Spillover/Crossover

Spillover
• Things transferring from work to home

Crossover
• Things transferring from one spouse to another
Connecting Your Loved Ones and Work

- Meet your partners/crew/squad/boss
- See where you work, what you drive, where you eat
- Meet your kids teachers/coaches/friends
- Meet your spouses colleagues and friends
- Make decisions about home life together, even when on shift
Separating Your Loved Ones and Work

- What is helpful to share?
- Let them lead by asking/telling you.
- How much do they want to know?
- Distinguishing home from work (e.g. changing into uniform at the station, changing back to civilian clothes before going home)
- A word on who you “are.”
Helpful Questions/Words

• I will tell you what I can
• What are you most worried about? (and then “…what else?”)
• You look sad… could we talk for a few minutes?
• What will help you feel better?
• How can I help? What can we do right now?
• What do you want to know?
Things to Consider

- Imagination vs. Reality: both can be scary or traumatizing
- Real information from you can be comforting
- “Dark humor” at home
- Plain language
- Accurate words (e.g. died, dead, killed)
- War stories
Protect Your Relationship Intentionally

- Spouse/partner should be the closest relationship
- Plan and do things together (e.g. yardwork, cards, movies, music, going for a drive, rearranging the house, reading, exercising, grocery shopping, reading to kids, baths)
- Consider conquer together rather than divide and conquer
- Make decisions together regarding home and family
About Children

• Adult problems are for adults to handle
• Reassure them that adults are taking care of things bigger than them
• Some things are not appropriate to share with children and teens, even adult children (e.g. war stories, private details of adult relationships/choices/history, stressors children can’t impact)
A Serious Note About Children

• Make it safe for them to come to you:
  • When they make mistakes
  • Substance use/peer pressure
  • Conflicts with friends/dating
  • Confusion about right/wrong
  • Being abused/threatened
  • Who to trust in this world

• “I’ll kill anyone who hurts you.”
Public Safety Partnerships/Friendships

- Can be easy because “he/she gets it”
- Issues and challenges are the same though ability to understand where you are coming from is probably better
- Still important to have boundaries and not add trauma “because they get it” or can “handle it”
- Be intentional about developing the life you share outside of work
- Avoid *always* talking about work when together
- Avoid *never* talking about work
Hard Conversations

Do I look fat?

Do I look stupid?
Making Hard Conversations Easier

**Do’s**
- Neutral ground
- Agreed time and place
- Stick with topic at hand
- Respond rather than react

**Don’t have discussions**
- In bed
- At work
- When intoxicated
- Around kids/others
In General: Don’ts

- Rolling eyes
- Sighing
- Guffawing
- “whatever”
- Putting up hands
- Bringing up the past
- Swearing
- Minimizing
- Mimicking
- Mocking
- Pouting
- Acting like a victim
- Clenching fists
- Sarcasm
- Being mean
- Being punitive
- Crying to manipulate
- Threatening/intimidation
- Walking away
- Ultimatums
Kiss of Death: Secrecy

- Being emotionally or physically closer to someone other than your primary other
- Being secretive about finances/debt
What is Said/Meant/Heard

- Finances
- Parenting
- What’s going on with other family/friends
- Chores/things around the house
- Downtime/vacation
- Health
- Future plans/goals
Fight Until It’s Done

• If there’s something left out, there’s something left out
Some Tips for Clean(er) Fighting

• Stick to the subject immediately at hand.
• No WMDs.
• Listen. Repeat *what* you heard before making an interpretation of what you heard. Copy?
• Use ‘I’ statements rather than YOU statements.
• No martyring, bullying, manipulating, catastrophizing.
• Take time outs.
How to Apologize

- Be sincere
- Be specific
- Be accepting
- Be patient
- Be willing
- Be appreciative
- Be forgiving - of others and yourself
Keep Your Perspective

- Be kind to yourself and your loved ones
- Remind yourself why you went into this field
- There are always choices in relationships and work
- Look for the good
- Take the long view of what’s important
- Serenity Prayer