

COMMUNITY CORNER

'Celebrating Couples: It Takes Two' to be theme for February

By Col. Kevin Brown
GARRISON COMMANDER

In February, we celebrate our relationships with Valentine's Day. Building on that celebration, Army Community Service is celebrating couples the entire month.

"Celebrating Couples: It Takes Two," is ACS' theme for the month. In conjunction with the campaign, ACS staff will be providing fun classes and activities designed to help strengthen the core members of our Families.

I encourage all of our couples on post to take advantage of these opportunities. Even if your relationship is on

solid ground, it never hurts to get new tools to keep it that way.

If you're having issues, make the commitment to work on your relationship.

Our Army keeps our Soldiers moving, and our Families have the important job of supporting them at home.

Building a strong base for your relationship will help couples build resiliency and weather the ups and downs of marriage and the added challenges being married in the Army throws our way.



Col. Brown

Throughout the month, ACS will host "In it to win it" workshops including, "We Are Teammates," from 9 a.m. to noon and 1 to 4:30 p.m. Feb. 16 and 17 at Riley's Conference Center.

Four sessions will be offered during the workshop – Fidelity and Marriage; Finances and Marriage; Trauma and Marriage; and Blended Families.

Communication + Commitment = Happy Couples will be offered twice during the month from 1 to 4 p.m. Feb. 17 or 24 at ACS, 7264 Normandy Drive on Custer Hill. This workshop will help couples learn how to communicate effectively and choose

their words with care.

To add a little fun to the month, ACS will host "Guess What Your Mate Will Say" from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. during Brunch with My Little Valentine Feb. 20 at Riley's Conference Center.

This game show-type event, open to mates and dates, will test couples with questions about their favorites colors, what they would buy with a lottery win and other couple-centric questions.

For more information on any of the Celebrating Couples events, contact ACS at 785-239-2435 or e-mail rick.dmwacs@comus.army.mil.

For our single service members, the Warrior Zone

will show movies throughout the day and host contests from 6 to 8 p.m. Feb. 12.

Singles and couples are invited to the Sweetheart Dinner and Dance from 5 to 10 p.m. Feb. 12 at Riley's Conference Center. Tickets are available for \$40 for couples and \$22 for singles.

The night will include a five-course dinner, DJ entertainment and a cash bar. This event is open to the public. For more information, call 785-784-1000.

For those looking for some active entertainment for Valentine's Day, head to Custer Hill Lanes for Valentine's Bowling from 5 to 10 p.m. Feb. 14. Games and shoes will be \$1

each and the bowling center will offer a pasta dinner for \$8. All couples attending will receive a box of chocolates, rose and a card with a gift inside. Call the bowling center at 785-239-4366 for more information on this event.

Have some fun this month with your significant other. Take advantage of these events and classes to improve your relationship and build your resiliency to help make your relationship and our Army the strongest it can be.

To comment on this article or suggest a topic for the Community Corner, send an e-mail to rick.post.newspaper@comus.army.mil.

Couple's communication key, expert says

By Robert Clifton
NPSF

My wife and I like to call our verbal fights in marriage "intensive fellowship." Something about the idea we are arguing doesn't feel good, so if we can put a softer word on it, the intensity goes away a little.

Conflict and relationships seem inevitable. A book I had read a long time ago mentioned that true friendship does not occur until you have had a disagreement and been able to work through it.

Statistically, year after year, the top three things couples split up over include money, sex, and you guessed it, communication.

So if we have been communicating with each other since the day we were born, what is the big deal? Why all the disagreements, anger and resentment that comes from talking to each other.

A few years ago, a Ph.D. psychology professor by the name of John Gottman introduced what he called, "The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse."

The four horsemen represent the four ways communication with each other goes wrong.

In an office that looked like a apartment John Gottman measured communication style with 700 couples. He did this by creating an atmosphere that looked and felt similar to being in a home. He connected heart sensors and heart rate monitors on each couple so that

he could examine physiological symptoms of couples when they are in conflict.

In the midst of making a determination about what the likely hood of couples staying together he noticed four different ways that couples argue. The eventually gave these four marriage killers the name four horsemen.

Below is a list of the Four Horsemen and some examples of what it may sound like and look like in an intimate relationship.

CRITICISM

Attacking your partner's personality or character, usually with the intent of making someone right and someone wrong.

Generalization: "you always..." "you never..." "you're the type of person who..." "why are you so..."

CONTEMPT

Attacking your partner's sense of self with the intention to insult or psychologically abuse him/her.

Insults and name-calling: wimp, fat, ugly, stupid, slob, lazy...

