

MISSION OPSEC VS. SECRETIVENESS

In Combat:

- You talk about the mission only with those who need to know; you can only talk about combat experiences and missions with unit members or those who have “been there, done that.”

At home:

- You may avoid sharing any of your deployment experiences with your family, spouse and friends.
- You may avoid telling your family, spouse or significant other where you are going or when you will get back (and get suspicious when they ask).

TRANSITIONING THE COMBAT SKILL:

- OPSEC involves providing information to those who need to know and trusting your fellow Soldiers. The “need to know” now includes friends and family.

Action:

- Realize that your family needs to know something about your deployment experiences.
- Tell your story the way you want to tell it.
- Share with your significant other what you are doing, day to day.
- Be proud of your service.

INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY VS. GUILT

In Combat:

- Your responsibility is to survive and do your best to keep your buddies alive.

At home:

- You may feel you have failed your buddies if they were killed or seriously injured.
- You may be bothered by memories of those wounded or killed.

TRANSITIONING THE COMBAT SKILL:

- Soldiers make life and death decisions in the heat of battle; responsibility involves learning from these decisions without second guessing.

Action:

- Recognize that there are human limits to preventing death and injuries.
- Do not allow “survival guilt” to destroy you. Your buddy would want you to drive on.

NON-DEFENSIVE (COMBAT) VS. AGGRESSIVE DRIVING

In Combat:

- Driving unpredictably, fast, using rapid lane changes and keeping other vehicles at a distance is designed to avoid IEDs and VBIEDs.

At home:

- Aggressive driving and straddling the middle line leads to speeding tickets, accidents and fatalities.

TRANSITIONING THE COMBAT SKILL:

- Combat driving is necessary to avoid danger; at home, combat driving may feel right, but is dangerous.

Action:

- Shift from offensive to defensive driving.
- Control your anger.
- Obey traffic laws: Use turn signals and slow down.

DISCIPLINE & ORDERING VS. CONFLICT

In Combat:

- Survival depends on discipline and obeying orders.
- Following orders kept you and those around you safe and in control.

At home:

- Inflexible interactions (ordering and demanding behaviors) with your spouse, children and friends often lead to conflict.

TRANSITIONING THE COMBAT SKILL:

- Giving and following orders involves a clear chain of command, which does not exist within families and friends.

Action:

- Acknowledge that friends and family members have been successful while you have been gone and may have developed new ways of doing things.
- Always be prepared to negotiate. Families and friends are not military units.

THE ALCOHOL TRANSITION

In Combat:

- Alcohol use was limited.

At home:

- Alcohol is now plentiful.

Action:

- Pace yourself and don't encourage each other to get drunk.
- Don't drink to calm down or if you're feeling depressed.
- Don't drink if you're having trouble sleeping, it actually makes the sleep worse.
- Look out for each other.

MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

Unit:

- Buddies, Leadership, Chaplain

Post:

- Troop Medical Clinic, Behavioral Health Service

Off-Post:

- Civilian Doctor or Mental Health Professional, VA

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Battlemind Training I



Transitioning from Combat to Home



Training Timeframe: At Post-Deployment

The Transitioning Warrior

From the *combat-zone* to the *home-zone*.

- **Battlemind** includes combat skills and the battle mindset that sustained your survival in the *combat-zone*...
- But Battlemind may be hazardous to your social and behavioral health in the *home-zone*...

Successful transitions

- Every Soldier will adjust to home in their own way.
- Build on your proven strengths.
- Translate combat skills to home skills.
- Effectiveness at home is as important as effectiveness in combat.

Professional combat skills helped you survive

Buddies (cohesion)
Accountability
Targeted Aggression
Tactical Awareness
Lethally Armed
Emotional Control
Mission Operational Security
Individual Responsibility
Non-defensive (combat) driving
Discipline and Ordering

It is **CRITICAL** that you not let your combat behaviors and reactions determine how you will respond at home.

