own notes here:





How

- Regulate emotions
- Be mindful when communicating via text / email / social media
- Write what you mean
 - Minimize sarcasm
 - Consider tone, use emojis
 - Re-read / Cool-off before sending
 - Self-regulate when on the receiving end

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Continue the discussion of Deliberate Communication and its application during deployment.

1. Continue to discuss "how" to engage in Deliberate Communication.

- Communicating while experiencing intense emotions may prevent effective communication. Intense emotions can interfere with how a message is delivered as well as how it is received.
- Deliberate Communication requires you to regulate your emotions.
- Other strategies we will discuss today, like Shift Your Thinking and Deliberate Breathing, can help you to regulate your emotions.

2. Discuss effective habits when communicating by e-mail, instant messaging, or social media.

- When communicating via email, text, or social media, there is a danger of being misunderstood due to the absence of seeing nonverbal cues like facial expressions or hearing one's tone of voice.

[NOTE: Share an example, like "So nice to finally hear from you" with different inflections that trigger different interpretations.]

Record your own notes here:



- Vague or un-thought-through messages can be misinterpreted, and false assumptions can be made.
- **[ASK]** What are some effective habits or best practices to consider when communicating through electronic means?

[NOTE: Allow for discussion.]

3. Cover any effective communication habits that were not addressed in the group discussion.

- Write what you mean; minimize sarcasm; consider your tone and what the other person may take from the written communication; craft your messages carefully to avoid being misunderstood.
- Use emojis; emojis can help make up for the missing communication cues and help the reader decode your intended tone.
- Always re-read messages before hitting “send” or “post”. Once the message is sent, you cannot take it back.
- Cool off before sending a heated message. Consider waiting if you are angry, upset, or overly tired. You may feel differently about the situation later. Take a breather, re-read the message, and/or get a sanity check by having a trusted friend read it before firing it off.
- As the one receiving the message, fight any urge to read into anything or jump to conclusions. If something is unclear, seek clarity. Take ownership of your interpretation and regulate your emotions and reactions.

4. Transition.

- Being deliberate and effective with your communication is hard, and it may be even harder when your Soldier is deployed. So, of all the strategies to begin using now, during pre-deployment, Deliberate Communication might be the strategy that delivers the biggest bang for the buck.
- Let’s move on to the next strategy: Control the Controllables.

Record your own notes here:





Strategy: Control the Controllables



What	When	How
<p>Quickly moving attention away from things that cannot be changed and toward things that are within your control in order to take productive action</p> 	<p>You realize you are wasting energy and time by stressing over something you can't control</p> <p>When you realize that what you are doing is not getting you anywhere</p> 	<p>Step 1: Identify what is causing you stress and ask, "Is this within my control? Can I change this?"</p> <p>Step 2: If yes, work to find a solution.</p> <p>If no, choose to accept it, then move on to Step 3.</p> <p>Step 3: Ask, "What is within my control?"</p> <p>Step 4: Re-direct focus and energy toward the "controllables" and take productive action.</p>

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Discuss the strategy of Control the Controllables.

1. Introduce the "what" of Control the Controllables.

- The strategy of Control the Controllables involves quickly moving your attention away from things that cannot be changed and toward things that are within your control in order to take productive action.

2. Describe "when" to use this strategy.

- This strategy is useful when you realize you are wasting energy and time by stressing over something you cannot control.
- Or, similarly, this strategy is useful when you realize that what you are doing is not getting you anywhere...when you feel like you are stuck in the mud, spinning your wheels.

3. Explain "how" to use Control the Controllables.

- Let's walk through how to use this strategy. **Step 1** is to identify what is triggering your stress (i.e. the AE).
- For example, you realize you've been stressing out over the fact that due to deployment, your Soldier will be missing a Family member's special birthday celebration.



Record your own notes here:

- Next, you ask yourself, “Is this (i.e. missing the birthday) within my control? Can I change this?”
- If the answer is yes, then **Step 2** is to put your focus on finding an effective solution.
- But, in the case of our example, the answer is most likely no. So, then **Step 2** is to choose to accept that the AE is not within your control. It is what it is.
- Once you’ve accepted the uncontrollable, in **Step 3**, you ask yourself, “What is within my control?” For example, you and your Soldier discuss creative ways for your Soldier to be a part of the birthday celebration.
- **Step 4**, re-direct your focus and energy toward the “controllables”, and take productive action. For example, you can arrange a virtual (e.g., Zoom) birthday party that the Soldier and other members of your Circle of Support can participate in. You can also help provide the birthday surprise or gift that your deployed Soldier has arranged ahead of time.

4. Discuss the power of acceptance.

- **[ASK]** How might the act of acceptance, like in Step 2, be a powerful strategy to promote resilience all on its own?

[NOTE: Allow for discussion.]

- Acceptance allows you to put your energy toward those things over which you have influence and control.
- Ruminating about an uncontrollable stressor can amplify negative emotions like anxiety, anger, and guilt. Acceptance can help break the cycle by grounding your emotions and your focus in the present.
- When you choose acceptance, you often feel the emotions of relief or contentment. Positive emotions like these can help you to broaden your awareness and think more creatively. This, in turn, can help you to re-direct your focus and move forward toward productive action.

5. Transition.

- In some situations, there may be very few things that you can control, but one “controllable” you can always count on is that you are in charge of your Thoughts, how you think about, interpret, or perceive any given situation (i.e. AE).
- Let’s explore the strategy Shift Your Thinking next.



Record your own notes here:



Strategy: Shift Your Thinking





What	When	How
Shifting to a <u>T</u> hought that drives more helpful <u>C</u> onsequences	You notice your current Emotions and Reactions are not helpful When you want to generate more positive emotions	Step 1: Objectively describe the <u>A</u> ctivating Event Step 2: Determine the Emotions and Reactions that are most helpful given the situation Step 3: Choose a <u>T</u> hought(s) that will drive the ideal <u>C</u> onsequences

How can I look at this AE differently?



Is there an opportunity to grow from this?

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Introduce the strategy of Shift Your Thinking.

1. Describe the “what” of Shift Your Thinking.

- The strategy of Shift Your Thinking is having the awareness and mental flexibility to shift your Thoughts to drive more productive Consequences.
- Oftentimes, simply shifting your Thoughts, such as the way you are interpreting the AE, can alter how you experience the situation.

[NOTE: This strategy has also been referred to as “reframing” or “restructuring” thoughts.]

2. Describe “when” to use this strategy.

- This strategy is useful when you notice your current Emotions and Reactions are not helping you in the situation.
- Shift Your Thinking can be useful if what you are feeling or doing is adding unnecessary stress or simply magnifying your stress.
- There also may be times when you deliberately want to generate more positive emotions; Shift Your Thinking can help you accomplish this.

Record your own notes here:



3. Explain “how” to use Shift Your Thinking.

- Let’s quickly walk through how to use this strategy and then we’ll demonstrate it through an interactive exercise.
- **Step 1**, describe the AE, just the facts.
- **Step 2**, determine the Consequences—the Emotions and Reactions—that will be most helpful given the situation.
- **Step 3**, choose a Thought that will produce the desired Consequences.
- To help you shift your Thought or your perception of the AE, consider asking the question, “How can I look at this AE differently?” or “Is there an opportunity to grow from this?”

4. Acknowledge that this strategy may appear easy in concept, but it can be difficult in practice.

- This strategy may appear easy in concept, but it requires disciplined practice.
- **[ASK]** What might make Shift Your Thinking a challenge to practice?

***[NOTE:** Allow for responses. This question is meant to prompt participants to consider barriers to shifting thoughts.]*

- Let’s be honest, when you are angry or upset, sometimes it’s just easier to stay that way.
- But, when you have a goal to strengthen resilience, a goal to grow, or you value your relationship with your Soldier and others, then this strategy can be useful.
- It will take some intention and effort before shifting your Thoughts becomes easier and more natural. The good thing is that you are given ample opportunities to practice and train this skill.

5. Transition.

- In fact, let’s get in a rep right now.

Record your own notes here:



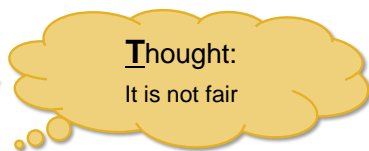


Shift Your Thinking: Counterproductive



Activating Event:

Your Soldier tells you they've made plans to go out for dinner with members of their squad



Consequences:

Emotions: Anger, resentful

Reactions: Muscle tension;
raise your voice in protest

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Set up the Shift Your Thinking exercise: share a scenario and highlight the AE, counterproductive Thought, and resulting Consequences.

