

**Brigade Command Team Spouse Development Program  
(CTSDP-BDE)**

**Course Syllabus**

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**Course Length:** One week, Monday through Friday, generally 0800 to 1600 daily although start and end times may vary based on scheduled guest speakers.

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**Course Description:** The Command Team Spouse Development Program – Brigade (CTSDP-BDE) focus is to provide you, as a member of the command team, a better understanding of the Army's operational environment, a better understanding of one's ability to perform as an informal leader, a better understanding of the Soldier & Family Readiness Group, and a better understanding of one's level of organizational involvement and tools to increase one's resiliency as they enter the brigade level command team. Emphasis is on leadership and interpersonal relationship skills essential to their future role. CTSDP-BDE affords the opportunity to learn about Army programs and resources, exchange ideas with other command team spouses and mentors, and clarify role expectations.

**Course Organization:** The Command Team Spouse Development Program - Brigade is a one week course conducted concurrently with the Brigade Pre-Command /Command Sergeants Major Course. Spouses of brigade command selectees; division and corps General Staff selectees; and brigade Command Sergeant Major selectees are invited to participate in the course. During CTSDP-BDE, participants will attend some large group presentations with their spouse, but the majority of the time will be in small group seminar discussions with other CTSDP-BDE attendees. A variety of topics will be presented and discussed that will be beneficial to participants as a member of the command team.

**Course Objectives:**

- **Increase self-awareness**

- Discuss how your optimism (or pessimism) affects your effectiveness as your spouse transitions into the Brigade command team.
- Discuss your explanatory style and the potential impact it will have on your success in this new role as a Brigade command team spouse.
- Discuss how to build on your individual strengths and how to mitigate your weaknesses in order to increase your effectiveness in your Brigade spouse role.
- **Increase informal leadership skills**
  - Discuss the strengths, weaknesses, and effective utilization of leadership styles in use by exemplary brigade spouses (interviewed by current and past participants).
  - Discuss the skills and behaviors pertinent to your informal leadership roles to include the differences between advising, coaching, and mentoring relationships.
  - Discuss effective strategic communication skills and tactics needed to motivate and influence others.
  - Discuss your social tendencies and how to balance your behaviors to complement those around you.
- **Increase interpersonal skills**
  - Discuss your upcoming roles as a Brigade command team spouse with former Brigade level commander spouses and Command Sergeant Major spouses.
  - Discuss your current support system and how it may be altered by your new role.
  - Discuss the important role support plays in successful transitions and how to proactively establish a support system.
  - Discuss ways to effectively communicate with your followers in a manner that ultimately builds trust and influences followers to have a sense of empowerment.
  - Discuss how to recognize conflict and disagreement as a potentially positive force in groups and how to analyze, understand, and prepare prior to intervening in a conflict.
  - Discuss what you learned about Army Family Programs, their impact on family members, and how you intend to interact with family support agencies/organizations to provide the best possible support to your command team.
- **Increase knowledge of the Brigade Command Team environment**
  - Prepare a brief presentation for your peers demonstrating how you would like to introduce yourself to your Brigade, emphasizing your guiding values and principles, your

mission and vision for your tenure as part of the Brigade command team, and the key activities and involvements you wish to highlight during that time.

- Discuss the week's lessons learned and how you plan to integrate principles and practices into an understanding of the specific unit and command team realities to which you will transition.
- Discuss your prior experiences and what you can draw upon as your role changes to being a member of the Brigade command team.
- Discuss the potential positive and negative consequences of transitioning to the Brigade level, factoring in the concurrent stressors in your life and how they interact to affect how successful you will be in this new role.
- Discuss choices you can make that will support your success even if you don't have control over the transition to the Brigade command team.
- Describe your perceptions of the senior Army leadership presentations on command teams and how you will use their comments to improve your role as a Brigade command team member.

### **Course Topics:**

**Understanding the Brigade Command Environment:** This two hour small group discussion session encourages participants to explore: What prior experiences can they draw upon? In what way will their roles change and how prepared are they for these changes? What are the potential positive and negative consequences of this transition? What are some of the concurrent stressors in their life? How might these interact to affect how successful the participant will be in this new role? Even if participants don't have control over this transition, what choices can they make that will support their success? By the end of this section, participants will have completed the Transition Inventory and assessed their degree of preparation for their upcoming transition.

