

ON THE HOME FRONT

Mark Gorkin, "The Stress Doc," speaks to 1st Cavalry Division spouses on Oct. 30 at Fort Hood. Gorkin gave tips on how to maintain healthy stress levels.



U.S. Army/SPC. SHEENA WILLIAMS

'Stress Doc' gives advice to spouses

Deployment can put more stress on families

By Amanda Kim Stairrett
Fort Hood Herald

FORT HOOD — A study was done on World War II fighter pilots and their co-pilots to see who underwent the most stress during missions. Surprisingly, it was found that co-pilots had the most stress because they didn't have a chance to control what was happening, said Mark Gorkin, a motivational speaker and licensed clinical social worker.

That same rationale may hold true for military spouses because they must cope with the uncertainty of being their soldiers' co-pilots, he said. Deployments can be more stressful for families because soldiers often have more control or knowledge of a situation, Gorkin said.

Gorkin, also known as "The Stress Doc," donated his time and traveled to Fort Hood on Oct. 30 to speak to spouses of 1st Cavalry Division soldiers.

The first six weeks of a deployment can be the most stressful for spouses, said Laurie Dunlop, co-adviser of the 3rd Brigade's 3rd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment's Family Readiness Group.

She wanted to provide First Team spouses with a tool to help them deal with stress early in the deployment.

Gorkin, using his trademark humor, gave tips on how to practice safe stress, which included identifying and preventing burnout, using laughter, the importance of exercise and the do's and don'ts of stress management.

He also talked about the six 'F's for managing loss and change, something military spouses are well-versed in. Those 'F's are: let go of "familiar" past, confront unpredictable "future," acknowledge loss of "face," get support for rebuilding "focus," seek trusted, objec-

Tips to Reduce Stress

1. Exercise regularly
2. Discover the meditative and sensual mode: relax in a hot tub with candles and your favorite music.
3. Find a hobby
4. Learn to let go. When people are depressed or stressed, they are often clinging to a belief, a situation or a person who is ignoring or denying key aspects of reality.
5. Reflect upon the six 'F's for managing loss and change (listed below).
6. Express healthy anger
7. Declare your emancipation from procrastination: the critical step in overcoming endless delay, daliance and denial is letting yourself feel the anxiety, anger or shame that underlies avoidance or escapist behavior.
8. Seek out others with similar issues
9. Consider a support group or professional help
10. Seek the higher power of humor

tive "feedback" and have "faith" in a higher/team power.

Andrea Ochoa said that after attending the seminar she felt she had the ability to cope better with stress.

Still, she added, there are days when it is hard to deal with. It is important to Ochoa that she hold herself together for her family and three children, all below the age of 9.

"It's very important they don't see me like this," she said, laughing nervously as the tears welling up in her eyes.

Ochoa's husband, Sg Feliberto Ochoa Jr., a soldier in the 3rd Brigade's 215th Brigade Support Battalion, deployed Oct. 5.

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