[SLIDE BUILDS]

1. Share a scenario, then highlight the Activating Event.

- Imagine this scenario: It's two weeks prior to your Soldier's leave date. You hope to spend as much quality time with your Soldier before they leave. When your Soldier gets off work, they inform you of plans that they made to have dinner with members of their squad.
- The AE is, "Your Soldier tells you they've made plans to go out for dinner with other members of their squad."

2. Discuss potential heat-of-the-moment Thoughts.

- **[ASK]** What are some heat-of-the-moment Thoughts a Circle of Support member might have in response to this Activating Event?

[NOTE: Discuss possible Thoughts before revealing the example provided.]

[CLICK TO ADVANCE]

- Your Thoughts might be, "It's not fair." Perhaps you think it is not fair for the squad members to take time with your Soldier now when they will have time on deployment. Or, perhaps you think it is not fair for your Soldier to have a "night out" when you have to stay home with the kids.



3. Describe the Consequences driven by the example Thought and discuss the impact of these Consequences.

[CLICK TO ADVANCE]

- A Thought like this could drive Consequences such as feeling angry or resentful. You may notice physical reactions like your muscles tensing up or your heart pounding; you may raise your voice in protest over your Soldier's plans.
- You are entitled to your Thoughts, Emotions, and Reactions. In the moment, these Consequences may not be detrimental.
- However, if the situation would escalate or if the situation is left unresolved, then these Consequences could negatively impact future interactions with your Soldier and interfere with having quality time before they leave.
- Therefore, this might be a time that you choose to use the strategy of Shift Your Thinking and can benefit from considering alternative Thoughts about the AE.

[NOTE: This is a natural transition to the next slide.]

Record your own notes here:





Shift Your Thinking: Productive



Activating Event:
Your Soldier tells you they've made plans to go out for dinner with members of their squad



Thought:
It is important that my Soldier spends time with their battle buddies before they deploy together



Consequences:
Emotions: Content; hopeful
Reactions: Composure; share your concerns with your Soldier and listen to their perspective

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Facilitate an interactive exercise of using the strategy of Shift Your Thinking.

[SLIDE BUILDS]

1. Step 1: State the Activating Event.

- Let's walk through Shift Your Thinking, starting with **Step 1**; state the AE.
- The AE is, "Your Soldier tells you they've made plans to go out for dinner with other members of their squad."

2. Step 2: Determine the Emotions and Reactions that are most productive given the situation.

- One part of pre-deployment preparations is ensuring your relationship with your Soldier is as strong and healthy as it can be prior to the deployment. Navigating conflict with your Soldier in a productive manner is important.
- In **Step 2**, determine the Emotions and Reactions that will be most productive, given the situation.
- **[ASK]** What Emotions and Reactions would be most helpful in allowing you to have a productive conversation with your Soldier?

[NOTE: Allow for responses.]

[CLICK TO ADVANCE]

- Productive Emotions may include feeling content and hopeful.



Record your own notes here:

- Productive Reactions might include being more composed – such as having a less intense level of physiological stress – and sharing your concerns with your Soldier while listening to and trying to understand their perspective.

3. Step 3: Identify a Thought that will drive the desired Consequences.

- Now, in **Step 3**, we shift our Thought in order to drive our desired Consequences.
- This might be a time you ask yourself, “How can I look at this situation differently?”
- Cohesion is important for a Soldier and their unit. Cohesion can help them succeed in the mission and keep your Soldier safe. The more cohesive they are prior to leaving for deployment, the more cohesive they can be during the deployment.

[CLICK TO ADVANCE]

- An alternative Thought that would help generate more productive Consequences might be: “It is important that my Soldier spends time with his battle buddies before they deploy together.”

4. Explain the potential impact of considering an alternative perspective and Shifting Your Thought.

- Considering another perspective and Shifting Your Thought to produce more productive Consequences can allow you and your Soldier to effectively communicate.
- Rather than have a conversation fueled by intense emotions, you can have a deliberate conversation that allows you to reach an understanding or even a compromise. Perhaps, after sharing your concerns and feelings, your Soldier decides to have dinner with the Family and then meet their squad members for a drink after spending time with you.

5. Transition.

- As previously mentioned, Shift Your Thinking can be a strategy you use to generate positive emotions. Let’s review the benefits of positive emotions and reasons why you may want to deliberately cultivate them.

Record your own notes here:





Positive Emotion





Positive emotions help buffer against stress

What are some ways you can generate positive emotion now during the pre-deployment phase to help set you up for success during and after the deployment phase?



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Discuss the value of generating positive emotions.

1. Explain the effects of positive emotions and how they benefit a person's resilience.

- Given the challenges you and your Soldier will face during the deployment cycle, it is to be expected that you will experience negative emotions. It is also expected that you will encounter a somewhat elevated level of stress.
- Positive emotions help buffer against stress and enhance resilience. Positive emotions have an “undoing effect” on the physiological changes that happen when experiencing negative emotions. Furthermore, under stress, you can become stuck or fixated on a problem, but positive emotions can help to broaden attention and increase creative thinking, which helps support mental agility and problem-solving.
- Often when people think of positive emotion, they think only of happiness, joy, or excitement. But there are many other positive emotions like peace, relief, love, contentment, and gratitude, to name a few.

Record your own notes here:



2. Discuss ways Circle of Support members can generate positive emotion during the deployment cycle.

- **[ASK]** What are some ways you can generate positive emotion now during the pre-deployment phase to help set you up for success during and after the deployment phase?

[NOTE: Allow for responses. Encourage participants to share how the strategy might generate positive emotion. Examples might include

- *Control the Controllables: reflecting on what is within your control can promote feelings of confidence, hope, and optimism;*
- *Shift Your Thinking: choosing to shift your interpretation or the meaning you assign to an AE;*
- *Connecting to a sense of purpose can promote a sense of meaning, gratitude, sense of pride, and hope;*
- *Pursuing and achieving goals can promote feelings of confidence and a sense of pride and accomplishment;*
- *Spending quality time with friends/Family can promote feelings of love and appreciation and a sense of belonging;*
- *Doing a kind act for others: the act of giving elicits positive feelings like joy, gratification, and sense of connection;*
- *Engaging a sense of humor / laugh: laughter decreases stress hormones and increases “happy hormones” like endorphins and serotonin, which leads to feelings of pleasure and joy. Laughing with others also promotes a feeling of “togetherness”.]*

[NOTE: This is a natural transition to the next slide.]

Record your own notes here:





Sharing Positive Experiences





Experiencing positive emotion is a vital part in maintaining your resilience during challenging times, like a deployment

Discuss with your Soldier your perspectives on sharing positive experiences with one another

Sharing in positive emotions together can help strengthen connection

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Encourage Circle of Support members and Soldiers to discuss the sharing of positive experiences with one another during deployment.

1. Encourage Circle of Support members and Soldiers to discuss the sharing of positive experiences with one another during deployment.

- Experiencing positive emotion is a vital part in maintaining your resilience during challenging times, like a deployment.
- Yet, sometimes Circle of Support members and Soldiers alike are hesitant to allow themselves positive experiences apart from one another or feel guilty for them.
- Considering the benefits of positive emotions, it warrants having a conversation with your Soldier on this topic. Remember from our earlier discussion about establishing a communication plan with your Soldier, it is important that you both be able to share positive experiences with one another.
- If you have had an exhausting, hard-fought day, it can be difficult to receive news from your Soldier that they had an enjoyable experience that day, and vice versa. It might require deliberate effort to put your feelings aside and celebrate the positive experience with one another.
- Sharing in positive emotions together can help strengthen connection. Let's look at another strategy that you can use to support your personal and your relational resilience.

[NOTE: This is a natural transition to the next slide.]



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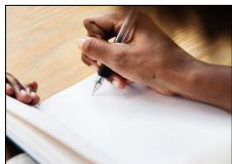
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Strategy: Hunt the Good Stuff



What	When	How
Deliberately focusing your attention on the good things or positive events that happen or have happened in your day, and appreciating them	Daily, on-going When you have time to reflect In conversations with others	Step 1: Search for good things or positive events Step 2: Take note (write, speak, or think) of three good things that happened Step 3: Spend a moment reflecting on each good thing by asking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What does it mean to me? - How can I get more of it? - What ways did I or others contribute to this good thing?