Hostile humor, sarcasm or mockery
Body language and tone of voice: sneering, rolling your eyes, curling your upper lip

DEFENSIVENESS

Seeing self as victim, warding off a perceived attack:

Making excuses (external circumstances beyond your control forced you to act in a certain way) It's not my fault..." "I didn't..."

Cross complaining: meeting your partner's complaint, or criticism with a complaint of your own, ignoring what your partner said.

Disagreeing and then cross-complaining "That's not true, you're the one who..." "I did this because you did that..."

Yes-butting: start off agreeing but end up disagreeing

Repeating yourself without paying attention to what the other person is saying
Whining "It's not fair."

STONEWALLING

Withdrawing from the relationship as a way to avoid conflict. Partners may think they are trying to be "neutral" but stonewalling conveys disapproval, icy distance, separation, disconnection and/or smugness:
Stony silence
Changing the subject
Removing Yourself Physically

SILENT TREATMENT

Sounds like a mouth full! In our intimate relationships when one of these is used during conflict we have what is called an "unsuccessful repair attempt." When I ask a couple how they repair their relationships a typical response would be "oh, I don't know I guess we don't talk for a couple days

and then everything is better." Problem is it is not better! Typically couples can make that work the first year, maybe the first five years but eventually all of those unresolved conflict issues build up and we no longer see a way to fix what happened.

Let's take a look at some remedies to these four horsemen.

Learn to make specific complaints and request:

Instead of generalizing make known what the specific bother was and let the partner know how that impacted you. Might sound like "when you spent fifty dollars we did not have in our account this week I felt angry. I want you to not spend money that we do not have in the account."

Conscious communication: Speak the truth and listen generously

Validate your partner: Let your partner know that what you are saying makes sense and repeat things back to your partner to make sure you have a clear understanding. Jumping to conclusions creates more confusion.

Think about the four horsemen the next time you get in an argument. Which one do you see yourself use? What can you do to use one of the healthy techniques in order to keep your relationships whole?

Information used from Bob & Marlene Neufeld and Mary Ann Carmichael, 2005, www.marleneandbob.com.

Exchange policy offers refund, return relief

AAFES PUBLIC AFFAIRS

DALLAS – Recent industry statistics show more than \$200 billion worth of merchandise is returned to retailers annually.

Since returns are ultimately inevitable, the Army and Air Force Exchange Service wants to ensure military shoppers are aware of its hassle-free return policy.

"Depending on the product, the Exchange offers an industry-leading return policy to maintain maximum customer satisfaction," said Chief Master Sgt. Jeffrey Helm, the Exchange's senior enlisted advisor. "If, for some reason, the product doesn't measure up, we have the processes in place to make it right."

The process for merchandise returns at Exchanges is as follows:

Items in new condition may be exchanged or returned within 90 days except for the following:

- 30 days only: Jewelry and watches, camcorders, televisions, digital cameras, furniture, mattresses, major appliances and gas-powered equipment
- 15 days only: Computers and unopened software/peripherals, CDs, DVDs and video games

• Non-refundable: Gift cards, pre-paid music and wireless and phone cards.

If a shopper requests a refund with a sales receipt, a cash refund will be made if the original purchase was made in cash. If the original purchase was made by credit card, the refund will be credited to the customer's same credit card.

If a customer requests a refund without a sales receipt, the refund amount will be loaded on an Exchange merchandise card.

In addition to returns on items purchased at the Exchange, military shoppers dissatisfied with a catalog item can return it to their nearest Army and Air Force Exchange Service, Marine Corps and Navy or Coast Guard Exchange for a full refund, and, if applicable, the U.S. customs fee. If the return is due to an error on the Exchange's part, the shopper will be reimbursed the standard shipping charges in full.

"We take our commitment to serving those who serve very seriously," Helm said. "On the rare occasion when a product fails to meet a shopper's expectations, it's extremely important that they have a hassle-free experience when it comes to returning and exchanging merchandise."

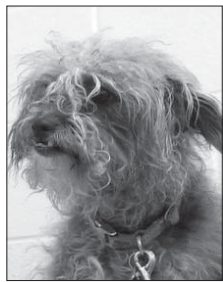
Home wanted

Noble

Noble is a 2-year-old male poodle mix. He is neutered, has had all of his vaccinations and has a microchip. Noble is housebroken and gets along with cats and other dogs.

If interested in adopting Noble, stop by the Fort Riley Veterinary Service facility:

Fort Riley Veterinary Service facility,
Building 226, Custer Ave., Main Post
785-239-6183



HOUSE FILL AD

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