

Resilience and Risk Reduction

Comprehensive Resilience Modules

Family Dimension

“Who’s In Charge?”

Supporting a Resilient and Ready Force

Who's In Charge Overview

□ When you return home from deployment:



It might actually take a little time for you and your family to find your place

Just as it took time for your family to adjust to the gap left when you deployed



It's not a question of being loved or wanted



If you are like most Soldiers, you might find a power struggle over who's in charge at home

It is simply a practical transition of who does what. But it can cause some friction



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Who's In Charge Scenario

❑ Let's drop in on the couple in this scenario...

Re-Deployed Male: Look at this place, it's a mess! What are you doing? What's the matter with you? Can't you just keep it clean?!?



Female Spouse: How dare you. You know, you have been gone. How dare you come in here and tell me how to run this house. I have been doing it all by myself.

And when you left we had a baby and babies don't make a mess, but toddlers do and I'm not going to spend all day picking up everything that she throws on the ground. So, I'm going to spend time playing with my daughter and I need you to respect the decisions that I am making about this!



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Principles

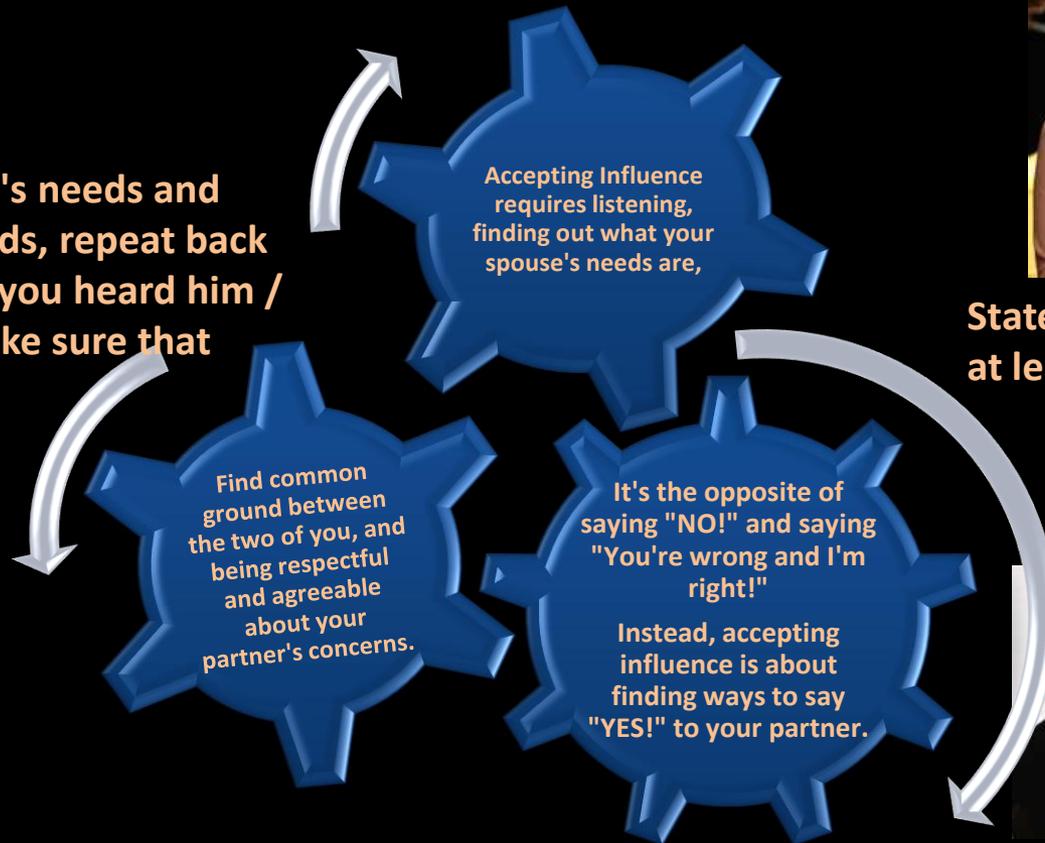


- ❑ 'Accepting Influence' can help prevent fights.
- ❑ 'Repair' can keep the fights from getting destructive.