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Introduce the strategy of Hunt the Good Stuff.

1. Explain that a common misconception of HTGS is denying the bad stuff that happens.

- A simple way to generate more positive emotion, particularly gratitude, is to focus on the good things that are happening or have already happened. There is a strategy for that, it is called “Hunt the Good Stuff.”
- Hunt the Good Stuff (HTGS) isn’t a new concept. Some of you may recall a grandmother or parent telling you to count your blessings. And, this is perhaps one of the most recognized skills in the Army’s formal resilience training.
- HTGS, though, is often misunderstood as a “sunshine-and-rainbows” skill. HTGS is not about burying your head in the sand, denying the bad things in a situation.

2. State “what” HTGS is.

- HTGS is deliberately focusing your attention on the good things or positive events that happen or have happened in your day, however small, and appreciating them.

Record your own notes here:



3. Describe “when” to HTGS.

- HTGS is a resilience strategy to use daily. Taking notice of good things as they happen throughout the day will benefit you in the moment as well as strengthen your ability to remember those good things later.
- You can HTGS when you have a moment to reflect on the day. This might be at the end of the day before you shut off the lights, or when you’re getting ready for the day. Perhaps, you HTGS during meal time.
- You can also engage in HTGS more informally during conversations with others. This will not only benefit you, but it can also benefit the other person as well.
- For example, if I’m recounting my crappy day to my friend, I’m having a crappy day all over again, and my friend is having a crappy day right along with me.
- Instead, if you share the good stuff, and spend time discussing that good stuff, consider how this might shift your energy and your friend’s energy into something more productive.

4. Explain “how” to use the strategy.

- Let’s review the three simple steps of how to use the strategy of HTGS to reap the most reward
 - **Step 1**, is to “be on the hunt” and search for good things or positive events as they are happening or that have already happened in your day.
 - **Step 2**, take note of three good things by writing down, thinking of, or talking about each good thing.
 - **Step 3**, for each good thing, **reflect** on each thing by asking a follow-up question like, what does it mean to me? How can I ensure that it happens again? Or, what did I or others do to contribute to it happening?

[NOTE: Provide an example (e.g., receive a gift from your Soldier or friend) and walk through a reflection on it.]

[NOTE: This is a natural transition to the next slide.]

Record your own notes here:





Strategy: Hunt the Good Stuff (cont.)



The “deployment curse”

- Good things DO happen during the deployment



How does Hunting the Good Stuff help to counteract the negativity bias and enhance resilience?

What are some creative ways to build HTGS into your daily routine now during pre-deployment and also during deployment?



How might you use the strategy of HTGS when communicating with your Soldier on deployment?

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Establish the realistic expectation that good stuff will happen on deployment; sometimes you may just have to hunt for it.

[SLIDE BUILDS]

1. Discuss the need to deliberately HTGS during deployment to counteract biased thinking fueled by the “deployment curse”.

- **[ASK]** Has anyone ever heard of the “deployment curse”, or “Murphy’s law of deployment”?

[NOTE: Allow for responses. For those who acknowledge they have heard of the “deployment curse”, ask someone to explain it. Simply put, the “deployment curse” is the belief that everything goes wrong once the Soldier is deployed.]

[CLICK TO ADVANCE]

- It is true that bad things can happen while your Soldier is on deployment: the car might breakdown, someone might get injured, or an appliance might stop working.
- But, it is also true that good and positive things happen during the deployment too. The real misfortune may not be the “curse” but rather allowing yourself to be trapped in the negativity bias.

2. Discuss how HTGS counteracts the negativity bias.

[CLICK TO ADVANCE]

- **[ASK]** How does Hunting the Good Stuff help to counteract the negativity bias and enhance resilience?

[NOTE: Allow for discussion.]



Record your own notes here:

- It's true that not every day is a good day, but there is good in every day. HTGS trains you to notice it.
- Taking the time to focus on and ruminate about the positive events of the day leads to more balanced emotions and energy.

3. Discuss creative ways to implement HTGS.

- **[ASK]** What are some creative ways to build HTGS into your daily routine now during pre-deployment and also during deployment?

[NOTE: Allow for responses. Examples might include

- *At the dinner table, share good things from the day;*
- *Keep a journal and HTGS for 5 minutes before bed;*
- *When the alarm goes off in the morning, start the day by HTGS from the previous day;*
- *Be deliberate in pointing out—or praising—the good stuff you see/hear from those around you.]*
- You will likely experience “bad days” during the deployment. Integrating HTGS into your and your Soldiers routine now in pre-deployment can help you hone the skill so that you are better able to notice and find the good stuff when it can benefit you most.

4. Discuss using HTGS when communicating with one another during deployment.

- **[ASK]** How might you use the strategy of HTGS when communicating with your Soldier on deployment?

[NOTE: Allow for responses. Examples might include

- *Start or end phone/video calls by sharing good stuff;*
- *End your day by texting your Soldier 1-2 good things from the day;*
- *Be deliberate in pointing out—or praising—the good stuff your Soldier shares with you.]*

5. Transition.

- There may be times that you are stuck in a negative frame of mind or your stress response is on overdrive and interfering with your ability to think clearly. When your brains are stressed, a mental strategy like Shift Your Thinking or Hunt the Good Stuff may be difficult and less effective. Let's look at another strategy that may be more useful in a situation like this.


Record your own notes here:





Strategy: Deliberate Breathing



What	When	How
Taking a physical, mental, and emotional pause by controlling your breath as well as your T houghts and emotions	When needing to gain self-control When needing to turn down the stress response	



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Introduce the strategy of Deliberate Breathing to include what it is and its general uses.

1. Allow participants to share experiences they might have in using controlled breathing exercises.

- Sometimes to regain control and composure, you may find that engaging your body first, rather than your brain, is a more useful strategy to boost your resilience and ground your attention in the moment.
- **[ASK]** Has anyone used Deliberate Breathing or other controlled breathing tactics? If so, how did it benefit you?

[NOTE: Follow-up responses by asking when and how they have used it and what benefits they experienced (e.g., manage emotions, recovery, enhance performance, sleep, grounding in the present moment).]

2. State “what” Deliberate Breathing is.

- Deliberate Breathing shares many similar benefits to other forms of controlled breathing techniques, such as to lower heart rate or gain focus.
- However, what is unique about Deliberate Breathing is that it emphasizes control over more than just the physical breath.
- Deliberate Breathing is taking a physical, mental, and emotional pause by controlling your breath as well as your **T**houghts and Emotions.

Record your own notes here:



3. Describe “when” to use Deliberate Breathing.

- In general, Deliberate Breathing is useful when you need to gain a sense of self-control. This is especially helpful when you find yourself in the midst of an uncontrollable situation.
- Recall the last steps of the Control the Controllables strategy are to identify what you can control and take productive action. Sometimes taking a few Deliberate Breaths to regain composure *is* that productive action.
- We will discuss other, more specific, times when Deliberate Breathing can be useful in just a few minutes.

4. Transition.

- Rather than discuss the steps of how to do Deliberate Breathing, let’s do a Practical Exercise to experience it firsthand.

[NOTE: Do not skip the Practical Exercise (PE); it can give participants a mental break and help to recover energy while still moving forward with training.]

Record your own notes here:





PE: Deliberate Breathing



How



Step 1: *(Physical)*

Take **low, slow, deep breaths** using your abdomen and lower core region with a steady, rhythmic cadence (e.g., 5-sec in and 5-sec out)

Step 2: *(Mental)*

Settle your focus on a simple target

Step 3: *(Emotional)*

Ground your emotions or generate positive emotions



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Practical Exercise: Deliberate Breathing.

1. Set up the Practical Exercise (PE).

- The PE will consist of about a 2-minute breathing exercise.
- Before we begin, take a moment to notice what you feel in your body, like muscle tension or heart rate; notice any emotions you're feeling; and notice your state of mind.
- Now, sit or stand up tall, and let your shoulders drop down and back, away from your ears. To get a feel for the movement of your breath, try placing one hand on your belly and one hand on your chest. Close your eyes if you're comfortable with that, or simply lower your gaze to the floor.

