



# Combat Stress Control





# History of Combat Stress



**Where there is  
combat...**

**There is stress.**



# What is Combat Stress ?

## 5 Stresses

- Extreme risk and fear
- The “fog” of war
- Discomfort and fatigue
- Casualties
- Boredom



Sketch by SGT John F. Fenwick, Jr., USMC, Korean War veteran.





# What is Combat Stress ?

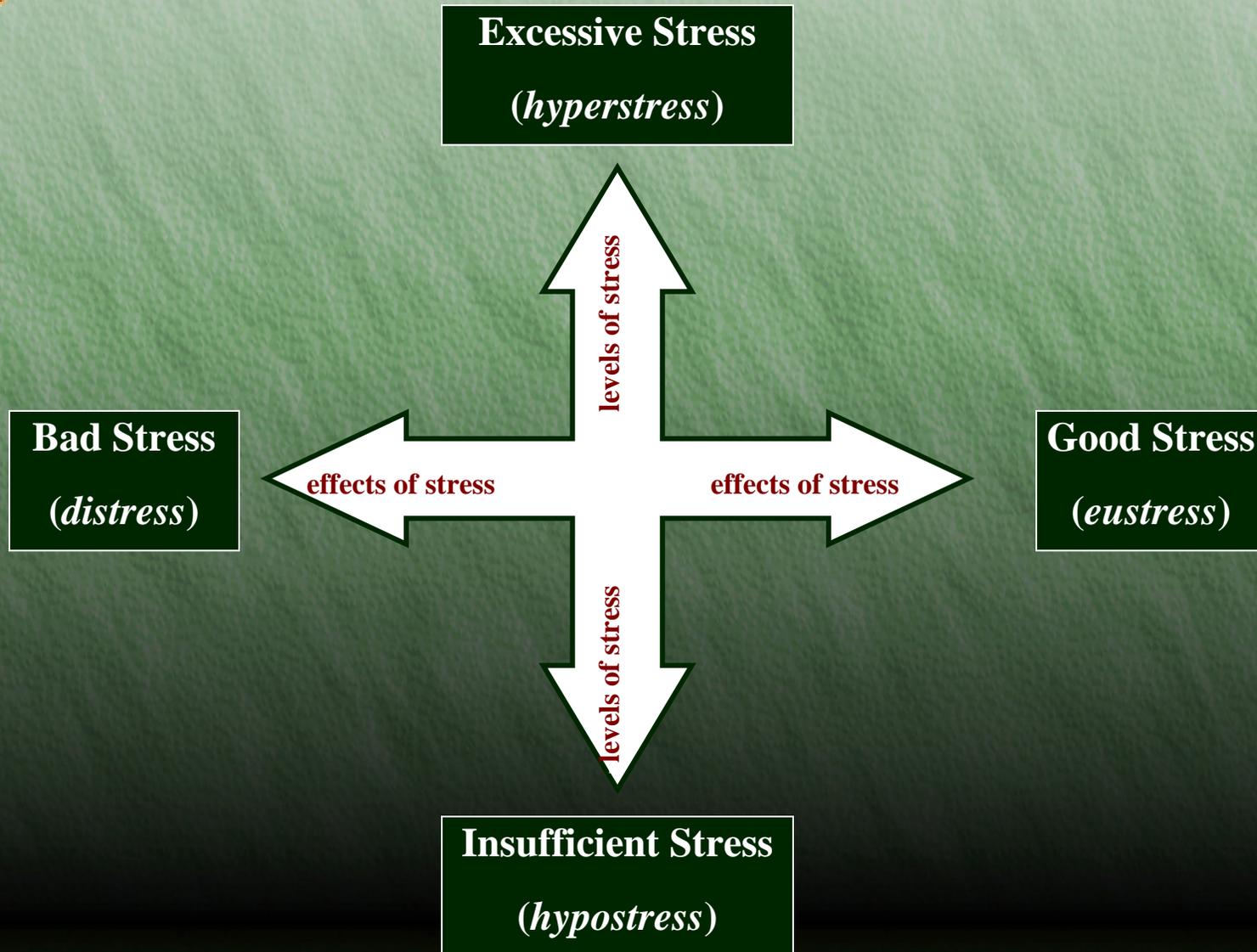
## 9 Elements



- Violent, unnerving sights and sounds
- Casualties
- Confusion and lack of information
- Feelings of isolation
- Communications breakdown
- Individual discomfort and physical fatigue
- Fear, stress and mental fatigue
- Continuous operations
- Homesickness



# Combat Stress Response





# Dysfunctional Stress Responses



- Muscles
- Sleep
- Stomach
- Cardiovascular
- Neurological
- Brain
- Behavior



# Preventing Dysfunctional Combat Stress Responses



- Effective Leadership
- Confidence and Morale
- Unit Cohesion
- Physical Conditioning & Realistic Training
- Family Care
- Stress Management Techniques





# Controlling the Combat Stress Response

## *BODY*

- Hydration & Nourishment
- Dry off, cool off or warm up
- Wash up, shave, change clothes

## *MIND*

- Think about succeeding
- Deep breaths, calm, in control
- Remember stress is normal





# Controlling the Combat Stress Response

## *UNIT*

- Talk, get facts, ignore rumors
- Welcome newcomers to the team
- Clean weapons, focus on mission

## *HONOR*

- No alcohol or drug use
- Obey Rules of Engagement





# Intervention

- Regardless of the best prevention and leadership efforts serious Dysfunctional Combat Stress Reactions may occur.
- When this happens, Marine leaders, Medical and Psychiatric personnel and Chaplains work to intervene with simple principles.





# Principles of Intervention

## ■ Proximity

- Manage the service member as close to their unit as possible. Utilize maximum unit cohesion to promote recovery.

## ■ Immediacy

- Treat as soon as possible. Prevent mishaps and misconduct.

## ■ Expectancy

- Give positive expectations for full recovery and return to duty. Normalize reactions.

## ■ Simplicity

- Use brief, simple methods to restore physical well-being, and self-confidence. “3 hots and a cot.”



# Conclusion



- Preserve Combat Power
- Stress is Normal
- Goal is Control
- Leadership  
Responsibility
- Brilliance in the Basics
- Use Support