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Handling Marital Conflict Constructively

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This material is based upon work supported by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the Office of Family Policy, Children and Youth, U.S. Department of Defense under Award Numbers 2010-48869-20685 and 2012-48755-20306.

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Military Families Learning Network**

Research and evidenced-based
professional development
through engaged online communities.
eXtension.org/militaryfamilies

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POLL

How would you best describe your current employer?

Military Families Learning Network Military Caregiving



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Available Resources



<https://learn.extension.org/events/1688>

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Evaluation & CE Credit Process

The Military Caregiving Concentration team will offer 1.00 CE credit hour from NASW.

To receive CE credit please complete the evaluation and post-test found at:
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Handling Marital Conflict Constructively: It Starts with Me, & Begins with "I"

October 29, 2014
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Handling Marital Conflict

Agenda

- Marital Conflict Defined
- Origins of Marital Conflict
- Desiring something better
 - Strategies for Healthy Communication
- Complicating Factors
- Summary

Marital Conflict Defined

- Marital conflict
 - develops over time when events are poorly handled so as to deeply damage the marriage relationship. The conflict festers to the point that pride, hurt, and bitterness prevent effective communication.
 - natural part of marriage relationships that can actually grow us personally both in maturity and in connectedness.

Hot buttons

- **Time:** togetherness vs. separateness
- **Family:** in-laws
- **Roles:** marital, household, work, social
- **Sex:** needs vs. wants

All these hot button issues produce **STRESS**

Origins (cont.)

- How Stress affects the...
 - body: digestive problems, heart disease, and weight gain
 - mind: anxiety, depression, sleep problems, memory and concentration
- Begins with Me
 - Self-control – maintain calm
 - Keeping your cool
 - "cooler heads really do prevail"

Desiring something better

"Both men and women crave "connection" and desire emotional "closeness."

- Where to begin?
 - Start using effective, healthy communication

Strategies of Healthy Communication

- **Assertiveness**
 - "I" Statements—what you want and how it will make you feel
- **Active Listening**
 - Repeat or restate in your own words what you believe heard.

Strategies ... (cont.)

- **Starts with "I"**
 - Closeness = Intimacy

"When we do loving responsible things, people draw close to us."
(Cloud & Townsend, 1999)

Strategies ... (cont.)

- **Authentic Self-Representation Formula**
 - Calming Down
 - Growing Up
 - Getting Closer

(Runkel, 2011)

Strategies (cont.)

- **Seeking and Granting Forgiveness**
 - Offenses, no matter how minor, cause conflict and hurt
 - When left unresolved, further damages the relationship with disconnectedness
 - Take time to seek and grant forgiveness
 - Promotes healing and restoration laying the foundation for reconciliation to take place

(PREPARE/ENRICH, 2004)

Strategies (cont.)

- **Six Steps for Seeking Forgiveness**
 - Admit what you did was wrong or hurtful
 - Try to understand/empathize with the pain you have caused
 - Take responsibility for your actions
 - Assure your partner you will not do it again
 - Apologize and ask forgiveness
 - Forgive yourself

(PREPARE/ENRICH, 2004)

Strategies (cont.)

- Six Steps for Granting Forgiveness
 - Acknowledge your pain and anger
 - Be specific about your future expectations
 - Give up your right to "get even"
 - Let go of blame, resentment, and negativity towards your partner
 - Communicate your act of forgiveness
 - Work towards reconciliation (when safe)

(PREPARE/ENRICH, 2004)

Complicating factors

- Military couples post-deployment
 - Posttraumatic Stress Disorder
 - Avoidance, hyper-arousal, isolation
 - Secondary Trauma Stress – Brian E. Bride's Caregiver Compassion Fatigue webinar dated Aug 20, 2014
 - Intimate Partner Violence (Gerlock, Grimesey, Sayre)
 - Significant life events / changes – Stressors
 - Loss/illness, job change, relocation, new child...

Summary

Questions???

Bibliography


- Cloud, H. & Townsend, J. (1999). Boundaries in Marriage, 38-39.
- Runkel, H. E. (2011). Screamfree Marriage, 59-67.
- PREPARE/ENRICH: Couple's Workbook (2004) Life Innovations, Inc., 13.
- Gerlock, A. A.; Grimesey, J.; & Sayre, G. (2014). Military-Related Posttraumatic Stress Disorder and Intimate Relationship Behaviors: A Developing Dyadic Relationship Model. *Journal of Marital & Family Therapy, 40, No. 3*, 344-356.


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Military Caregiving Upcoming Event...


Overview of Suicide Risk Assessment & Prevention

Date: November 12, 2014
 Time: 11:00 a.m. Eastern
 Location: <https://learn.extension.org/events/1712>

For more information on MFLN–Military Caregiving go to:
<http://www.extension.org/pages/60576>







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<http://www.extension.org/62581>

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