2. Lead the group through Step 1 (Physical).

- Let's start Step 1 by engaging your diaphragm. Breathe deeply into your lungs. You should feel your lower core (belly, low back, side abs) expand on the inhale, like you're filling up a balloon, and then contract on the exhale.
- Try to keep chest movement to a minimum. Continue to **breathe low**.

[NOTE: Be silent; allow 20 seconds to practice.]

Record your own notes here:

[NOTE: An optional handout that includes the steps of Deliberate Breathing can be found in Tab I.]



- Next, slow your breath. Lengthen your inhale and exhale to a rhythmic cadence of 5 seconds in and 5 seconds out, or to a cadence you find comfortable and that you can maintain. Continue to **breathe slowly**.

[NOTE: Be silent; allow 20 seconds to practice.]

3. Lead the group through Step 2 (Mental).

- Now for Step 2, continue the low, slow breaths, and **settle your mental focus** to one simple target.
- A simple target is anything that grounds your mind in the present moment. Maybe you count the cadence of your inhale and exhale; maybe, it's a physical sensation like the feel of your heartbeat *[pause]*; or perhaps your target is a stationary, external cue like the chair in front of you.
- Using whichever mental focus strategy that works for you, lock your focus on the target you've chosen, and use that target as an anchor to come back to when you notice your mind wandering.

[NOTE: Be silent; allow 20 seconds to practice.]

4. Lead the group through Step 3 (Emotional).

- Finally for step 3, check if you notice any strong **emotions** present, acknowledge them, accept that they are present, return to your mental focus, and continue to take deliberate breaths.

[NOTE: Be silent; allow 20 seconds for them to practice; then gently end the exercise.]

5. Finish the exercise by encouraging participants to examine the differences they may feel in their bodies and minds after engaging in Deliberate Breathing.

- Take a moment right now to check in with your body and mind. Notice how your body feels. Perhaps you are less tense and have a slowed heart rate. Notice your state of mind, perhaps you are calmer and more focused.
- Go ahead and blink your eyes, shrug your shoulders, shake it out, and return your attention to the training.
- Practicing Deliberate Breathing for up to 20 minutes a day—which can be broken up into smaller chunks—will enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the strategy.

6. Transition.

- Now let's take a closer look at the specific application of Deliberate Breathing during the deployment phase.




Record your own notes here:



Strategy: Deliberate Breathing



What	When	How
	<p>In-the-moment when you need to gain composure</p> <p>During a break in action when you need to turn down your body's activation (recovery)</p> <p>When you need to relax, like to promote sleep</p>	<p>Composure: From whatever position you're in, take 1-3 Deliberate Breaths.</p> <p>Recovery: Sitting, standing, or lying down; engage in Deliberate Breathing for 1-10 minutes.</p> <p>Relaxation: Settle into a comfortable position and engage in Deliberate Breathing for 10-20 minutes. Lengthen exhale to be 1-2 seconds longer than inhale.</p>

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Review the strategy of Deliberate Breathing and discuss its multiple applications.

1. Explain that Deliberate Breathing (DB) is like a multi-tool.

- Deliberate Breathing is like a multi-tool. It has many uses. And, like a multi-tool, "how" you use it depends on "when" you need it or what the end-goal is.

[NOTE: This slide briefs in the following rhythm: (1) when to use Deliberate Breathing, (2) how to use Deliberate Breathing in that situation, (3) ask participants for examples of practical application. Then, move to the next "when".]

2. Explain "how" to use DB to gain composure.

- When you need to gain composure in the moment, take a tactical pause. Take 1-3 deliberate breaths, then execute the task.
- [ASK]** What situations now in pre-deployment or during deployment might using Deliberate Breathing for composure be useful?

[NOTE: Allow for responses. Possible examples include

- Before engaging in an important conversation;
- Before, during, and/or after an argument;
- If you have kids, you may use Deliberate Breathing during stressful parenting situations;
- After a bout of excitement and you need to focus back on the task at hand.]



Record your own notes here:

3. Explain “how” to use DB for recovery purposes.

- Deliberate Breathing can be used during a break in action when you want to recover some energy.
- Think of it like plugging in your cell phone in order to recharge your battery. Even if you don't have time for a full charge, every little bit matters.
- For recovery, engage in Deliberate Breathing for as little as one minute and as many as 10 minutes.
- Remember, Deliberate Breathing is more than just controlled breathing. It also involves focusing on one thing to quiet your mind.
- To increase the efficiency of Deliberate Breathing, try generating positive emotion, such as gratitude. Think about something that you are grateful for or visualize an image or experience that helps generate a positive emotion.
- **[ASK]** What situations during deployment could you use Deliberate Breathing to aide in recovery?

[NOTE: Allow for responses. Possible examples include

- After a long, exhausting day;
- After a good workout;
- After an emotionally exhausting phone call;
- To regain energy after a period of excitement, joy, or other positive experience.]

4. Explain “how” to use DB for relaxation.

- Deliberate Breathing can also help you to relax more fully by putting your mind and body in a restful state.
- This can help you to fall asleep. Sometimes, even when your bodies are exhausted, it is the mind that keeps you awake at night.
- For relaxation, try lengthening your exhale to be 1-2 seconds longer than your inhale before settling into an even rhythm. This helps to engage the body's natural relaxation response and more efficiently turn down the stress response.
- Also, generating positive emotions, and gratitude in particular, can offer additional benefits for relaxation.

[NOTE: This is a natural transition to the next slide.]

Record your own notes here:





Strategies: Implementation





Which strategies can you see yourself using during the deployment cycle?



Have strategies that are within your control and always available to you

Different strategies may work better for you than others depending on the stressor, timing, and situation

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Summarize Part 2 and transition to Part 3.

1. Ask Circle of Support members to consider which strategies they intend to use during the deployment cycle.
 - We have just reviewed several strategies that can effectively support your resilience during the deployment cycle.
 - **[ASK]** Which strategies can you see yourself using during the deployment cycle?

[NOTE: Allow for responses. Encourage participants to also consider and share “when” and “how” they would they would use the strategies they identified.]

2. Encourage Circle of Support members to have a variety of strategies that they can choose from to meet the demands of the situation.
 - Remember that it is vital to have strategies that are within your control and always available to you.
 - You may find that different strategies work better for you than others depending on the stressor, timing, and situation. For example, some strategies are useful in the moment, whereas other strategies are more appropriate after the dust has settled or once the stressor is no longer immediate.

Record your own notes here:



3. Transition to Part 3.

- We have now completed Part 2 of today's training. We discussed strategies that can be used to help you to face and cope with stressors, adapt to change, and grow from the challenges you experience throughout the deployment cycle.
- You are neither expected nor encouraged to take on the challenges of the deployment cycle all on your own. Engaging the support available to you is a resilient strategy, too.
- So, let's move on to Part 3: Support & Resources.

Record your own notes here:





Part 3: Support & Resources



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Recommended time is 15 minutes



Introduce Part 3: Support & Resources.

1. Review the content that will be covered in Part 3.

- Perhaps your Soldier has been or is your primary source of support. We will begin Part 3, Support & Resources, by discussing ways you and your Soldier can maintain connection during the deployment.
- While your Soldier is on deployment, their availability and ability to support you may be limited. So, we will discuss the value of establishing your own Circle of Support. Along with identifying who you can rely on for support, we will discuss the types of support that can benefit you during the deployment.
- Next, we will discuss strategies for cultivating and strengthening connections with others. Deployment can be an opportunity to cultivate new friendships and strengthen other connections while also maintaining connection with your Soldier.
- Lastly, we will review professional resources that can support your ability to cope with stressors and overcome adversity as well as to support your goals and your growth during the deployment cycle.

[NOTE: This is a natural transition to the next slide.]



Record your own notes here:

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Support: Who is in Your Circle?





Establish realistic expectations with your Soldier regarding the level and type of support you expect from them during the deployment

It is important to have someone to talk to about what you're going through

Who's in your Circle? Consider people in your life who truly support you and your overall well-being

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Explain the need to establish realistic expectations about who the Circle of Support can rely upon for support.

1. Encourage Circle of Support members to establish realistic expectations regarding the support their Soldier can provide.

