

# PROGRAM REPORT

## MILITARY MARRIAGE & RELATIONSHIP ENRICHMENT ARMED FORCES RESERVE CENTER, EL PASO, TEXAS

30 JANUARY 2016

PRESENTED BY:



BOB AND BARBARA ZIELINSKI, DIRECTORS/FACILITATORS

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## **PROGRAM SUMMARY**

### **Event Date/Venue**

- Program was held 30 January 2016 at the Armed Forces Reserve Center, El Paso.

### **Curriculum**

- Active Military Life and Resiliency Skills
- Modules were tailored to suit the target audience (See Appendix A)

### **Attendance**

- 58 persons registered for the program. This shows a substantial unmet need.
- 30 persons attended -- 3 engaged couples, 2 married attending alone, and 11 married couples.
- 16 children were in childcare.

### **Evaluations**

- The participants' evaluations indicate 100% positive impact; that is, every attendee benefitted significantly. Transcripts of the comments are attached to this report as Appendix C.

### **Marketing and Support**

- Much appreciation goes to Mary Goldsmith, TXNG Family Programs Contractor and Lilia Herrera-Estrada of HHS and the facility commander for providing the venue and outstanding logistic and outreach support.
- Childcare at Little Footsteps Day Care was provided free of charge to the participants.
- Chick-Fil-A, Zaragoza, El Paso, donated hot lunches for all participants, staff and children.

### **Follow Up**

- Each Participant received a certificate of completion and a special Challenge Coin as a reminder to challenge each other to use the resiliency skills and tools learned in the workshop to ensure healthy communication and conflict resolution.
- Engaged Couples received the Twogether in Texas Marriage Initiative Certificate for a discount on a Texas Marriage License.

Additional facilitator comments are included on the last page of this report.

Very Respectfully Submitted,  
**Bob and Barbara Zielinski, Marriage Management**

**Appendix A**

**PROGRAM MODULES  
SUMMARY**

**Active Military Life & Resiliency Skills for Couples  
(One day)**

**Welcome and Introductions/Establish safe environment**

**Module 1:** Resiliency and Stress; managing military service and marriage

**Module 2:** Communication Styles in Military Communities + Group Activity

**Module 4:** Timing Successful Communications

Group Practice: Active Talk Time + Partner Exercise: Communication  
Biorhythms

**Module 5:** Emotions and Your Body

Brain Physiology, Reaction Chemistry/Adrenalin

**Module 6:** Planning to Manage Emotional Upsets

Exercise: Mapping and Managing Triggers + Partner Exercise: Confiding a  
Trigger

**Module 8:** Destructive Behaviors; Behavior Ownership and Apology

**Module 16:** Conflict Resolution Skills: Shared Meaning and Resolution Tool

**Module 17:** SMART Exercise - Identifying Emotional Triggers or Concerns;  
Conflict Resolution Practice

**Module 24:** Ideas for Staying Close

**Wrap Up, and Evaluations + Certificate and Challenge Coin Presentation**

## Appendix B PARTICIPANT EVALUATIONS

### What challenges did you face prior to participating in this program?

- “Getting all the kids ready; communicating respectfully.”
- “Talking”
- “Communication” (3 responses)
- “2- way communication.”
- “Communication, co-parenting, intimacy.”
- “Communication with my spouse.”
- “Misunderstanding issues with the wife.”
- “Communication, respect.”
- “Communication was awkward.”
- “Communication, and recent infidelity.”
- “Some communication problems, problem connecting and trying to figure out how we can get better.”
- “Not communicating.”
- “I thought I would be facing challenge issue that has been a foothold in our marriage; feeling vulnerable.”
- “Didn’t have the tools to solve some of our relationship issues.”
- “Separation. Divorce.”
- “How to talk fairly.”
- “Trust me, we had some baggage- LOL”
- “Listening and feeling heard.”
- “Finding a way to discuss issues in our marriage as an introvert.”
- “Listening and learning that introverts need to be more outspoken.”
- “Stubborn on both sides.’

### How did this program help you overcome these challenges?

- “Had key cards to help us communicate without bashing.”
- “Making me talk.”
- “Have more confidence to speak up,”
- “We are more open and understand each other better.”
- “We were able to have an open conversation about how to correct the issues.”
- “To be open with my spouse and have active listening.”
- “It helped me get better understanding with wife.”
- “To listen to each other more.”
- “Understand my spouse.”

