



RHUMB LINES

Straight Lines to Navigate By



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Operational Stress Control – Five Core Leadership Functions

"Our Navy is committed to a culture that fosters individual, family and command resilience and well-being. Stress is a fact of life for both Sailors and their families, especially amidst a period of high operational tempo and a dynamic work environment. Navy leaders have a responsibility to help Sailors cope with these issues. By teaching Sailors to navigate stress, we will make our force more resilient."

– Adm. Jonathan W. Greenert, Vice Chief of Naval Operations

With increasing professional, personal and educational demands being placed upon the fleet, the Navy's Operational Stress Control (OSC) program was developed to provide leaders and Sailors with tools to help mitigate the negative effects of stress. Five core OSC leadership functions have been identified that will reinforce a leader's commitment to their Sailors, families and overall command health.

Strengthen – Activities to enhance and build resilience in individuals, units, and families fall into three categories:

- **Training** – conduct realistic training that develops physical and mental strength and endurance.
- Social cohesion – builds mutual trust and support, and is an essential component of resilience.
- Leadership – effective leaders instill confidence and provide a model of ethical and moral behavior.

Mitigate – Mitigating stress is about **balance**.

- While there is the need to intentionally subject Sailors to stress in order to train and prepare them, leaders must ensure adequate sleep, rest, recreation and spiritual renewal to allow for recovery from stress.

Identify – **Identify stress** reactions or injuries early, before they become entrenched.

- Leaders must know the individuals in their commands and recognize when their confidence has been shaken.
- Most importantly, leaders need to know which **stress zone** their Sailors are in on a day-to-day basis.
- Sailors and family members may not always recognize when they are stressed, and leaders may need to step in.

Treat – Ensure Sailors with a stress injury or illness **get the help** they need.

- The first line of defense is an observant Shipmate, who can help a fellow Sailor **navigate stress**.
- Sailors must be encouraged to seek out a leader, chaplain, counselor, or corpsman when feeling excess stress.
- When a Sailor reaches the ill or injured stress zones, definitive medical or psychological treatment is needed.

Reintegrate – Sailors receiving treatment for stress-related injuries or illnesses need to be welcomed back.

- Ensure the **stigma** associated with getting help is neutralized; casual derogatory comments left unchecked may prevent other Sailors from seeking help, when needed.
- Actions that restore the confidence of the stress-injured Sailor, their peers, as well as command leaders, are necessary. Healing is a slow process.

Key Messages

- Everyone experiences stress that can help achieve goals, but too much, over a long period of time, can have negative, lasting effects.
- Leaders must know their Sailors in order to recognize when their confidence has been shaken or the unit has lost cohesion.
- Go to <http://navstress.navy.dodlive.mil> for information on handling stress and building resilience.

Facts & Figures

- In a **recent poll**, Sailors claimed their leading stressors were: 1. Lack of personnel to accomplish workload, 2. Being away from family, 3. Lack of time for home responsibilities. 80 percent of those polled indicated that exercise was their primary method of stress reduction.
- More than 142,000 Sailors, family members, and health care providers have received OSC training.
- 54 returning warrior workshops have been held to date, with 3725 military attendees and 2903 guests/family members.