- Now, let's consider *your* support system.
- Ideally, your Soldier will be a source of support for you as you go through the deployment. However, due to the nature of the deployment, their schedule, distance, time zones, etc., your Soldier may or may not be able to give you the support you need.
- It is encouraged to have a discussion with your Soldier regarding the level and type of support you expect from them and whether it is realistic.

2. Ask participants to consider who, in addition to their Soldier, is in *their own* Circle of Support.

- During the deployment, you may not be able to talk with your Soldier as often as you'd like. Furthermore, there may be some things or details that you decide not to share with your Soldier for reasons we discussed earlier. It is important though, that you have someone to talk to about what you are going through.

Record your own notes here:



- Take a moment and consider who is in your Circle of Support. Who are the people in your life who truly support you and your overall well-being. Who can you confide in? Who lifts your spirits? Who can provide wise counsel if/when needed?

[NOTE: Provide about a minute for participants to silently reflect on their Circle of Support.]

- If your Soldier has been “your person”, the one you confide in about everything or have predominantly counted on for support, then this deployment will be an opportunity for you to grow your support circle.
- The support you begin the deployment with may change and may grow throughout the deployment as you develop a network of support from others.

[NOTE: Something to be mindful of during this discussion is that some participants may not feel they have any support outside of their Soldier. If you sense this is the case, encourage the person to consider Chaplains, MFLCs, other community/professional support members as well as other participants in today’s training.]

- You are in a room of like-minded people. Everyone in the room is here because of a vested interest in supporting their Soldier. You might consider exchanging contact information with one another after the training so that you can remain a source of support to each another.

3. Transition.

- Now let’s discuss what type of support can be helpful.

Record your own notes here:





Support: What Type?





There are various ways that others can support you

- Tangible support
- Informational support
- Emotional support

How might accepting help from others boost your resilience?

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Discuss the various ways that Circle of Support members can be supported by others.

1. Describe the various types of support (i.e. tangible, informational, emotional) and provide examples for each.

- It is common for others such as friends, neighbors, co-workers, and Family members to offer their support by saying, “Let me know how I can help” or “I want to support you, let me know what you need.”
- This is well-meaning, but does put the responsibility on you to reach out and to communicate what you need.
- As you navigate the deployment, there are various ways that others can support you. It can be helpful to know what kind of support you need and also what members of your Support Circle may be best suited to support your needs. Consider who you can turn to for support as you face various deployment challenges.
- Sometimes you can benefit from tangible support like a ride to pick up your vehicle at the repair shop, a home-cooked meal, lawn care, or an hour of childcare to run important errands or to take a break and engage in self-care.
- Sometimes you need informational support, such as information on a topic, advice, suggestions, or counsel.

Record your own notes here:



- Sometimes you need emotional support, such as someone to listen to you without feeling judged by them, someone to validate your experiences, show you empathy, or help foster hope.
- For various reasons, your Soldier may or may not be able to provide you with the emotional support you need or are seeking.
- Your Soldier may have fulfilled the various types of support for you before, but now that they are away does not mean you need to do it all on your own.

2. Discuss the value of leaning into one's Circle of Support to help navigate life during a deployment.

- Self-reliance is often perceived as a strength. It is not uncommon to think that you can, and must, manage a challenge, problem, or task all on your own.
- Maybe you can accomplish the task without help from others, but consider for a moment if, instead, you accepted support from others.
- **[ASK]** How might accepting help from others boost your resilience during the deployment?

[NOTE: *Allow for discussion.*]

- Self-reliance and independence during a deployment can sometimes be a self-imposed expectation; it is an expectation that can actually undercut your resilience.
- Instead, cultivating a strong Circle of Support and then reaching out and accepting their support can enhance your ability to cope with stressors, overcome challenges, and experience personal and relational growth.
- What's more, allowing others to support you is a way you can support your Soldier. Many Soldiers report a top stressor is worrying about loved ones back home. If your Soldier knows you have support or are working to cultivate a support network, then it will enable them to focus on your relationship and on the deployment mission.

3. Transition.

- Perhaps you want to build up your Circle of Support. Let's talk about ways to build strong connection with others.

Record your own notes here:





Support: Build Connection with Others



How can you build-up your Support Circle & strengthen connections?

- Reach out
- Ask for and accept support
- Volunteer
- Spend quality time together
- Attend social events



Social media as a source of connection

What are some benefits of social media?

What might be some potential downfalls of social media?

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Discuss strategies to cultivate connection with others.

[SLIDE BUILDS]

1. Discuss strategies to cultivate connection with others.

- **[ASK]** How can you cultivate connection with others?

[NOTE: Allow for responses before revealing examples.]

[CLICK TO ADVANCE]

[NOTES: Examples may include

- Reach out and initiate contact, be responsive to others' efforts to reach out, seek out a mentor;
- Ask for and accept help, offer support to others;
- Volunteer with an organization that aligns with your values and passions;
- Join a deployment support group on social media;
- Spend quality time together, create positive memories, cultivate shared experiences;
- Work through a challenge (e.g., conflict) together;
- Celebrate successes, accomplishments, progress toward goals, and growth experienced by others;
- Attend social events such as those hosted by MWR, FAP, or the unit's FRG;
- Be authentic.]



Record your own notes here:

2. Acknowledge the pros and cons of social media as a person's primary source of connection with others.

[CLICK TO ADVANCE]

- **[ASK]** What are some benefits of social media in regard to finding support and connection with others?

[NOTE: Allow for discussion. Examples might include

- Online support groups;
- Maintain a level of connection with a large group of friends/Family, staying up-to-date on each other's daily lives;
- Build and maintain connection with people that are geographically dispersed.]

- **[ASK]** What might be some potential downsides of social media in regard to using it as a primary source of connection with others?

[NOTE: Allow for discussion. Examples might include

- Can change our way of communicating with others;
- Temptation to overshare or vent, which may undercut a relationship or person's trust;
- Temptation to make comparisons;
- Constantly "plugged-in" can interfere with meaningful interactions in the present moment;
- Temptation to only share the highlight reel or a filtered reality of your life which keeps you from being your authentic self.]

- There are benefits to using social media for support and a level of connection with others, but overuse or overreliance on social media can create a false security of connection along with other potential downsides. Therefore, ensure that you are also engaging in relationships and sources of support in real life, outside of social media too.

3. Transition.

- Another way to find support, and even build connection with others, is to capitalize on the professional resources and programs available to you.

Record your own notes here:





Resources



What resources are available to support you and your Soldier during the deployment cycle?

AWC
ARMY Wellness Center



**MILITARY
ONE SOURCE**

MILITARY & FAMILY
LIFE COUNSELING

ARMY COMMUNITY SERVICE
ACS
Real-Life Solutions for Successful Army Living



ESGR
EMPLOYER SUPPORT OF
THE GUARD AND RESERVE



DHAP
DEPLOYMENT HEALTH
ASSESSMENT PROGRAM



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Record your own notes here:

[NOTE: See Tab J for the worksheet containing your personal notes of information (e.g., phone numbers, locations) specific to the unit receiving the training for local and remote resources. Some of these resources may not be available to all members of the Circle of Support. There is an optional handout for participants with more detailed descriptions of key resources in Tab I.]



Highlight resources available to support the Circle of Support members and their Soldier during the deployment cycle.

[SLIDE BUILDS]

1. Discuss resources that are available to Circle of Support members and their Soldier during the deployment cycle.

- **[ASK]** What resources are available to support you and your Soldier during the deployment cycle?

[NOTE: Allow for responses. When a participant offers a resource, such as ACS, ask them or others to explain what the resource is or what it provides.]

2. Discuss any points that were not already raised by the group that are deemed most relevant to the group.

[CLICK TO ADVANCE]

[NOTE: Rely on participants to share what services each resource provides and fill in the gaps.]

- Some resources may include
 - Army Community Service (ACS): comprehensive services designed to meet individual and community needs. ACS programs include Financial Readiness, Family Advocacy Program (FAP), Army Family Team Building (AFTB), and more.
 - Embedded Behavioral Health Provider: trained and certified professionals to provide clinical assistance regarding mental health issues or concerns.



