



Operational Stress Control

Frequently Asked Questions

Q1. How is the Operational Stress Control (OSC) program different from other stress-related programs?

OSC is the core of all Navy resilience-building efforts because it promotes an understanding of stress, awareness of support resources, and provides practical stress navigation tools. The OSC program encourages Sailors, families, and command leaders to take care of themselves psychologically, physically, and emotionally; to look out for one another; and take action when they see themselves or others reacting negatively to stress. It takes a holistic approach to focus on building resilience using practical tools to identify signs of stress and suggest appropriate actions so people can rebound when they encounter stress problems.

The OSC program provides training through two facilitated, small-group courses: Navy OSC Leader (NAVOSC-Lead) for commissioned officers and chief petty officers and Deckplate Leader OSC (DPL-OSC) for E4-E6 supervisors. OSC training teaches leader-focused actions and responsibilities to positively impact individual Sailor and command resilience and readiness.

Q2. Who is the OSC program for?

Everyone. Sailors, family members, and leadership must get to know one another well enough to recognize when they, their shipmates, families, and even commands are dealing with stress problems - and know who or where they can go to get help. A key concept of OSC is that if you know your people, you will recognize the signs of someone in need and intervene with resources before things get worse.

Q3. Why is it important now?

The strain of war, decreased unit manning, and extended deployments, coupled with the stresses brought on by household moves and the balance of family and job responsibilities can magnify the stress Sailors and their families are experiencing.

Q4. When will we know the OSC program is a success?

When Sailors, families, and leaders work together to help themselves and others to build resilience and use that strength to navigate through stressful times; when they seek help for stress issues before they become stress injuries; when seeking help is considered a sign of strength; and when shipmates who have received assistance for stress-related issues are fully integrated back into the command.

Q5. What is stress?

Stress is the way or process by which we respond to challenges to the body and mind. Stress is a normal part of life, but one we need to learn to navigate. Used to our advantage, stress can push us to higher levels of performance, but too much or extreme stress can have negative consequences.

Everyone experiences and reacts to stress differently. A first step in recognizing stress is having a common language. OSC uses a model that identifies stress reactions across a continuum, using “stress zones” to guide appropriate responses, addressing stress injuries early on, and providing leaders with the skills to promote resilience. The model uses four colors:

- Green – Ready – not stress-free but mission-ready
- Yellow – Reacting – when we have normal responses to stress, but may experience trouble sleeping or increased irritability
- Orange – Injured – when we need to admit that our stress may be more than we can handle alone and when we need to seek help
- Red – Ill – when medical attention is required

Q6. What can we do to navigate stress?

We prefer to use the term navigating rather than managing stress. We don't always have control over what life throws at us, but we can learn how to identify stress reactions and take measures to deal with them. Talking to shipmates, friends, family, and sometimes professional caregivers often helps.

- Let others know you are feeling pressured
- Think about what you've done in the past to help get through tough times
- Ask others what has worked for them

When talking isn't enough, remember that reaching out for help is a sign of strength and doing it early helps. Some resources that are available to help are:

- Your chaplain, chain of command or Ombudsman
- Fleet and Family Support Centers
- Military OneSource www.militaryonesource.mil
- Naval Center for Combat and Operational Stress Control www.nccosc.navy.mil
- Navy Operational Stress Control www.navynavstress.com