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- “Helped me find ways to communicate.”
- “I have a better knowledge of why I do things (my triggers) so I can better deal with them.”
- “Being in a controlled environment and clearly state what we want from each other.”
- “We have tools to use.”
- “Made me understand that we are on the same page. Know that we are not alone.”
- “It allowed me to appreciate listening to my partner.”
- “Give ways to communicate effectively & respectfully to one another.”
- “Gave us tools to open conversation to talk about our issues.”
- “More options to communicate.”
- “Finding other ways to communicate healthy to one another.”
- “By interacting fairly & communicating effectively.”
- “Helped us confront some challenges we have & how we can overcome them with practical applications.”
- “It gave me ways to express myself.”
- “To be open minded & strive to use them for better communication.”
- “Understanding more of feelings toward communication.”

**What I liked most about this class was:**

- “Conflict resolution.”
- “How real it was.”
- “Friendly environment.”
- “It helped us communicate more about some issues and it gives us tools to use daily.”
- “The energy – as an introvert, I found the class very easy to respond in.”
- “The skits and practical exercises.”
- “The interaction of the class.”
- “Friendly environment.”
- “The interaction between the couples.”
- “All the skills and tips we learned.”
- “Understanding my partner.”
- “We are not alone. Everyone is working to make their marriage better.”
- “The activities and it was fun. People were friendly. It was very informative. Information I can take with me for years to come.”
- “The personal interaction between instructors and attendees.”
- “Having a difference of couples. Diversity in marriages. Ways to communicate.”
- “Friendly atmosphere.”
- “Interaction, Chick Fil A. Talking with instructor one on one [single attendee, during couple time.]
- “Educate, red flags for abuse. I was able to attend alone & didn’t feel out of place.”
- “Group interaction – everything.”

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- “The information and the group setting and support.”
- “The discussion with other couples.”
- “Exercise, group interactions, role play.”
- “Interaction”
- “The personal interaction between the instructors and attendees”
- “Friendly atmosphere.”

**Where would your relationship be if this program did not exist?**

- “Still working on our relationship regardless but very helpful.”
- “In the rough.”
- “Waiting for help.”
- “At a stalemate.”
- “Probably non-existent.”
- “I really don’t know.”
- “Stagnate”
- “It would not proceed in a timely matter.”
- “Facing the same issues with failed attempted solutions.”
- “I don’t think we would have a relationship if it weren’t for this program.”
- “Close to unbearable.”
- “Still in conflict.”
- “Still trying to find a program like this. It exceeded my expectations.”
- “My relationship would have eventually fallen apart.”
- “It would be good or great; however, we wouldn’t be communicating as we should be.”
- “Don’t know.”
- “We would be looking for options to keep the relationship strong.”
- “Lag in some areas I should be nurturing.”
- “Existing – but not as healthy & nurturing.”
- “I suppose we would be fine but not better off.”
- “My relationship would be further challenged by the communication barriers.”
- “Still try to work it out without success or tripping on my methods.”
- “On the edge of staying for the kids’ sake.”

**How important is this program? Why?**

- “Very, every relationship has challenges.”
- “To always strive to better our marriage.”
- “Very important; it helps developing communication.”
- “Very important because it gives you tools to have a successful marriage.”
- “Very! It offers couples the option of working through issues without a counseling feel.”
- “Very, it helps spouses communicate clearly and effectively.”
- “Most of us need a third party to help us learn to hear each other.”
- “It helps to understand each other.”

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- “It helps couples **re-connect.**”
- “It is important to me because it is crucial to my relationship & to myself.”
- “The couple [facilitators’ names] are wonderful! I loved them!”
- “I love my partner and would do anything to keep us close.”
- “Very important it **gives hope.**”
- “It is very important because we all need some encouragement and know that there is hope and **we are not ALONE!**”
- “It is important because the course **teaches you to listen and understand where your partner is coming from.**”
- “Really great as I feel I learned how to be **respectful of my spouse’s opinions** and learning his listening style helped.”
- “I think there’s a lot of good material. Everyone should give it a try.”
- “This provides other opportunities for resources.”
- **“It’s a safe place; no opportunity for negativity.”**
- “Important for couples to foster a good, healthy relationship.”
- “Life skills that we can keep referring back to as challenges crop up.”
- “This is important because **military marriages have so many stresses and challenges so these type of programs help to reset and rebuild.**”
- “Very important because it showed that every marriage has its challenges and that it can be better with work.”
- “Learn about each other’s habits of communication.”
- “Very because it touches areas of communication & listening skills.”