- United Service Organizations (USO): provides networking for Circle of Support members, Family meals, and activities for kids. They also provide wellness activities with Family workshops, gaming and fitness programming, and help to connect Soldiers and their Families with phone calls home and video chats.
- Family Advocacy Program (FAP): programs and services for Families to enhance their relationship skills and improve their quality of life, which include Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP), New Parent Support Program, and more.
- Army Family Team Building (AFTB): a training and readiness program that provides a better understanding of Army culture as well as the skills and resources needed to become resilient, self-sufficient members of the military community.
- Military One Source: online resource that is a one-stop shop. It provides assistance on an array of topics such as the Military Life Cycle, PCS moves, health and wellness, retirement planning, financial counseling, relationship counseling, non-medical counseling for stress relief, life coaching, education and employment benefits, childcare options, and more.
- Military and Family Life Counseling Program (MFLC): free, short-term, confidential non-medical counseling services for a wide range of issues from marital conflicts and stress management to coping with deployments or loss. MFLCs are available to Soldiers and their Circle of Support; sessions can take place in person, over the phone, or via secure video or online chat.
- Army Wellness Center (AWC): staffed with health educators to provide educational programs and services to improve and sustain physical health. Programs include health and fitness assessments, wellness coaching, exercise prescription, nutrition coaching, stress management, and tobacco education and coaching.
- Ready & Resilient (R2) Performance Centers (R2PC): R2 Performance Centers have Master Resilience Trainers-Performance Experts with graduate level degrees in psychology or human performance who can assist you in achieving goals, enhancing resilience, and optimizing performance.
- Chaplain: Provide religious or spiritual support and counseling.

Record your own notes here:



- Better Opportunity for Single Soldiers (BOSS): the BOSS program aims to enhance the morale and welfare of single Soldiers. BOSS sponsors a variety of activities before, during, and after deployment to maintain the morale of single Soldiers affected by deployment stress.
- Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR): ESGR helps Soldiers understand their rights governed by the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA). Specifically, ESGR helps Soldiers know where to turn if facing employment issues, Civil Litigation, or other discrimination for their military service to include being deployed.

[NOTE: USERRA is a Federal law intended to ensure that persons who serve in the Armed Forces, Reserve, National Guard, or other uniformed Services: (1) are not disadvantaged in their civilian careers because of their service; (2) are promptly reemployed in their civilian jobs upon their return from duty; (3) are not discriminated against in employment based on past, present, or future military service.]

- Deployment Health Assessment Program (DHAP): DHAP provides early identification of emerging deployment-related health conditions and serves as a gateway to care and treatment. The goal of DHAP is to connect Soldiers and Army Civilians with the right care at the right time.

3. Encourage Soldiers to consider how awareness of the available resources can support their resilience and alleviate stress when on deployment.

- **[ASK]** How might having a greater awareness of the resources available to you help support your resilience and potentially alleviate stress during the deployment?

[NOTE: Allow for discussion.]

- If a situation arises during deployment where professional assistance is needed, you may not have the time to research what is available. This is where a deployment binder with a list of contact information can be helpful. Knowing ahead of time where you can turn for support can alleviate stress by helping you promptly “Control the Controllables” and take action.

4. Transition.

- Now that we have discussed the support and resources available to you, let’s move on to Part 4: Draft a Resilience Plan.



Record your own notes here:

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Part 4: Draft a Resilience Plan



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Recommended time is 15 minutes



Introduce Part 4: Draft a Resilience Plan.

1. Review what will be covered in Part 4.

- Implementing the lessons, realizations, and practical strategies that you have gained from this training will help to decrease negative emotions like anxiety, stress, and anger, and increase the likelihood that you will experience more positive emotions like confidence, contentment, and hope.
- Good intentions, though, aren't enough. It is important to have a plan and commit to it. Now, in Part 4, we will Draft a Resilience Plan.
- We will reflect on what you personally found impactful from the training and review some suggestions of putting key aspects of this training into a resilience plan. This will just be a draft, a beginning, a starting point.
- We will discuss how setting and pursuing goals can be an effective strategy to support your resilience during the deployment cycle.
- Lastly, we will set a goal to help you execute your resilience plan.

[NOTE: This is a natural transition to the next slide.]



Record your own notes here:

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PE: Draft a Resilience Plan



Realistic Expectations	Resilience Strategies	Support & Resources
<p>Deployment is an opportunity for growth.</p> <p>Everyone experiences the deployment differently.</p> <p>Communication plan: Who, what, when, how</p>	<p>What: HTGS</p> <p>When: Dinner time</p> <p>How: Reflect on 2 things I'm grateful for and share them with another person at the table with me or through a text message.</p>	<p>On Mondays, I reach out to one person to check in with them.</p> <p>Military One Source: militaryonesource.mil 800-342-9647</p>



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Record your own notes here:

[NOTE: Provide participants with the handout "PE: Draft a Resilience Plan" (see Tab I) or encourage participants to record their ideas on a piece of paper, if available. Another option, although it may risk distraction, might be to use the Notes App on a Smart Phone.]



Provide practical suggestions for what to include in one's resilience plan and offer Circle of Support members an opportunity to begin to draft their own plan.

1. Provide practical suggestions for what to include in one's resilience plan by working through the first three parts of today's training.

- When drafting your resilience plan, you might consider using the sections of this training as your guide.
- For example, consider writing out the Realistic Expectations that you want to be sure to remember throughout the deployment cycle, such as "Deployment is an opportunity for growth" or "Everyone experiences the deployment differently."
- Take a moment and reflect on the realistic expectations and deployment realities that resonated most with you from today's training.

[NOTE: Allow a few moments for silent reflection. Again, encourage them to record their ideas on paper, if possible. Time permitting, encourage participants to share with the group, if desired.]

- You'll also want to be sure to include the communication plan that you established with your Soldier as part of your resilience plan.



- Perhaps you want to write out the strategies you plan to incorporate. You can use the framework that was used to present the strategies in the module such as “what” strategy, “when” you will use it, and “how” you will use it. For example, “I will HTGS (i.e. the ‘what’) each night at dinner time (i.e. the ‘when’) by sharing 2 good things from my day with whomever is at the table with me, or if dining alone, I will send a text to a friend or Family member (i.e. the ‘how’).”

[NOTE: Allow a few moments for silent reflection. Again, encourage them to record their ideas on paper, if possible. Time permitting, encourage participants to share with the group, if desired.]

- Consider making a list of friends or Family members that you can call upon for support. When life gets stressful, a common tendency for many people is to pull away from others and try to carry the burden themselves.
- So, in your resilience plan, you might also include an action you want to take to ensure you are maintaining strong connections with others such as “On Mondays, I reach out to one person to check in with them.”
- Take a moment to consider your plan for keeping or building connection with others and accepting support.

[NOTE: Allow a few moments for silent reflection. Again, encourage them to record their ideas on paper, if possible. Time permitting, encourage participants to share with the group, if desired.]

- Resources exist for you to use. Consider writing down the resources along with information to access the resource such as phone numbers or websites that you intend to utilize or may find useful to your circumstances if/when needed. This could be included in a deployment binder or a deployment folder on your computer.

2. Transition.

- Drafting a plan for how you will maintain your resilience is a sure-fire way to prepare yourself to meet and overcome the challenges of the deployment cycle.

Record your own notes here:





Pursue Goals



Pursuing personal goals helps you not only get through the deployment but also to grow through it

What are some goals you might find worth pursuing during the deployment?

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Explain that pursuing goals is an effective strategy to support your resilience during the deployment cycle.

1. Explain that pursuing goals is an effective strategy to support your resilience during the deployment cycle.

- Pursuing goals is an effective strategy to support your resilience during the deployment cycle. Therefore, you may choose to incorporate goal setting as part of your resilience plan.
- Many Circle of Support members find that pursuing personal goals helps them to not only get through the deployment but also to grow through the deployment.
- Example goals can range from improving physical health, making progress toward educational degrees or certifications, advancing in one's career, saving money, refining personal characteristics, maintaining a Family schedule, or developing other life skills.
- Consider the discussions we have had on growth and ways you or others have grown from previous experiences.
- **[ASK]** What are some goals you might find worth pursuing during the deployment that can help you grow?

[NOTE: Allow for brainstorming.]

[NOTE: This is a natural transition to the next slide.]

Record your own notes here:



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Strategy: Clear Goal Plan



WOOP Goal Setting Framework: What is it?

Wish: What is something you want to fulfill?

Outcome: What would be the best Outcome of fulfilling it?

- Imagine the best outcome.

Obstacle: What is your main inner Obstacle that holds you back from fulfilling your Wish?

Plan: What can you do to overcome your Obstacle?

