Helping Distressed Guardsman

In Operation Iraqi Freedom, any guardsman can run into rough times. If you see a fellow guardsman who is upset, fuming or brooding alone, you can help them through a painful and sometimes risky time. Emotionally distracted soldiers can endanger the mission, the unit, and themselves. Often just talking to a friend (or leader) who listens, tries to understand, and praises their strengths, is all that people need to find their own answers. The following is suggested to help buddies:

1. Be a good friend. For example, say, "Something seems to be bothering you. How can I help? I can listen without being upset."

2. Listen attentively and encourage him or her to continue telling you what's wrong. Stay calm and objective. Don't criticize or argue with the person's thoughts or feelings, but listen and allow silent time for them to find words.

3. Acknowledge the person's grievances against others, but don't amplify them by agreeing with them too strongly.

4. Ask questions to help you understand the problem and the feelings. If your talking stalls, try to summarize what has been said and ask if you have it right.

5. Delay offering different perspectives or practical advice until you believe they know you really know the situation, and understand why they are upset.

6. Plant the seeds of new ideas. Don't drive them in with a hammer.

7. Praise them for the work they have been doing under such difficult circumstances, and for talking with you.

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Air Force OneSource	1-800-707-5784	www.airforceonesource.com **login**: airforce **password**: ready	
Army OneSource	1-800-464-8107	www.armyonesource.com **login:** army **password**: onesource	
Military OneSource	1-800-342-9647 800-3429-6477 484-530-5908	www.militaryoneonesource.com **login:** military **password**: onesource	
TRIWEST (our Regional call center for services)	1-888-874-9378	triwest.com	TRICARE Claims P.O. Box 77028 Madison, WI 93707
Defense Enrollment Eligibility Recording System (DEERS)	1-800-538-9552	http://tricare.osd.mil/deers	DEERS Support 400 Gigling Road Seaside,CA 93955
California Vet Centers	State locator toll free: 1-866-747-VETS		http://www.va.gov/rcs
Department of Veterans Affairs	VA Benefits: 1-800-827-1000 Health Benefits 1-877-222-8387	http://www.va.gov/	Los Angeles, San Diego, Oakland Region addresses: 1-800-827-1000
Army Pay-Contact unit first	1-877-276-4729	**web**: http://www.dfas.mil/money/milpay/ **email**: arng-milpay@arng-fsc.ngb.army.mil	

Control Your Stress-A Few Tips

Mental and Physical fitness will help you better endure the stress of combat and military operations:

Control Your Stress

- Try to look calm and in control
- Focus on the mission
- Follow SOPs
- Breathe deeply and relax
- Know COSR are normal
- Keep open communication with your team
- Gather Facts
- Avoid rumors
- Avoid alcohol
- Drink plenty of fluids
- Eat well-balanced meals
- Maintain personal hygiene
- Practice quick relaxation techniques
- Sleep at least 4 hours in each 24-hour period, 6-8 if able
- Debrief after unusually stressful events
- Share grief with a friend, a leader, or a chaplain
- Keep active
- Welcome new team members
- Stay physically fit
- Know and practice self aid/buddy-aid
- Support each other
- Set the example of an ethical, moral guardsman

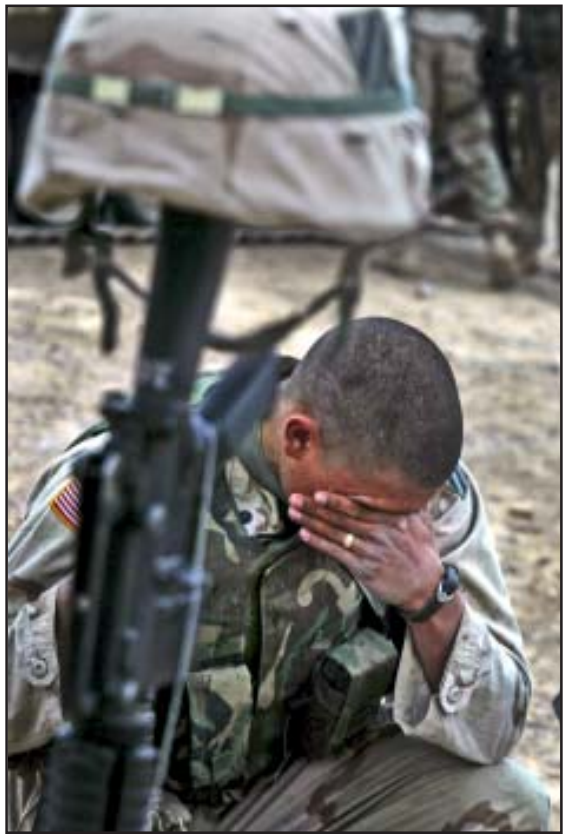
Adaptive (Positive) Combat Behaviors

- Unit cohesion
- Loyalty to buddies and leaders
- Identification with unit tradition
- Sense of eliteness
- Sense of mission and purpose
- Alertness, vigilance
- Strength, endurance
- Tolerance to hardship
- Ignoring pain, injury
- Increased faith, confidence
- Courage, heroic acts

All materials adapted from Technical Guides/Tip Cards, U.S. Army Center For Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine: http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil

Managing Combat Stress

A Guide for the California National Guard



Resource Services Division
California National Guard
http://www.calguard.ca.gov/csc/
Current as of 15 June 05

Combat Stress Control Basics

Combat is more stressful than any training can be. The goal of the enemy is to stress and confuse you. Security and support operations can involve heavy stress, even if there is no combat or home front stressor. Mental and physical fitness will help you endure the stress of combat and military operations. Know the signs of combat and operational stress reactions (COSR), what to do for self and others, and when to seek help.

