



## COMBAT AND OPERATIONAL STRESS CONTROL (COSC) STATEMENT

### HEADQUARTERS AND SERVICE BATTALION FLEET MARINE FORCE, ATLANTIC MARINE FORCES COMMAND, MARINE FORCES NORTHERN COMMAND

Stress isn't always harmful. Successfully overcoming stressful situations enable us to cope with mental, physical, and emotional challenges in the future. Understanding stress reactions and having the ability to identify and address harmful stressors promotes the long-term health of our Marines, Sailors, and civilians. Combat and Operational Stress Control (COSC) activities support this effort and are oriented around five core areas:

**Strengthen.** Develop and deliver ways to strengthen ourselves and others mentally, physically, spiritually, and socially against the negative effects of combat, operational, and family/life stressors. This includes training to develop technical proficiency and increase unit cohesion. This also means having candid discussions about life's challenges, actively listening, and offering genuine support.

**Mitigate.** Stress can negatively impact mission accomplishment and be a detriment to one's health. Stress requires mitigation like other risks. Many stressors can be avoided with good planning such as, identifying potential hazards, making sound risk mitigation decisions, and being an engaged leader. It is also critical to know yourself and your people, listen to your instincts, and ask penetrating questions. You can create an environment that mitigates unhealthy stress.

**Identify.** It is critical to promptly identify and address signs of stress in those around us. Know and use the Stress Continuum and Stress Decision Flowchart located within MCO 5351.1. You might save a life by simply saying, "How are you doing? No, really how are you doing?"

**Treat.** Treatment is about taking specific action, beginning with self-care and peer support. This might include self-education or self-referral. It might also mean helping others by sharing lessons learned, or referring someone to a chaplain, medical officer, or mental health professional. When a Marine, Sailor, or civilian is experiencing harmful stress don't be satisfied until they are visibly better or in the care of trained professionals.

**Reintegrate.** Regardless of an individual's level of treatment, we will see to their full reintegration once recovered. We successfully reintegrate amputees, other teammates who suffer serious physical injuries, and a stress injury is no different. Everyone on this team is valuable.

The strength of the Marine Corps comes from each individual working together to accomplish the mission. This means that we can only develop a more resilient, ready force if we take action and help each other with harmful stressors. Join me in this fight!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. M. Hermès'.

**G. M. HERMÈS**  
Colonel, U.S. Marine Corps