- When ____ (obstacle/situation) ____, then I will ____ (action) ____.

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Introduce the WOOP framework and briefly explain each step.

[SLIDE BUILDS]

1. Introduce WOOP as an effective goal-setting framework.

- Setting personal goals and creating a plan to achieve them can benefit you by providing a positive focus; enhance your motivation; and promote a sense of accomplishment, pride, and satisfaction.
- There are numerous goal-setting frameworks to use; some are more effective than others.
- WOOP is a goal-setting framework that has been shown to increase goal commitment and goal attainment. The WOOP framework helps you to do what you need to do and accomplish what you want to accomplish.
- First, I'll explain each step of WOOP. Then, we will walk through an example. Lastly, you will be given a few moments to create your own WOOP goal specific to the deployment cycle.

2. Describe Wish.

[CLICK TO ADVANCE]

- Set the Wish. The Wish is something specific that you would like to fulfill within a specific time frame, such as the deployment. The Wish can be about your physical health, mental well-being, relationships, financial health, professional abilities, or something else. It might be from one of the areas you identified as an opportunity for growth.



Record your own notes here:

[NOTE: Reference: Oettingen, G. (2015). *Rethinking positive thinking: Inside the new science of motivation*. New York, NY: Penguin Random House.]

- It is important that the Wish is meaningful to you and is also challenging yet realistic to accomplish.

3. Describe Outcome.

[CLICK TO ADVANCE]

- Describe the Outcome. Here you consider and then visualize what the best outcome of achieving your Wish would be. The Outcome is something that you find fulfilling and motivating.
- Visualizing the Outcome is as important as identifying it.

4. Describe Obstacle.

[CLICK TO ADVANCE]

- Describe the Obstacle. Here you consider and then visualize the greatest *inner* controllable Obstacle that may keep you from accomplishing your Wish.
- Inner Obstacle means something that comes from inside of you, such as your Thought, interpretation, or perception of an outside barrier or the way you feel when that outside barrier arises.
- There may be several Obstacles, so choose the obstacle that is the most influential and within your control to overcome.

5. Describe Plan.

[CLICK TO ADVANCE]

- Finally, you establish a Plan for overcoming your Obstacle and obtaining your Wish. Your Plan is what you are going to do in that moment when that inner Obstacle arises.
- Your Plan can be something you are planning to think or say to yourself in that moment, or it can be a behavior that you will engage in when the Obstacle presents itself. We call this a “when/then” statement.
- Research has found that the when/then framework is the key to goal success because it leverages the power of cues. Additionally, when you visualize this process, you will be more likely to behave or think in the way that aligns with your goal or Wish.

6. Transition.

- Let’s take a look at an example.

Record your own notes here:





Clear Goal Plan: Example WOOP



Wish: During deployment, I wish to grow my interpersonal connections with others to increase the quantity and quality of my support system.

- Summarize: Grow interpersonal connections

Outcome: Strong connections with others can help support and sustain my resilience during the deployment cycle.

- Summarize: Stronger connections support my resilience

Obstacle: When feeling stressed or anxious, I tend to shut down and shut people out.

- Summarize: Feeling stressed and avoiding social interactions

Plan: When I notice myself wanting to avoid interacting with others, then I stay committed to my goal by engaging in one simple action that aligns with my goal/wish.

- What strategies can you capitalize on to assist you in your Plan and fulfilling your Wish?
- What resources might you consider utilizing?

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Provide an example of using the WOOP framework.

1. Introduce the example goal for the pre-deployment phase.

- Let's walk through a goal that a Circle of Support member might set for the deployment phase.
- You'll notice that each step is summarized into 3-6 words. This brings more clarity of focus in order to better promote action.

2. Walk through each step of WOOP and emphasize the sub-step of summarizing each step into 3-6 words.

- The Wish is to grow interpersonal connections during the deployment to increase the quantity and quality of support. To summarize, the Wish is to "Grow interpersonal connections."
- The best Outcome of fulfilling this Wish was determined to be: "Strong connections with others can help support and sustain my resilience during the deployment cycle." To summarize, "Stronger connections support my resilience."

Record your own notes here:



- This Circle of Support member identified that the greatest Obstacle to fulfilling their Wish is that they have a tendency to shut down and shut people out when they are feeling anxiety or stress. To summarize, the Obstacle is “Feeling stressed and avoiding social interactions.”
- The Plan identifies the Obstacle, “When I notice myself wanting to avoid interacting with others,” and then states an action to take when the Obstacle arises, such as “then I stay committed to my goal by taking one simple action that aligns with my goal.”
- A simple action might be sending a text message to a friend or Family member or making a phone call. Another example might be to invite someone to meet for coffee or lunch.

3. Explain that drawing on support and resources can support Circle of Support members in the Plan and therefore increase the chances of fulfilling the Wish.

- Drawing on strategies and the support and resources available to you can help increase the chances of you fulfilling your Wish.
- **[ASK]** What strategies can you capitalize on to assist you in your Plan and fulfilling your Wish?

[NOTE: Allow for responses.]

- **[ASK]** In what ways might you capitalize on support and resources to support your goal pursuits during deployment?

[NOTE: Allow for responses. Examples might include

- Source of encouragement;
- Accountability;
- Guidance on the goal topic;
- Guidance and support in setting effective goals or identifying effective actions (e.g., MLFC, Life Coach, R2 Performance Centers, Wellness Centers).]

4. Transition.

- Now it is your turn.

Record your own notes here:





PE: WOOP Goal Plan



W	Wish: What is your challenging, yet feasible, Wish? • Choose one specific to the Deployment Cycle
O	Outcome: What is the best Outcome?
O	Obstacle: What is your main inner Obstacle?
P	Plan: What is your when-then Plan?
	When... ... then...



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Practical Exercise: Walk Circle of Support members through setting their own goal(s) using the WOOP framework.

1. Set up the Practical Exercise.

- We will now walk through a Practical Exercise where you will get the chance to create a WOOP goal specific to the deployment cycle.
- For now, just focus on setting one WOOP goal. After walking through this exercise once, you will have gained the know-how to set additional WOOP goals later.
- Consider the draft resilience plan and the ideas you generated in that exercise. Perhaps you can use one of those ideas to now create a plan of action.

[NOTE: Throughout the exercise, allow about 1 minute for reflecting on and identifying their response for each step. Check in to be sure the majority have completed each step before moving on to next one. If time allows, ask for a couple of examples throughout the Practical Exercise.]

2. Identify the Wish.

- Take a minute to identify your Wish: What is your challenging, yet feasible, Wish? What would you like to accomplish? Consider one of the areas you identified earlier as an opportunity for growth.
- Then, summarize the Wish into 3-6 words.

[NOTE: Ask for examples.]



Record your own notes here:

[NOTE: Provide participants with the handout "PE: WOOP Goal-Setting" (see Tab I) or encourage participants to record their ideas on a piece of paper, if available. Another option, although it may risk distraction, might be to use the Notes App on a Smart Phone.]

3. Identify the Outcome.

- Take about a minute to identify your Outcome: What is the best Outcome of fulfilling this Wish?
- Then, summarize the Outcome into 3-6 words.

[NOTE: If time allows, ask for examples.]

- Now, take about 30 seconds to visualize experiencing this Outcome. Make the visualization as vivid and real as possible.

4. Identify the Obstacle.

- Take about a minute to identify your greatest inner Obstacle.
- Now, summarize the Obstacle into 3-6 words.

[NOTE: If time allows, ask for examples.]

5. Identify the Plan.

- Take a minute to create your when/then Plan. Select a productive action to take when you experience your Obstacle.

[NOTE: Ask for examples.]

- Now, take about 30 seconds to visualize encountering the Obstacle and then enacting your Plan.
- You might have to try a couple different Plans before you find the Plan that works for you. The great thing about using the WOOP framework is that it only takes a few minutes.

6. Ask Circle of Support members how the goal plan can help them navigate the deployment challenges and set them and their Soldier up for success during reintegration.

- **[ASK]** How do you see this plan helping you to navigate the deployment challenges and set you up for success during reintegration?

[NOTE: Allow for discussion.]

- Share your plan with your Soldier to include the ways you believe it will strengthen your resilience and set you and your Soldier up for success during reintegration. Communicating this information up front can promote a shared experience and strengthen the relationship.

[NOTE: This is a natural transition to the next slide.]

