

# Combat and Operational Stress First Aid (COSFA)

## Secondary Aid: Connect, Competence, & Confidence





# Enabling Objectives



- Define Connect, Competence, and Confidence
- List indicators of need
- Describe procedures
- Describe potential obstacles, and how to mobilize resources
- Apply Secondary Aid skills to vignettes



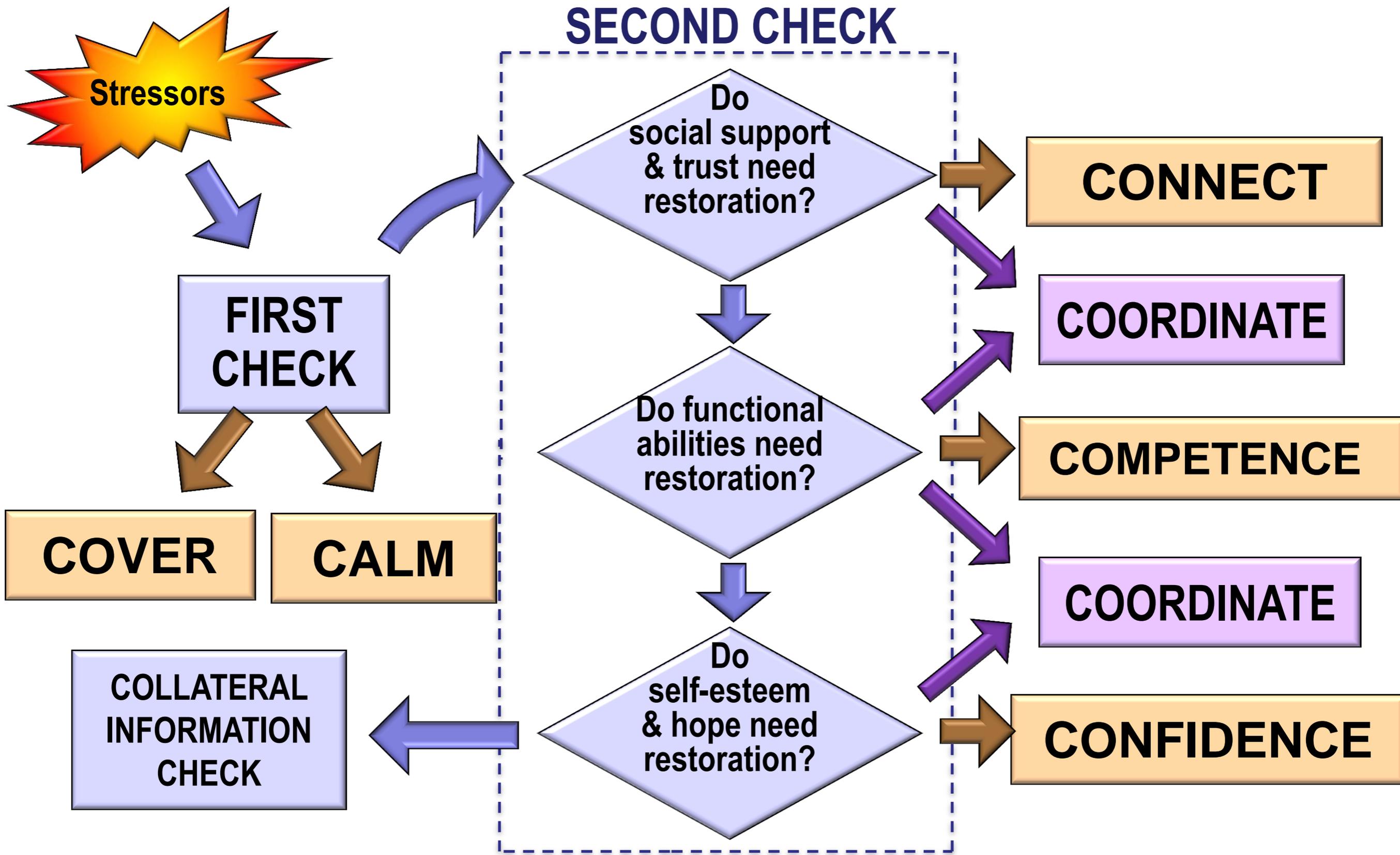
# Secondary Aid: Restore Functioning, Reduce Distress