**Other comments and suggestions:**

- “Great class. I received to others.”
- “I am so happy I found this class and I hope to be able to attend another class soon! **Please keep doing what you are doing because it is important and it can change lives.**”
- “This course exceeded my expectations.”
- “Thank you for your time and support! It really means a lot.”
- **“I wish more of my comrades would come to this class.** I think they would benefit from it.”
- “I had fun.”
- “Thanks you for your big hearts!”
- “Facilitators are very knowledgeable & **passionate** about the cause.”
- “Have folks complete & post name cards on desk for greater familiarity among participants.”  
(Note: We have done this in the past, however, we were aware of some participants suffered from severe PTSD and we elected to keep names confidential hence creating a safer environment for sharing.)
- **“More classes** or more word out.”



**Appendix C  
Impact Data  
Participants Class Rating Likert Scale Responses**

30 January, 2016 El Paso, TX

Regarding Today's Lesson:	1	2	3	4	5
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I found it Helpful	0	0	0	2	24
I understood it very well	0	0	0	1	25
I will use what I learned	0	0	0	2	24
I would recommend this class to others	0	0	0	0	26
The Instructors encouraged questions and comments	0	0	0	1	25
The instructors are knowledgeable about the material being presented	0	0	0	0	26
Overall, I liked today's lesson	0	0	0	0	26
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>176</b>
<b>Pct. Of Total</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>3.3%</b>	<b>96.7%</b>
	<b>Disagree 0.0%</b>		<b>Neutral 0.0%</b>	<b>Agree 100.0%</b>	

Of the 26 evaluations and 176 possible answers received on 30 January 2016:

- 100% of the responses were positive.
- 96.7% of the responses scored *the highest possible rating*.
- *Every participant indicated they would recommend the class to others.*
- There were **no negative responses in any category**; the class appealed to all military and veteran personnel *and* their spouses, as well as to all ranks and ages.
- All of the participants indicated they **understood the lessons, found them helpful and will use what they learned.**

## Appendix D

### Marketing Data

#### ***Where Participants heard about the class:***

ACS (Army Community Services) Financial Readiness Specialist  
El Paso Vet Center  
Email -3  
EMAIL from 410TH CA BN Unit Administrator  
Email from Captain's spouse  
Facebook  
Facebook friend -2  
First Sergeant  
Flyer at Storks Nest Center  
FRG flyer  
FRG newsletter  
Ft Bliss MWR (Moral, Welfare & Recreation)  
Google  
I got an email  
Military wife on Facebook page of Ft. bliss  
Nelida Lewis - 2  
New Mexico workforce connection  
Online  
Retired military- Marines and Army Combat Engineer; Work at MWR on Fort Bliss  
Saw it online  
SOS Representative  
UTEP MSSC flyer  
Vet center  
Wife

**The large number of information sources show that the team did an excellent job in getting the word out. We truly appreciate the cooperation of all our El Paso partners in promoting this event.**

## **Appendix E**

### ***Services and Ranks Represented:***

**Services/Rank Represented:** 16 Military, including 2 Veterans

**Air Force:** 2: E-5

**Army:** 8: E-7 (2), E-6 (3), E-5 (1), E-4 (2)

**Army National Guard:** 1: E-4

**Army Reserves:** 1: E-5

**Marines:** 1: E-5

**Navy:** 2: E-6, E-4

**Female Military:** 2

**Dual Military Couple:** 1

### **Deployments:**

5 people had 0 deployments	0
3 people had 1 deployment	3
1 person had 2 deployments	2
1 person had 3 deployments	3
2 people had 4 deployments	8
1 person had 5 deployments	5
1 person had 6 deployments	8
1 person had 7 deployments	7
1 person had 10 deployments	10

**TOTAL DEPLOYMENTS 46**

Average deployments per military participant: 3.06

## **Instructors' Comments:**

We sincerely thank our contributors for making this program possible. You touch so many lives with your thoughtfulness and generosity. Special thanks to all our partners, especially Mary Goldsmith and Lilia Herrera-Estrada, for their help securing a venue and making sure the event was sent through numerous networks in the area.

Chick-Fil-A restaurant on Zaragoza Road, El Paso, generously donated hot lunch for all the participants, staff and children. They included a coupon for a future visit as well. Program registrations were far above expectations and we were delighted when Chick-Fil-A stepped up at the last minute to meet the need.

The class was engaged from the beginning and remained enthusiastic throughout the day. Everyone participated in the lessons and the results were outstanding.

Due to the number of children expected in childcare, we hired two caregivers to be in compliance. Couples took their children to childcare before the marriage program began and pick them up as soon as the class was completed. Our thanks to Little Footsteps Childcare for providing this critical service.

The evaluations were very gratifying. Couples reported an overwhelming positive impact on their marriages and their lives. We were honored to be able to serve our Military Members, Veterans and their families. We hope to find the resources to come back to El Paso soon!

Very Respectfully Submitted,

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