Listen to your partner's needs and then in your own words, repeat back to your partner what you heard him / her asking for and make sure that you've got it right.



State that you'd like to meet at least some of their needs.



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Who's In Charge Scenario II

- ❑ Review the scenario below to see how this couple deals with their struggle of who's in charge at home and see how Accepting Influence and Repair works.
- ❑ Male Soldier: Look at this place, it's a mess! What are you doing? What's the matter with you? Can't you just keep it clean?
- ❑ Female Spouse: How dare you. You know, you have been gone. How dare you come in and tell me how to run this house. I have been doing it all by myself. And when you left we had a baby and babies don't make a mess, but toddlers do and I'm not going to spend all day picking up everything that he throws on the ground. So, I'm going to spend time playing with our kid and I need you to respect the decisions that I am making about this!

- ❑ Now you have some choices in how you respond.



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Who's In Charge Scenario II

Male Soldier: You don't deserve my respect. I was deployed! You weren't! You've got it so easy!

Female Spouse: (angry stare)

❑ Soldier Response 1 – Bad Aggressive

❑ Aggressive - An aggressive response will only make the fight worse. What's needed instead is to repair and accept influence. One way to do this is to say, "I'm sorry, you've got a good point." Then summarize what your partner said, for example here you could say, "I'm sorry, you've got a good point. I do respect your parenting and I do probably need to pitch in with the cleaning. And I do need to know our child better. I think I may need your help to do that."



❑ Soldier Response 2 – Bad Withdrawn

Male Soldier: Fine! I don't belong here anyway. (walks away)

Female Spouse: (looks upset)

❑ Withdrawn - Withdrawing isn't a good choice because you stay hidden and invisible. It also doesn't give your partner a chance to know you. Instead of withdrawing, you need to do some repair and accept influence.



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Who's In Charge Scenario II

❑ Soldier Response 3 – Positive

Soldier: You know, you're right. I'm sorry. I know you've been doing a lot around here and I respect you. I just feel like I don't even know our kid anymore. Will you show me how to make him laugh?

Spouse: (smiles)



- ❑ Positive - This is an excellent choice because you repair things by apologizing and listening to your partner. You've accepted influence, so it's unlikely that the fight will continue. Instead you have repaired the situation by saying, "You're right, I need to get to know our kid all over again."



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Who's In Charge Scenario III



- ❑ Listen to each of the responses and determine if it is aggressive, withdrawn or positive.

Male Character (Soldier): When are you going finally do the laundry? It's piling up over here.

Female Character (Wife): I've been handling laundry for myself and the kids for the past year. I don't need you to tell me what to do.

- ❑ Response #1-Male Character (Soldier): If I didn't bring it up, it wouldn't get done, you never do anything around here.
- ❑ Response #2-Male Character (Soldier): I can't ever say anything to you without getting yelled at. What's the use?
- ❑ Response #3-Male Character (Soldier): Yeah, I didn't say that right. Sorry about that. I just need these jeans to be washed, and I'll be honest, I haven't done my own laundry in a year. All I had to do in Kuwait was drop off my laundry in a bag, and the contractors had it ready the next day clean and folded! So, I see you've got some piles sorted... so, which pile do my jeans go in?

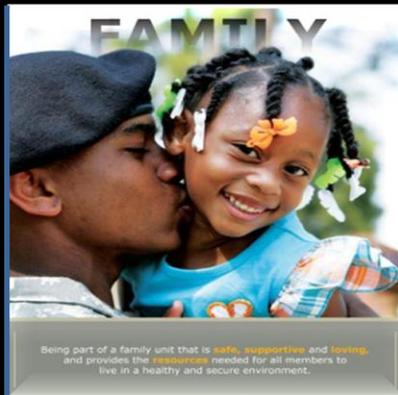


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Take Away

Accepting Influence is not about who's got control, but rather:



About negotiating how things are going to function now that you are home.



It requires you to:
Listen carefully to your partner.
Draw out the unspoken needs that you or your partner are having a hard time expressing.



Finding ways to agree with your partner, not to just say "Yes, Dear..." but to actually find some common ground on which you can agree.

The benefit is a stronger relationship, one built on respect, compassion, alliance and resilience.