**Exploring My Personal Characteristics: Analyzing the Self:** This is a two hour small group discussion that will help participants answer: Who am I? Is my glass half full or half empty and how will my optimism (or pessimism) affect my effectiveness as my spouse takes command? What is my explanatory style and what is the potential impact it will have on my success in this new role as a brigade command team spouse? What behaviors, skills and roles will I have to perform as a community leader and brigade command team spouse? How confident am I that I can succeed in this role? How resilient am I? By the end of this section, participants will have examined their sense of self and how to build on their individual strengths and mitigate their weaknesses to increase their effectiveness in their brigade command team spouse role.

**Examining The Role "Support" Plays in Negotiating a Transition:** This one hour small group session is designed for participants to think about their current support system and how it may

be altered by their new role. Participants will leave with an understanding of the important role support plays in successful transitions and how to proactively establish a support system.

Coping Strategies for Functioning in New Roles and Environments: This two hour session will introduce participants to methods for utilizing some effective coping strategies including changing the meaning of the situation, modifying the situation through reframing, and creating a sense of optimism about the situation. By the end of this session, participants should have an understanding of coping strategies useful in their upcoming transition.

Importance of Perceptions: This segment of the day's training consists of an explanation the complexities of causal attributions and discussing the Perceptual Process and how individual behavior positively or negatively can impact the effectiveness of a leader. Some time is spent examining the influence of attitudes and habits that effective leaders possess and strategizing some methods of enhancing the positive attitudes and habits of individual course participants. By the end of this section, participants should have an understanding of the process that involves sensing various aspects of a person, task, or event and forming impressions based on selected inputs.

Leadership as a Study of People: This segment of the day's training builds on the perceptions others may have of a leader, both formal and informal, and consists of an inventory of social tendencies. Each participant self-identifies themselves with a specific set of behaviors and forms a group similar to them. This is followed by an activity that allows each group to reflect upon how their group's set of social tendencies has strengths and weaknesses attached to their behaviors (their attributes, any deficits they may have, and what triggers their motivation). By the end of this section, participants should be able to understand what drives their own social tendencies and how they can balance their own behaviors to complement those around them, regardless of their differences.

Bases of Effective Leadership – Needs of Followers: This segment of the day's training transitions from understanding one's self to how an individual's leadership can be more effective if they understand how to use their own social attributes to motivate and influence their followers. Some discussion is facilitated regarding power, affiliation, and achievement as it relates to Brigade Commander Spouses and the influence they may have in both military and civilian groups. Additionally, the participants will learn and discuss ways to identify a strong organizational culture. Several activities are conducted to apply the concepts in this section that enable the individual learners to easily see the relevance of conducting a cultural assessment at their instillation. By the end of this section, participants will be able to recognize the importance of building a strong culture and the methods for doing so.

Understanding Power and Influence in Groups: This segment of the day's training synthesizes how followers may perceive a leader, the social tendencies that individuals may have that either enhance or diminish a leader's effectiveness, and the needs that followers have in order to be influenced by a leader's actions. A brief discussion is facilitated surrounding effective communication skills and then the five bases of power are explained along with the tactics needed to influence another individual. The participants will learn not only the bases of power, but also analyze the need to have a clear understanding of the expectations attached to each type of power in their role as a Brigade Commander team

spouse. By the end of this section, participants should be able to identify ways to effectively communicate with their followers in a manner that ultimately builds trust among their followers and influences their followers to have a sense of empowerment.

**Leadership Communication:** This final segment of the day's training does three things: it combines all of the above topics and integrates them into a closing activity; provides an opportunity for the participants to demonstrate and practice the lessons learned throughout the leadership training to this point, and finally serves as an introduction to the third day's topics and concepts. This is accomplished through an introductory explanation of the differences between mentoring and coaching, and the characteristics of both. Lastly, an activity is facilitated where each person selects a partner and then guides them through the difficulties, or hurdles, anticipated in their role as a Brigade Commander's spouse. By the end of this section, participants will have learned the importance of being an excellent leader through: having a vision; understanding their followers; executing well thought-out plans; superb communication skills; balance of diversity; perseverance; and celebration of successes.

**Qualities of a Successful Leader: Serving as Coach and Mentor:** Utilizing participant pre-course interviews with 'exemplary Brigade Spouses', the group examines a continuum of leadership styles ranging from autocratic to democratic/facilitative and transformational approaches. Skills and behaviors pertinent to their informal roles are emphasized, leading into a delineation of advising, coaching and mentoring relationships as models for their leadership activities. Participants will understand their primary leadership and managerial strengths and identify areas for learning. They will understand effective utilization of different styles and practices in situation specific applications.

**Skills for Community Leadership and Influence: Conflict Resolution Skills:** The "Skills" sections highlight key leadership competencies and skills appropriate to the Brigade Spouse Role in the unit, Army wide and surrounding community arenas. The first section provides an understanding of interest based negotiation principles and practices, concepts and models for analyzing and understanding complex conflicts, and basic interest based approaches to working with differences in groups. Participants will recognize conflict and disagreement as a potentially positive force in groups and enhance their ability to analyze, understand and prepare themselves prior to intervening in a conflict.

**Skills for Community Leadership and Influence: Working With Difficult People and Crucial Conversations:** This skills section offers a six step procedural 'roadmap' to the facilitation of successful conversations about difficult topics from the perspective of an individual involved in the issue as well as the perspective of an 'outside neutral' facilitator. By the end of this section, participants will have a specific model for the conduct of conflict related discussions that reduces their anxiety, provides a structured guide for interest based approaches, and increased the likelihood of constructive outcomes.

**Skills for Community Leadership and Influence: Supporting Personal, Family, and Community Resilience:** The final Skills section follows presentation and overviews of the Army SFRG programs. This section outlines the basic elements of personal, family and marital resilience, asking participants to do a brief identification of steps each might take to enhance their own level of resilience and well-being while serving as advisors and support resources to their command spouse and their unit as SFRG advisor. Some attention is given then to the spouse's leadership role in the surrounding civilian community. Participants will examine steps each

may take to increase their own resiliency while understanding application of the principles in support of their units through their role as SFRG advisor and as a member of the command team.

**Integration and Application:** Final activities designed to integrate key lessons from the week include group discussion of the Hogan Personality Inventory (lessons learned and relevance to their role as Brigade Spouse) and a final exercise in which each participant prepares a brief presentation to the group as they might present themselves to their Brigade, emphasizing their guiding values and principles, their mission and vision for their tenure as part of the Brigade Command Team, and the key activities and involvements they wish to highlight during that time. Participants will review the week's lessons learned and integrate principles and practices into an understanding of the specific unit and command team realities to which they will transition.

**Army Command Team:** During this one hour large group presentation, the Chief of Staff and the Sergeant Major of the Army and their spouses will discuss their philosophy of the Army Command Team – setting expectations, obtaining work-life balance, family priorities, communications, teamwork, and values.

**CSA/VCSA/SMA Spouse Discussion:** The CSA/VCSA and SMA spouses will speak to all CTSDP-BDE and CTSDP-BN participants in a one hour and thirty minute discussion on the command team and latest challenges/initiatives concerning the Army.

**Installation Management Command (IMCOM):** This is a one and a half hour presentation by the Commanding General, IMCOM. The IMCOM Commander will cover the organization and functions of IMCOM, programs, current challenges and initiatives affecting the U.S. Army. The IMCOM Commander will also offer his thoughts on command and the command team.

**U.S. Army Surgeon General (MEDCOM):** This is a one and a half hour presentation by the Surgeon General focusing on the health of our Army, current challenges and initiatives targeted at Soldiers and Families to improve and encourage healthy lifestyles.

**Army Protocol/Customs & Traditions:** This one and a half hour session immerses spouses in Army protocol and traditions focusing on unit events, changes of command and responsibility, gifts, army traditions, hail & farewells, coffee groups, SFRG groups, communication, introductions, invitations, dress, civilian etiquette, receiving lines, and other opportunities for spouses to support organizations and build relationships as are appropriate.

**Senior Spouse Discussion Panel (Class Dependent):** During this one and a half hour small group session, participants will have an opportunity to discuss their upcoming roles as a brigade command team spouse with former brigade level commander and Command Sergeant Major spouses.

**Talent Management Task Force:** This one hour presentation provides an overview of the Talent Management initiative and how Soldiers can interface to influence the course of their future assignments.

**Army Wellness Center (Elective):** During the week long course, you will have an opportunity to participate in an Army Wellness Center (AWC) elective. This elective provides spouses the opportunity to experience a variety of health programs designed to provide you a comprehensive assessment and personal approach to improve your health and wellness. As

one of our most popular electives, the AWC experience is for many, a superb source of positive life changing habits.

**Using Your Chaplain Effectively (Elective):** This is a one hour presentation by the Chaplain focusing on the special relationship between chaplains, their commanders/CSM, and the roles and responsibilities of their office. This session also talks to current challenges the chaplain corps faces within the Army, and the important role that Command team spouses can play.