BUDDIES (COHESION) VS. WITHDRAWAL

In Combat:

- No one understands your experience except your buddies who were there.
- Your life depended on your trust in your unit.

At home:

- You may prefer to be with your battle buddies rather than your spouse, family or friends.
- You may assume that only those who were there with you in combat understand or are interested.
- You may avoid speaking about yourself to friends and family.

TRANSITIONING THE COMBAT SKILL:

- Cohesion in combat results in bonds with fellow Soldiers that will last a lifetime; back home, your friends and family have changed, re-establishing these bonds takes time and work.

Action:

- Develop and renew relationships at home.
- Spend individual time with each of your loved ones; balance time spent with buddies and family. Provide and accept support from them.

ACCOUNTABILITY VS. CONTROL

In Combat:

- Maintaining control of weapon and gear is necessary for survival.
- ALL personal items are important to you.

At home:

- You may become angry when someone moves or messes with your stuff, even if it is insignificant.
- You may think that nobody cares about doing things right except for you.

TRANSITIONING THE COMBAT SKILL:

- Being accountable and in control keeps you combat ready; back home, the small details are no longer important; family decisions and personal space are best shared.

Action:

- Giving up control at home does not place you at risk.
- Distinguish between what is and is not important.
- Do not be afraid to apologize if you overreact. Apologizing is not a sign of weakness.

TARGETED VS. INAPPROPRIATE AGGRESSION

In Combat:

- Split second decisions that are lethal in highly ambiguous environments are necessary. Kill or be killed.
- Anger keeps you pumped up, alert, awake and alive.

At home:

- You may have hostility towards others.
- You may display inappropriate anger, or snap at your buddies or NCOs.
- You may overreact to minor insults.

TRANSITIONING THE COMBAT SKILL:

- "Combat anger" involves appropriate responses to the actual threat level to ensure safety.

Action:

- Assess whether there is a real threat to your safety.
- Think before you act; Wait before you respond (count to 10); Walk away.
- Talk to someone— get an azimuth check.

TACTICAL AWARENESS VS. HYPERVIGILANCE

In Combat:

- Survival depends on being aware of your surroundings at all times and reacting immediately to sudden changes such as sniper fire or mortar attacks.

At home:

- You may feel keyed up or anxious in large groups or situations where you feel confined.
- You may be easily startled, especially when you hear loud noises.
- You may have difficulty sleeping or have nightmares.

TRANSITIONING THE COMBAT SKILL:

- Combat requires alertness and sustained attention; back home, it takes time to learn to relax.

Action:

- Monitor yourself for "revved-up" reactions to minor events.
- Engage in regular exercise.
- Do not drink large amounts of alcohol or take illegal drugs to help you fall asleep; these will actually make your sleep worse.

LETHALLY ARMED VS. "LOCKED & LOADED" AT HOME

In Combat:

- Carrying your weapon at all times was mandatory and a matter of life or death.

At home:

- You may feel a need to have weapons on you, in your home and/or car at all times, believing that you and your loved ones are not safe without them.

TRANSITIONING THE COMBAT SKILL:

- In the combat zone you developed and followed strict rules for weapons safety, including when to fire your weapon.

Action:

- Resist the desire to have a weapon "locked and loaded".
- Follow all laws and safety precautions regarding weapons. Never drive with a loaded weapon.
- Never use a weapon to threaten or intimidate loved ones.

EMOTIONAL CONTROL VS. ANGER/DETACHMENT

In Combat:

- Controlling your emotions during combat is critical for mission success and quickly becomes second nature.

At home:

- Failing to display emotions around family and friends will hurt your relationships. You may be seen as detached and uncaring.

TRANSITIONING THE COMBAT SKILL:

- Emotional control involves both holding in and expressing feelings.

Action:

- Express your emotions appropriately.
- Showing emotion is important for keeping your personal relationships healthy.
- Displaying emotions is not unmilitary and does not mean you are weak.