Secondary Aid is used either after primary aid, or when primary aid isn't necessary



# Connect, Competence, and Confidence: The Focus of Second Check





# Connect





# Connect: Conceptual Map





# Indications That Unit Members Need Connect to Restore Cohesion



- No longer feeling like their normal selves, and feeling uncertain and awkward around each other
- Feeling ashamed of their own acute Orange Zone crises, and fearing others in the unit have lost trust in them
- Emotional numbing and detachment, and inability to interact with peers as in the past
- Fearing that talking with others in the unit will trigger painful memories and loss of control of emotions or behavior
- Feeling intensely angry all the time
- Blaming leaders or peers in the unit for the death of a peer
- Feeling blamed by others in the unit for the death of a peer
- Feeling exhausted and overwhelmed



# Connect: How Does It Work?



- Reduce isolation and alienation to promote:
- Common identity, experiences, and understanding
  - Shared responsibility and suffering
  - Reduced feelings of guilt, shame, or blame
  - Greater forgiveness
  - More hope



# Connect: Procedures

<b>Assess Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identify most trusted in and out of unit</li><li>• Identify positive mentors / leaders</li></ul>
<b>Assess Obstacles</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Perception of SM, leaders, CG</li><li>• What has changed</li></ul>
<b>Remove Obstacles</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Listen empathically / compassionately</li><li>• Show persistent, respectful curiosity</li><li>• Encourage / lead group social activities</li><li>• Encourage seeking connectedness</li><li>• Confront distortions, blame, shame</li><li>• Encourage active problem solving</li><li>• Foster After Action Reviews</li></ul>



# Connect: Potential Obstacles and Solutions



<b>Obstacles</b>	<b>Potential Solutions</b>
Busy / Distracted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Engage peers and leaders</li><li>•Connect to trusted others</li></ul>
Lack of Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Recruit peers and leaders</li></ul>
Loss	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Communalize grief</li><li>•Encourage other attachments</li></ul>
SM Ostracized	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Temporarily separate</li><li>•Engage leaders</li></ul>
CG Negative Feelings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Talk to someone you trust</li><li>•Refer to someone else</li></ul>



# Connect: Mobilizing Resources?



## Engage Chain of Command to:

- Lead After Action Reviews
- Show concern and caring consistently
- Reassure individuals with OZ stress
- Be a good mentor or role model
- Reduce conflict, blaming, and rumors
- Build teamwork
- Honor the fallen





# Connect Examples



Johnson: Chaplain

Group AAR Army: Grief



# Competence





# Competence: Conceptual Map





# Indications That Unit Members Need Competence to Restore Skills



- **Orange Zone stress can cause the loss of skills or abilities:**
  - Loss of ability to compartmentalize to remain calm and detached when needed
  - Loss of previous skills at modulation of physiological arousal
  - Loss of fine motor performance due to trembling, stiffness, or weakness
  - Loss of ability to make sense out of operational experiences
  - Loss of social aptitude due to loss of sense of humor, changes in fluency of speech, or decreased range of emotional responses
- **Orange Zone stress can create new challenges to coping:**
  - Needing to anticipate and manage reminders of trauma loss, or moral injury
  - Difficulty relaxing, slowing down, or getting to sleep
  - Difficulty maintaining an emotional even keel in the face of frustrations
  - Dread and desire to avoid re-exposure to situations reminiscent of trauma or loss
  - Stress-induced physical symptoms, such as low energy or changes in bowel functioning (e.g., diarrhea)



# Competence: How Does It Work?



Ensure that respite, sense of competence, and needed skills are obtained, which:

- Lays the foundation for recovery and healing, posttraumatic growth
- Reduces stigma of OZ / RZ stress by minimizing career impact
- Reduces potential social consequences of OZ / RZ stress



# Competence: Procedures

<b>Stop</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rest, take time to recover</li><li>• Identify challenges to functional capabilities</li><li>• Don't keep doing what isn't working</li></ul>
<b>Back Up</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Retrain and refresh skills</li><li>• Mentor / problem solve</li><li>• Learn new skills</li><li>• Enhance wellness</li></ul>
<b>Move Forward Again</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Practice new and refreshed skills</li><li>• Gradually increase responsibilities</li><li>• Set achievable goals</li><li>• Explore and trouble-shoot obstacles</li><li>• Reinforce successes and motivation</li></ul>



# Competence: Potential Obstacles and Solutions

<b>You cannot engage unit leaders</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Coordinate with others to provide leaders with behavioral observations</li><li>• Coordinate with other leaders</li></ul>
<b>OZ SM doesn't recognize a need</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Repeatedly but tactfully describe your observations to OZ SM</li><li>• Coordinate with others to do the same</li></ul>
<b>OZ SM lacks motivation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Appeal to OZ SM's loyalty to others</li><li>• Coordinate with influential others</li></ul>
<b>Resources are not available</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Engage leaders to supply resources</li></ul>
<b>Not sure of your competence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consult with others, seek mentoring</li><li>• Refer individual to other levels of care</li></ul>



# Competence: Mobilizing Resources



## Engage chain of command to consider:

- Whether there are ways to reduce exposure to the particular OZ stressors the SM is dealing with
- Ways to give SM meaningful activities that will make him/her feel competent
- When and how it is appropriate for SM to resume productive contributions to the unit
- Which remedial steps to offer if SM feels they didn't perform their duties to their best ability
- How to reduce SM sense of helplessness or passivity
- Ways to integrate SM back into unit





# Steps to Restore Competence



<b>Step</b>	<b>Intent</b>	<b>How to Do It</b>
<b>Stop</b>	<i>Rest, take time to recover</i> <i>Identify challenges to functional capabilities</i> <i>Don't keep doing what isn't working</i>	<i>With the concurrence of leaders and operational capability, take an operational pause for 24-72 hours</i> <i>Assess functional capabilities and limitations, if any, in occupational, social, and personal well-being spheres</i>
<b>Back up</b>	<i>Retrain and refresh old skills</i> <i>Learn new skills</i> <i>Explore new options</i>	<i>Refresher training</i> <i>Leadership mentoring</i> <i>Problem solving</i> <i>Training in new occupational, social, or personal wellness skills</i> <i>Enhance wellness through sleep, nutrition, exercise, meditation, prayer, etc.</i>
<b>Move forward again</b>	<i>Practice refreshed skills</i> <i>Practice and perfect new skills</i> <i>Find new directions and goals</i>	<i>Gradually increase responsibilities and duties</i> <i>Set achievable goals</i> <i>Explore and trouble-shoot obstacles as they arise</i> <i>Reinforce successes</i> <i>Reinforce motivation to overcome challenges</i>



# Confidence





# Confidence: Conceptual Map





# Indications That Unit Members Need Confidence to Restore Meaning & Hope



- Excessive or inappropriate self-blame (guilt or shame)
- Unrealistic self image due to generalizing negative perceptions and conceptions
- Feeling betrayed by those who were once trusted, including higher authorities
- Feeling betrayed by oneself
- Feeling unable to forgive others; seeking revenge
- Feeling unforgivable oneself
- Suicidal or homicidal thoughts



# Confidence: How Does It Work?



- Help restore confidence in self, leadership, mission, or core values and beliefs
- Help SM make sense of what has happened and mourn losses and limitations so that self-worth is restored
- Explore possible obstacles to confidence and problem solve solutions





# Confidence: Potential Obstacles and Solutions

Potential Obstacles to Confidence	Potential Solutions
The SM Is unable to grieve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Encourage communal sharing of grief</li><li>• Confront excessive blame</li><li>• Encourage SM to imagine how the deceased person would view them</li><li>• Encourage spiritual guidance / memorials / ceremonies</li></ul>
The SM has lost portions of himself or herself that are viewed as essential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Encourage supportive relationships with spiritual mentors and/or others who have sustained similar losses and found new hope</li><li>• Search for and confront excessive self-blame or blame of others</li><li>• Encourage the learning and mastery of new skills and abilities</li></ul>



# Processes to Restore Confidence



<b>Process</b>	<b>Intent</b>	<b>How to Do It</b>
<b>Assess needs</b>	<b>Assess self-image, meaning, level of trust in self and others, and hope for the future</b>	<b>Listen empathically Develop a trusting relationship Ask questions and offer tentative observations and understandings</b>
<b>Connect with resources</b>	<b>Restore depleted physical, psychological, and social resources Foster spiritual connections</b>	<b>Coordinate with all possible sources of needed resources both inside and outside the military Address financial problems, family problems, military occupational problems, health problems, etc. Identify obstacles and find solutions to overcome them</b>
<b>Encourage growth</b>	<b>Remove excessive guilt or shame Promote forgiveness of self and others Establish new meaning and purpose Set new directions and goals</b>	<b>Identify and confront distorted conceptions of self or others Encourage the individual to put themselves in others' shoes, to see themselves through others' eyes Appeal to trusted authority or spiritual figures Encourage making amends Seek reparations from others Encourage learning and education Encourage establishing new relationships and strengthening old ones</b>



# Confidence: Mobilizing Resources



- Consider involving other disciplines or mentors / peers who can implement Confidence either more effectively or in a complementary way to you
- Assist Leaders to:
  - Improve communication, mentoring, and information about mission, and acknowledgement of SMs' value
  - Make efforts to confront stigma about combat and operational stress at individual, group, and command levels
  - Foster and support doing things that will alleviate and mitigate harmful effects of stress at both the individual and command levels
  - Help to re-establish beliefs in shipmates who have stress injury



# Examples of Leadership to Connect and Restore Competence & Confidence



Band of Brothers Video, Compton

Last Castle Wall

Taking Chance

Carrier Video-CO speech



# Summary of Secondary Aid



## Connect

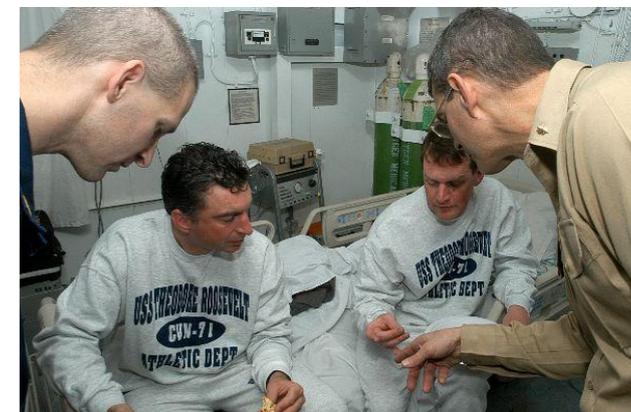
- Provide support
- Promote social interactions
- Facilitate rituals
- Problem solve obstacles

## Competence

- Mentor to full function
- Problem solve strategies
- Manage stress reactions

## Confidence

- Improve leader communication
- Mourn losses
- Support and encourage
- Help change perspective





# Closing Questions and Comments



## Seven Cs of Stress First Aid:

- 1. CHECK**  
Assess: observe and listen
- 2. COORDINATE**  
Get help, refer as needed
- 3. COVER**  
Get to safety ASAP
- 4. CALM**  
Relax, slow down, refocus
- 5. CONNECT**  
Get support from others
- 6. COMPETENCE**  
Restore effectiveness
- 7. CONFIDENCE**  
Restore self-esteem and hope

## Three Levels:

**1. Continuous Aid**

**2. Primary Aid**

**3. Secondary Aid**