

Speaker Notes

Title of Presentation: Coping Skills for the Recruiter Lifestyle

Page 1 – This presentation should be given in conversational style with an emphasis on getting the participants' input on the talking points. Be sure to ask if they have additional points they would like to discuss.

Page 2 – none.

Page 3 – none.

Page 4 – none.

Page 5 – none.

Page 6 – none.

Page 7 – none.

Page 8 – The recruiter lifestyle for the spouse can be lonely. The recruiter often has to work 6 days a week, and hours can be from 6:00 AM until 11:00 PM or later.

Page 9 – The job stress associated with being a recruiter may cause the recruiter to be tense, irritable and have a "short fuse." This can put additional pressure on the spouse who may want to discuss issues that have come up but not want to add further stress to the recruiter's life.

The recruiter may not want to go to certain public places where they have been recruiting. For example: There have been instances where people have been recruiting at a shopping center and been asked to leave by the store managers.

Page 10 – none.

Page 11 – none.

Page 12 - It's important to explain to children that their parent is serving their country and making a difference. It's also important for both the recruiter and the spouse to make sure the children know they are loved and that their parent misses them and wants to spend as much time with them as possible whenever they can.

Page 13 – Even though the recruiter parent may not be available as often as they would like, there are still opportunities to participate in events. If the recruiter parent can't be there on their child's birthday, they can establish a new tradition. For example: having a second birthday celebration on a day when the parent is there.

Page 14 – none.

Page 15 – **Remind yourself that this is temporary:** You can say to yourself, "I know this is temporary, and I will get through it." (More information on changing self-talk will be presented in the following slides.)

Seek support from others: Seek support from family, friends and coworkers.

Staying connected with others is one of the best ways to cope with stress.

Try to stay focused on the mission: Staying focused on your mission means you will meet your mission faster and be able to be home earlier. Don't be afraid to ask your family to help support you during this time.

Supporting your spouse and keeping communication channels open helps both of you. Just saying "I love and appreciate you," can do a lot to help your spouse feel supported and connected to you. It also helps you feel connected as well.

Let your children know you miss seeing them and that you will spend time with them whenever possible: When you are gone a lot, you may miss seeing them both in the morning and the evening. You may want to leave notes or cards for them to read that will let them know you are thinking about them. This will help

them feel more secure, and you will feel better knowing that you are doing everything you can to help them.

Page 16 – Keep a positive attitude: Don't waste time and energy focusing on the negative. This will only increase your stress level. Keep reminding yourself that this is temporary and that you and your spouse will survive. (Changing destructive thinking will be addressed in a future slide.)

Reach out to other spouses: If they are not in your community, reach out via email, texting or phone calls.

Focus on a new project, go back to school or take courses online: This will give you something positive to focus on, and you will feel good about accomplishing something during this difficult time.

When possible, take lunch or dinner to your spouse at their office: Even though your spouse may not be able to meet you for lunch, you may on occasion be able to take lunch to their office.

Communicate daily with your spouse even if it is only to ask, "How was your day?": Keeping the communication channels open will help keep you connected.

Be supportive of your spouse – this has benefits for everyone: When your spouse feels supported he or she is better able to focus on their work and may meet their quotas earlier and, therefore, be home earlier.

Page 17 – When possible, help your children connect with other military kids: this provides them with additional support and lets them know they are not alone.

If you can't be home often, leave your child notes or funny cards to let them know you're always thinking about them: Even if you aren't physically present often, you can still stay connected.

Provide your child with lots of structure and consistency at home: This helps children feel safe.

Give your child lots of love and affection: you can never give too much.

Page 18 – Our thoughts directly affect our response: It's how we look at situations and what we tell ourselves about the situation that determines the extent and duration of our reactions.

Learning to change our destructive thought patterns can reduce our stress levels:

(Give examples of destructive vs. healthy self-talk: instead of "How awful. This is the worst thing that could happen." - this is emotionally charged. Instead try – "I don't like what's happened, but I will get through this and move on." – this is much less emotionally charged.)

Ask if they can think of examples when they may have engaged in destructive self-talk and if they can think of healthier self-talk.

Page 19 – Challenge the "shoulds": Ask yourself, "Where is it written that "things should and must go a certain way?" or that they "shouldn't be the way they are?"

Avoid "all or nothing" thinking: "Everything always happens to me." "Nothing ever works out." This is self-defeating thinking that can keep you stuck.

Be compassionate with yourself: Treat yourself with the same compassion and kindness that you would a friend.

Focus on the present: We tend to worry about the future and get stuck in the past, but the only thing we have control over is the present moment.

Embrace optimism: Focus on what is positive in your life and be hopeful about the future – your current situation is only temporary.

Page 20 – Get organized: Get organized both at work and at home. This makes things seem more manageable.

Exercise when possible: This helps relieve stress by releasing endorphins and getting rid of stress chemicals in your body.

Eat healthy: Try to maintain a balanced diet.

***Practice relaxation:** This helps to counteract the stress response and allows you to maintain balance.

*Regarding the section on relaxation, you may want to explain how the relaxation response is the opposite of the stress response and that something as simple as taking a few deep breaths can activate the relaxation response.

Page 21 – Feeling connected with others has been shown to be one of the most effective stress reducers. People feel supported and not alone. They also have the opportunity to support others, and this can be a great way to get yourself focused on someone else rather than on yourself. It's also rewarding to feel you have made a difference for someone else.

Although you may not have close friends and family nearby, you can stay in touch through email, phone, texting, or skype.

Page 22 – none.

Page 23 – none.

Page 24 – none.

Page 25 – none.

Page 26 – none.

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