Common Physical Signs:

Tension:	Aches, pains
Jumpiness:	Easily startled; fidgety, trembling
Cold Sweats:	Dry mouth, pale skin, eyes hard to focus
Heart:	Pounding; may feel dizzy or light-headed
Breathing:	Rapid, out-of-breath; fingers and toes start to tingle, cramp and go numb
Stomach:	Upset; may vomit
Bowels:	Diarrhea or constipation
Bladder:	Frequent urination, urgency
Energy:	Tired, drained, takes an effort to move

Common Mental and Emotional Signs

Anxiety:	Keyed up, worrying, expecting the worst
Irritability:	Complaining; easily bothered
Attention:	Poor; unable to focus or remember details
Thinking:	Unclear; trouble communicating
Sleep:	Troubled; awakened by dreams
Grief:	Crying for dead or wounded
Guilt:	Self-blame for errors or what had to be done
Anger:	Feeling let down by leaders or others in unit
Confidence:	Low; loss of faith in self and unit

Many soldiers have these signs, yet still fight well and do all of their essential duties. The signs are normal responses to combat danger, uncertainty and the environment. They become warning signs if prolonged, excessive, or are a sudden change from the individual's usual style.

Combat Stress Warning Signs Requiring Quick Assistance

- Startles at any sound, movement
- Extreme restlessness
- Trembling or cowering
- Loss of feeling in limbs
- Memory loss
- Spaced-out appearance, actions
- Very rapid speech
- Uncontrolled outbursts
- Reckless actions
- Poor hygiene
- Loss of muscle control (total or partial)
- Speech impaired or lost
- Inability to sleep or fear of sleep
- Hallucinations
- Extreme mood changes
- Withdrawal
- Depression
- Apathy
- Hysterics or frantic
- panicky behavior

Deployed Resources for Leaders

If problems are too big for you to solve through talking with your guardsman in distress, remember the Army and Air Force deploys additional help in OIF for people with such problems. Beyond yourself and other NCO and officer leaders, there are:

- Unit Ministry Teams in the maneuver battalion, brigade HQ, hospitals, and providing support in Corps areas and Kuwait
- The primary medical providers in battalion aid stations and medical companies should know where these helpers are and how to contact them as well as being helpers too.
- Mental Health Officers, NCOs and Specialists at the brigade, division and area support medical companies.
- Mental health officers and enlisted in Combat Stress Control Teams that cover those areas and can come forward to battalions and companies.
- Air Force Combat Ministry Teams are located at the wing, unit, and hospital levels, as are medical staff at Expeditionary Medical Support (EMEDS) hospitals in theater.

Buddy and Leader Actions

- Even serious combat operational stress reaction (COSR) can improve in minutes if handled correctly on the spot
- If their behavior endangers the mission-control the situation
- If the soldier is upset, talk calmly and try to enlist the soldier's cooperation; assign a simple task
- Make a quick check for physical injuries
- Reassure the soldier that recovery from COSR can occur quickly
- If the soldier is no longer reliable:
  - Unload the soldier's weapon
  - Physically restrain only if necessary for safety
- Get the soldier to a safer place
- Don't leave the soldier alone
- Warm, cool, and/or dry the soldier if needed.
- Assign the soldier to appropriate, realistic tasks, and, eventually, to a return to duty
- Get a medic's advice if signs could be from injury, drugs disease
- Get the soldier to talk about what happened
- Evacuate to aid station if the soldier does not improve, but reassure the soldier of recovery and return to duty
- If unable to evacuate, ensure the soldier's safety while continuing to give reassurance and support

Below are California National Guard resources

detach card here

California National Guard Help Card Current: 15 June 05
www.calguard.ca.gov 1-916-854-3000

Combat Stress Control Program	CombatStressControl@ca.ngb.army.mil		www.calguard.ca.gov/csc
Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) California	1-916-854-3106	Jerold.jurin@ca.ngb.army.mil	9800 Goethe Road Box37 Sacramento, CA 95827-3563
Operation Ready Families	1-(800) 449-9662 (916) 854-3252 DSN: 466-3252	http://www.calguard.ca.gov/readyfamilies	9800 Goethe Road P.O. Box 269101 Sacramento, CA 95826-9101
California National Guard -Chaplain	24 hour pager: 1-888-939-1754 (leave number) 916-854-3398	http://www.calguard.ca.gov/chaplain	9800 Goethe Road Sacramento, CA 95827
Air Force Pay-Contact unit first	1-800-346-3374	http://www.dfas.mil/money/milpay/ email: CCL-AIRFORCE@DFAS.MIL.	

For updates to this card email: CombatStressControl@ca.ngb.army.mil