Record your own notes here:





Training Summary



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Summarize the training by reviewing key sections.

1. Review the main points that were covered during each part of the training.

- We have come to the end of the training. Let's review what we've covered.
- Part 1: Set Realistic Expectations. We reviewed the realities of deployment and how your expectations and your Thoughts influence your deployment experience. It is realistic to grow personally and relationally from this deployment if you put forth the effort.
- Also, we discussed setting realistic expectations with your Soldier, particularly about communication during the deployment. Talk over a communication plan with your Soldier in advance and revisit as needed.
- Part 2: Resilience Strategies. This section focused on strengthening personal resilience by connecting to a sense of purpose and utilizing strategies to face and cope with stressors, adapt to change, and grow through adversity.
- Part 3: Support and Resources. We discussed the value of cultivating support; seeking and accepting help to meet your tangible, informational, and emotional needs; and developing strong connections with others to help sustain your resilience during the deployment. We also reviewed professional resources that can help support you and your Soldier during the deployment cycle.



Record your own notes here:

- Part 4: Draft a Resilience Plan. This culminating exercise encouraged you to reflect on the insights and practical strategies you found most impactful today. You began a working draft of a resilience plan so that your good intentions translate into action. Lastly, you created a goal plan to make progress toward a meaningful, realistic goal so that growth from deployment becomes a reality.

2. Time permitting, allow the group to ask questions or share comments about today's training.

- **[ASK]** Does anyone have any questions or comments about today's training?

[NOTE: Field questions as a group allowing fellow participants to offer support or answers when appropriate. Ensure you have time set aside to be available after the training has ended in case time is limited.]

3. Transition.

- As mentioned at the beginning of this module, there are other deployment-specific resilience training modules that can support you throughout the deployment cycle. Let's review what those are and how to gain access to them.

Record your own notes here:





Additional DCRT Modules Available



During Deployment Resilience Training (Online)

URL: <https://www.armyresilience.army.mil/ard/R2/circle-of-support-homepage.html>

Problem Solving	Practical Issues	Communication Skills	Assertive Communication	Conflict Resolution
Social Media	Emotional Adjustment to Deployment	Recognizing Resilience	Managing Excess Stress	Taking Care of You
Family Roles	Enhancing Your Commitment	Parenting	Preparing for Post-deployment	

Post-Deployment Resilience Training for Circle of Support (Reintegration)

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Inform Circle of Support members of the deployment-specific resilience training available to them during the deployment and at the onset of the reintegration.

1. Inform Circle of Support members of the resilience training available during the deployment phase.

- As previously mentioned, you have access to online modules to support your resilience during the deployment.
- During Deployment Resilience Training includes 14 interactive modules that target specific challenges that Circle of Support members may experience during the deployment phase.
- The online training modules allow you the flexibility to work through the modules at your own pace and schedule. The modules were created to support you during the deployment, but can offer support during any phase of the deployment cycle, including pre-deployment.
- Although the modules are written with the Circle of Support member in mind, Soldiers are welcome to access the training too. Perhaps you and your Soldier decide to use the training modules as a way to strengthen connection. You might find that working through the material together or discussing it on a routine basis can help you communicate about challenges in a productive manner.



Record your own notes here:

Record your own notes here:

2. Provide a preview of the 14 online module topics and explain what the modules entail (e.g., duration, accessibility).

- On the slide is a list of the modules available to you. Each module is approximately 20-30 minutes in duration. The module topics range from problem solving to emotional adjustment to taking care of yourself.
- These are stand-alone modules; they are not sequential. This means that you do not have to take the modules in any certain order. You can pick and choose the modules that are most relevant to you and your needs.
- The training is supplemented with a downloadable workbook to allow you to process and personalize the content. There are also activities for children within the workbook.
- Although the modules can be accessed via your smart phone or tablet, it is recommended that you use a computer to work through the modules as this will provide you the best quality.

3. Inform Circle of Support members of the Post-Deployment Resilience Training for Circle of Support (Reintegration) including where to seek information about it.

- Plus or minus one month of your Soldier returning home, you are encouraged to attend the Post-Deployment Resilience Training for Circle of Support (Reintegration).
- Like this current module, the post-deployment module also mirrors the training your Soldier will receive. Specifically, the post-deployment module focuses on ways to effectively navigate the reintegration process such as managing your expectations, utilizing strategies to promote resilience, and capitalizing on support and resources.
- For more information on this training, specifically details of the time and place, you can contact the rear detachment of your Soldier's unit or your unit FRG.

4. Transition.

- As we wrap up this lesson, I am going to give you the opportunity to provide feedback about this training.







Survey QR Code



https://wrair.gov1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_do4HaQcyfxyBwsC

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Provide information to complete the post-training survey.

1. Provide information to complete the post-training survey.

- The Army Resilience Directorate (ARD) has requested that you take a brief survey to continue improving this training for future use.
- Soldiers and members of their Circle of Support provided feedback in 2018-2019 to the previous version of this training. That feedback was instrumental to ARD in revising and updating the training you just received.
- You have the opportunity now to offer your feedback which will then be used to make a difference for the next group of Soldiers and their Circles of Support.
- On the survey, you will be able to rate the usefulness, relevance, and effectiveness of specific topics as well as let them know specific sustains and improves for the next version.
- While completing the survey is optional, I ask that you remain here so we can conclude the training together as a group.
- Please use the QR code on your phone to access the survey.
- There is an information sheet that lets you know about the evaluation and who to contact if you have questions.
- The survey takes approximately 10 minutes.



Record your own notes here:

2. Ask if participants have any questions; prompt those choosing to complete the survey to begin.

- **[ASK]** Does anyone have any questions?

[NOTE: Allow for and address questions.]

- If you so choose, please complete the survey now.
When everyone is done, we will conclude the training.

[NOTE: Provide the participants time to take the survey.
When everyone who wants to complete the survey is finished, pull the class together for the conclusion.]

- Let me leave you with some parting thoughts.

Record your own notes here:





Coming together is the beginning,



**Keeping together is progress,
Working together is success.**

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Leave Circle of Support members feeling empowered and in control.

1.

Reinforce that the Circle of Support members are now even more equipped to face the demands and conquer the challenges of the deployment cycle, but it's up to each individual to continue to build and maintain their resilience.

- You came into this training with resilience. You were aware of and perhaps already using strategies that enabled you to manage stress and cope with adversity in order to maintain connection with your Soldier and others and focus on your life's priorities.
- However, through this training, your resilience tools have been further sharpened. You now have better awareness of not only some strategies that can help to strengthen and maintain resilience, but also more knowledge about when and how to apply those strategies as well.
- You are now even more equipped to face the demands and conquer the challenges of the deployment cycle, specifically pre-deployment and the deployment itself.
- The more effort you put into strengthening and maintaining your resilience during pre-deployment and deployment, the better off you will be when it comes time for redeployment and reintegration.
- I encourage you to continue the working draft of your resilience plan and commit to follow through with it. Implementing the key take-aways from today's training will benefit you down the road.



Record your own notes here:

2. Review the quote on the slide. Encourage Circle of Support members to think beyond themselves and to appreciate how these strategies can be used to help others.

[NOTE: Read the quote or have a participant read it aloud.]

- Coming together is a beginning, keeping together is progress, and working together is success.
- It is up to you to put the strategies into practice and become proficient in them...not just for your own benefit, but also for your Soldier, your Family, and other members of the Circle of Support.
- Furthermore, you are now equipped with strategies to use when helping others to work through challenges and adversity.
- Also, you and your Soldier have been given a common language. Common language can lead to greater connection, which will enhance cohesion. It will allow you to work better together as a unified team.
- Working together throughout the deployment will result in greater relational and personal success.

3. Emphasize collective resilience.

- Your Soldier is counting on you. *Your* resilience impacts your Soldier's resilience just as much as their resilience impacts yours.
- But, you do not have to shoulder the weight of the deployment on your own. You are a part of the Army's team.
- Embrace the benefits of collective resilience.
- Lean on, and capitalize on, the support from others. Reach out for support from friends and Family, from those in this room, and from professional resources. Be proactive, not reactive.

4. Thank the Circle of Support members for their participation today and for their sacrifices.

- Thank you for your participation today. And, thank you for the sacrifices you make so that your Soldier can serve our country and defend our freedoms.

Record your own notes here:

