Army

Smart
SOLDIER
PRESENTS

HUMAN
DIMENSION
VOLUME TWO

Serving our Nation

Contents

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Foreword

This special edition of Smart Soldier is the second volume to focus on *Human Dimensions,* and is a reminder of how we can manage and prepare for the demands that are placed on us as Australia's Army. At the core of Army's high performing and capable teams are our people. Seeking opportunities to develop, educate and promote professional excellence, and achieve skill mastery is at the heart of Army's success. This includes enhancing psychological skills that contribute to mental fitness and resilience at the individual, team, and organisational level.

The articles included in this edition have been developed by the Army's operational psychology unit (1 Psych Unit), and are a useful reminder for each of us. The articles are designed to challenge our own beliefs and practices, and reflect on lessons learnt from the operational environment.

The themes addressed in this edition align with being an *Army in Motion,* and help to set the conditions for developing and maintaining optimal Army teams - this is critical to our preparedness, our people, our profession, and potential within an environment characterised by *Accelerated Warfare.* I encourage everyone to take the time to read, discuss and use this information to find ways to enhance performance and capability at all levels.

RM Burr AO, DSC, MVO
Lieutenant General
Chief of Army

CONFLICT RESOLUTION:

Overcoming Conflict within your Workplace

SGT Jo Schelinski

What is conflict?

The ADF highly values teamwork; however, when different people work closely together, it's inevitable that conflict will arise. The interests, values, needs, goals, and perspectives of team members can conflict. Such differences are a normal part of team functioning, especially when planning or problem solving. Moreover, teams in the ADF are rarely static; old members post out and new members post in every year. Thus, there is a continuing process of interpersonal adaptation to each other's personalities and life issues. Often, the differences are resolved quickly with little or no tension among team members as a normal part of the way they do business. However, at other times, differences are not readily resolved, which can create a stressful work environment, lead to divided teams, and lower morale.

This article will look at some of the benefits of conflict, risks of avoidance, steps to resolving conflict, and helpful tips.

Benefits of conflict

When managed properly, differences among team members can benefit the whole team. When planning, problem solving, and/or innovating, divergent thinking can be an essential ingredient to improving the capability of the team. Working out differences in a safe, respectful way for the team members can improve their cohesion, morale, self-confidence, interpersonal skills, and ability to handle future differences in a fruitful way.

It is often tempting to ignore or put up with conflicts, rather than addressing them, particularly if they are persistent. Some of the risks to ignoring conflict include:

- **Reduced productivity:** When differences are ignored or not handled properly, they can become distracting and reduce motivation.

- **Increased transfer/discharge rate:** People often move on if there is little prospect of resolving a persistent conflict. In such circumstances, an entire team can disperse or effectively 'down tools'.

- **Reduced communication:** If a conflict remains unresolved, it can cause a communication breakdown within the team, leading to unhealthy confrontation.

- **Divided teams:** As communication becomes strained within a team, this can lead to a breakdown in morale, cooperation and relationships.

Effective communication tips

Open and respectful communication is the key to resolving issues before they get out of hand. This can be achieved by following the tips below:

- Clarify the situation using open-ended questions, e.g,. "Can you tell me about …?"

- Listen carefully and really hear what people are saying; don't think about what you want to say next.

- Confirm your understanding so they know you are listening, e.g., "So, if I am hearing you properly, you are saying, ..."

- Be aware of your voice tone, facial expression, and body posture.

- Avoid accusations, personal attacks or allow emotions to cloud logical thinking.

- Endeavour to be empathetic towards other people.

Other helpful tips

- **Create a culture of respect:** Strive to make people feel valued, respected, and show consideration for their viewpoints, regardless of your opinion. Healthy debate can be beneficial within a team, but ensure it always remains respectful.

- **Value differences:** Recognise and respect the diversity in skills, knowledge, and ideas everyone brings.

- **Acceptance:** Sometimes conflict is unavoidable and you may have differences of opinions with others. Accepting that we are all different and entitled to different viewpoints is an important part of showing respect, and maintaining professional composure.

- **Self-awareness:** Developing an understanding of ourselves can help with self-awareness and how we come across to others. Sometimes

we can be unaware of unhelpful behaviours, and it is important to learn from previous experience.

- **Avoid unhealthy confrontation:** Bottled feelings and unresolved conflict can often result in unhealthy confrontation including verbal arguments, physical confrontation, or passive aggression. Try not to take differences in opinion or viewpoints as a personal attack.

- **Do it now:** Don't put it off hoping the conflict and tension will go away. Sometimes this may work, but the majority of the time avoidance has the potential to make the situation worse.

Further support

It can be challenging to know where you can go for help. Below are some ideas for seeking guidance on resolving conflict within your workplace:

- Ask for advice or support from peers, friends and family

- Approach your supervisor or chain of command

- Unit Welfare Officer

- Unit Equity Advisor

- 1800 DEFENCE (1800 333 362)

- Review the Complaints and Alternative Resolutions Manual (CARM) for further guidance

- Defence Community Organisation

G rowth M indset

By CAPT Kylie Zijp

People tend to perceive their abilities in one of two ways – as being either fixed or capable of growth. People with a fixed mindset subscribe to the belief that attributes such as intelligence and learning ability are unchangeable. That is 'you have a finite amount of a certain skill and that's it.' In contrast, people with a growth mindset subscribe to the belief that attributes can be changed through hard work and persistence. People with these two mindsets respond very differently to challenges in terms of effort, criticism, and the success of others.[1]

People with a fixed mindset assume learning should be easy and not require effort. Equally, they believe that if you have to exert effort on a task, there is something wrong with you. This belief tends to incline those people to focus on easy, low effort successes, which help them to feel smart, talented, and capable. If they make a mistake, they are less likely to learn from it but instead will try to hide it or ignore the feedback. Furthermore, they are more inclined to feel threatened by those that outperform them, as they attribute the success to natural cleverness rather than hard work. All in all, maintaining a fixed mindset can have a detrimental impact on improving a person's performance inside and outside their team.

In contrast, people with a growth mindset understand that learning requires effort but nevertheless can be an enjoyable journey. They tend to persist when faced with obstacles, embracing challenges as an opportunity to improve. They are more tolerant of making mistakes. They are more inclined to listen to feedback, engage in self reflection and look for learning strategies. Seeing others succeed is not considered a threat to themselves, but rather a source of inspiration.

Here are some tips for developing your growth mindset:

Tip 1: Give yourself credit for your efforts, not just the outcome. Although completing a task and achieving a goal is very satisfying – monitor your progress, your strategies, your perseverance, and give yourself a positive tick for your efforts. In the military, positive outcomes are not guaranteed. Even the best planned and prepared missions can fail to achieve some of its aims. Even if a mission is entirely successful, the pathway to that outcome is important to acknowledge. Telling yourself, in absolute language, that you are or something is "the best" or "the worst", reinforces a fixed mindset and misses the opportunity to challenge and be more flexible in your thinking about what you did well or might have done differently.

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1   Dweck, C. S. (2009). Mindsets: Developing talent through a growth mindset. Olympic Coach, Vol 21, Issue 1 pp. 4-7

Tip 2: Address your current weaknesses. If you seem to be learning slowly or simply have not had enough opportunity to learn, remind yourself that, by deliberately addressing your current weaknesses, you will eventually improve with experience, practice, and feedback. Conversely, simply telling yourself that you don't have any talent reinforces a fixed mindset and its self-fulfilling prediction of failure.

Tip 3: You don't have to know everything. Encourage yourself and your mates that it's okay not to understand everything or know everything – because no one does. Don't belittle yourself or others who are learning or ask seemingly silly questions. Be willing to put up your hand and ask a question if you are unsure, otherwise you won't learn. Asking a question is not a sign of ignorance, rather it is a sign that you are making an effort to learn and understand.

Tip 4: Analyse your performance. Use self-initiated after-action reviews to learn lessons. Engage in self-reflection and critically analyse your performance. Ask these questions – what went well? What needs improvement? What steps need to be done to ensure I improve? Think about the process. Do not get caught up in the outcome.

Tip 5: Develop an inner sense. Develop your 'grit', which is the inner sense that you should keep going in pursuit of a highly desired goal even though it would be easier to give up.

The notion that knowledge, skills, and abilities are changeable does not deny the fact that some people are naturally gifted with certain strengths. However, having natural talent is only a starting point; acquiring proficiency still requires effort, and persistent engagement with a learning process. Developing a growth mindset can only enhance your (and the team's) learning process.
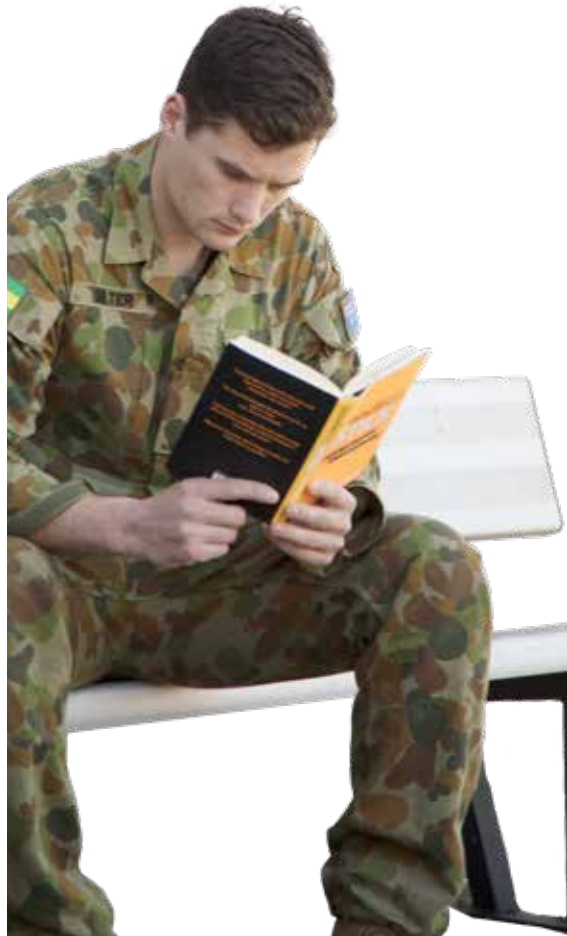
Human Performance 4 (HP4):
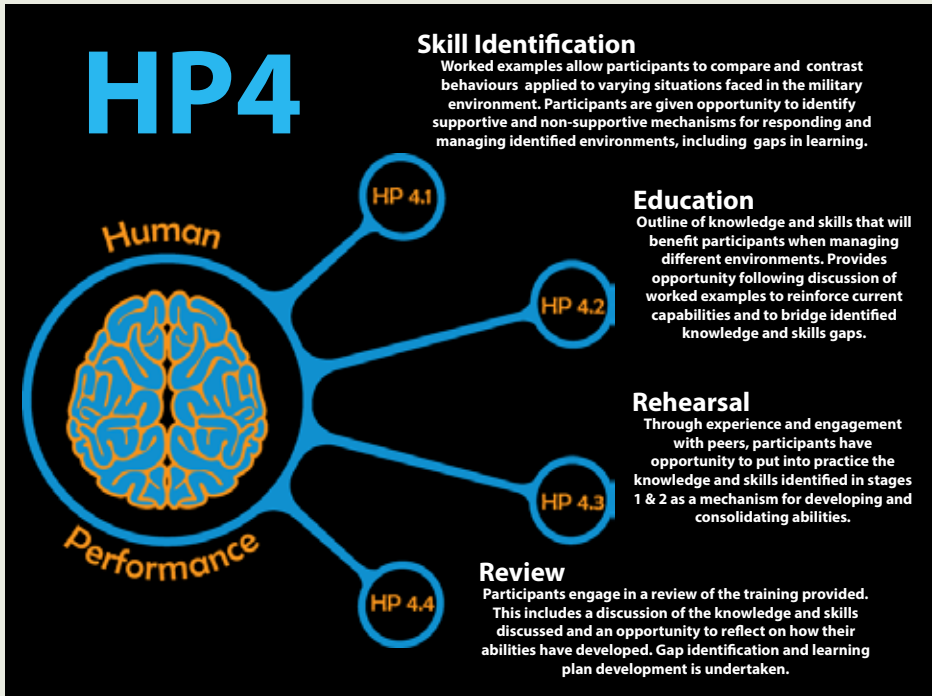
TRAINING THROUGH BEST PRACTICE

MAJ Sarah Watson

Ever sat through a slide-filled, information-packed presentation and wondered if you were really learning anything? Sometimes it's a question of whether you really needed the information in the first place. At other times, it can be about the delivery method and its ability to go beyond familiarisation to promote actual skill development. As you may be aware, there are sound evidence-based principles from research in learning, training, and development (LTD) for improving delivery methods and training content to ensure immediate and ongoing learning to meet this best practice approach.

Implementation of evidence-based training methods are implemented to address the increasing call for training that gives focus to Army's enhancement of human performance. Specifically, 1 Psych Unit has undertaken a critical assessment of the structure and effectiveness of its psycho-ed training.

The result is the Human Performance Four (HP4) framework, which provides direction on the process, implementation and instruction of training content that will support the immediate and ongoing skill development of participants. The evidence-based LTD principles underpinning framework are not limited by the particular topic of learning, allowing transfer across learning areas and needs, as required by the environment.

HP4

Human Performance

Skill Identification
Worked examples allow participants to compare and contrast behaviours applied to varying situations faced in the military environment. Participants are given opportunity to identify supportive and non-supportive mechanisms for responding and managing identified environments, including gaps in learning.

HP 4.1

HP 4.2

Education
Outline of knowledge and skills that will benefit participants when managing different environments. Provides opportunity following discussion of worked examples to reinforce current capabilities and to bridge identified knowledge and skills gaps.

Rehearsal
Through experience and engagement with peers, participants have opportunity to put into practice the knowledge and skills identified in stages 1 & 2 as a mechanism for developing and consolidating abilities.

HP 4.3

Review
Participants engage in a review of the training provided. This includes a discussion of the knowledge and skills discussed and an opportunity to reflect on how their abilities have developed. Gap identification and learning plan development is undertaken.

HP 4.4

HP4 provides four stages – skill identification, education, rehearsal and review. Each stage focuses on engaging the participants in actively identifying how to build up their knowledge and skills in a way that will extend beyond the training session, emphasising active, experiential learning:

HP4.1: Skill identification: The presentation of worked examples allows participants to compare and contrast behaviours applied to varying situations faced in a military environment. The use of multiple examples provides a variety of experiences that help participants to see the underlying principles for the skill. This is in contrast to the historical practice of, a single example which tends to become a one-size-fits-all approach. For example, participants undertaking a communications course might identify the use or absence of effective verbal and non-verbal skills in worked examples with both ideal and less than ideal outcomes. This provides the participant an opportunity to identify when they have or haven't used these same skills in similar circumstances. The use of worked examples takes the onus away from a historical knowledge based learning approach, to an environment where participants find solutions to problems, as well as

allowing participants an opportunity to identify potential skill gaps.

HP4.2: Education: This stage describes the knowledge and skills illustrated in the worked examples, which are brought out in teaching points during a facilitated discussion. During this stage, participants will be explicitly encouraged to identify their existing skill set and how they can add to it. Learning points are limited to five to seven items in order to best support cognitive load and optimal learning. Stage 2 provides participants a chance to confirm understanding of the skills they have identified in the worked examples presented at Stage 1, as well as provide education on the skill gaps.

HP4.3: Rehearsal: Role plays undertaken with peers provide an opportunity to practice the knowledge and skills identified in Stages 1 and 2. This learning is supported by peer observation allowing constructive feedback to be included in the skill development process. For example, in a communication skills course, role plays will challenge participants to activate listening and non-verbal skills to assist effective communication. Inclusion of an observer in the process will give participants an opportunity to receive feedback from peers on their skill development.

HP4.4: Review: In this final stage of the training framework, participants review the knowledge and skills explored during Stages 1-3 of the training package. Opportunity is provided to reflect on what has been learnt, identify any learning gaps that remain, and develop a learning plan for extending skill development beyond the training environment. This final process establishes a commitment on the participant's part to engage in active skill practice beyond the training environment.

HP4 is an experiential based training framework that encourages and supports participant learning through skill identification, problem solving and learning plan development. Guided by LTD best practice, it is flexible to topic development, either in a classroom or field environment, and can be set up to fit a short or extended training timetable without compromise to learning outcomes.

INNOVATION
What's the missing ingredient

SGT Mitch Wyatt

Innovation is being pushed to the forefront of Defence culture, having been mentioned no less than 34 times in the 2016 Defence White Paper but also reiterated by numerous Service Chiefs as a key element of their near- and long-term plans. Despite its prominence, innovation in Defence is seldom defined and often sought without a full appreciation of what is involved in the innovation process. This ambiguity has led to uncertainty around how to innovate, but also in varying levels of confidence in how ideas will be managed by different levels of command.

Although this article will not be a definitive guide, it is designed to both clarify some of the misconceptions and describe a structure for the innovation process. To be clear, "innovation" is the **skill** of introducing visible change to things that already exist. It entails identifying a previously unrecognised need and applying creativity to generate ideas for a solution. Innovation goes beyond creativity to implement the new ideas so that they have impact.

Innovation is not a rigid, linear process but rather a fluid, iterative process in which you may find yourself moving back and forth through a sort of innovation shuffle. It is also a skill that needs to be practised, rather than information to be memorised. An overemphasis on "getting it right" from the start and "rolling it out" without repeat testing and adjustment is likely to reduce the effectiveness of the innovation process and its potential benefit.

Innovation can be achieved using the method depicted in the diagram on the opposite page - "The Design Thinking Process". As you can see, the method splits the innovation process into two major areas, namely, the "Problem Space" and the "Solution Space." Operating in both areas requires the use of "divergent thinking" and "convergent thinking". Divergent thinking involving the generation of as many creative ideas as possible by exploring as many possible solutions, no matter how wild and wacky. Whilst, convergent thinking involves narrowing down the ideas by using rational thinking to identify usable and fitting solutions.

Tips for divergent and convergent thinking

Tip 1: Understand

- At this stage, you may not fully understand or appreciate the problem and its contributing factors. It's important to seek out as much information as you can and talk to

THE DESIGN THINKING PROCESS
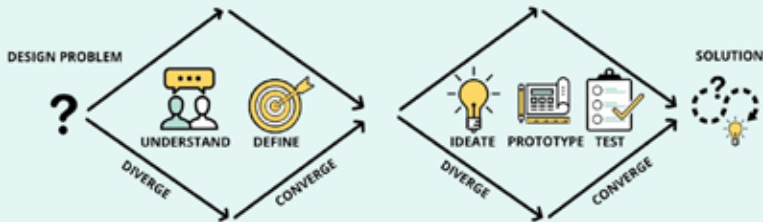
others who may be affected. Use semi-structured interviews to keep the discussion on topic.

- Try not to jump straight into thinking how you might solve the problem at this stage. Keep an open, positive mind.

- Dig out the root cause of the problem. Keep asking why?; five times is recommended.

- Empathise with those who are facing the problem that is sought to be resolved. The better you understand its impact, the better you can hone in on a solution that meets the users' needs.

Tip 2: Define

- Start narrowing down the problem you want to target.
- Converge on a single targetable problem statement.
- Make the problem human centered.
- Use "How might we" statements to target different sides of the problem.

Tip 3: Ideate

- Generate as many ideas as you can that may solve the problem. These

can be as crazy and out there as you like. The wilder the better as you are trying to develop solutions that may not have been thought about.

- Use techniques such as brainstorming and SCAMPER (use open source websites for further research). SCAMPER is an acronym for seven thinking techniques that help you to come up with untypical solutions to problems.

Substitute – Remove some part of the accepted situation, thing, or concept and replace it with something else.

Combine – Bring together two or more elements of your subject matter and consider ways that such a combination might move you toward a solution.

Adapt – Change some part of your problem so that it works where it did not before.

Modify – Consider many of the attributes of the problem you're working on and change them, arbitrarily, if necessary. Attributes include: size, shape, other dimensions, texture, colour, attitude, position, history, and so on.

Purpose (put to other use) – Modify the intention of the subject. Think about why it exists, what it's used for, what it's supposed to do. Challenge all of these assumptions and suggest new and unusual purposes.

Eliminate – Arbitrarily remove any or all elements of your subject, simplify and reduce to core functionality.

Reverse – Change the direction or orientation. Turn it upside-down, inside-out, or make it go backwards, against the direction it was intended to go or be used.

Remember, the ideas don't have to be exact. You are after quantity rather than quality at this stage.

Tip 4: Prototype

- Narrow down your ideas to a handful that you wish to test. The different strengths and weaknesses of ideas can be assessed from different perspectives using such methods as the "6 Hats":

    Managing (Blue Hat) What is the subject? What are we thinking about? What is the goal? What is the big picture?

   *Information (White Hat)* – What information is available? What are the facts?

    Emotions (Red Hat) – What are the instinctive gut reactions? What are the emotional reactions?

    Discernment (Black Hat) – What are logical or practical reasons for being cautious?

    Optimism (Yellow Hat) – What are the practical benefits?

    Creativity (Green Hat) – Where are the ideas going? Are they "outside the box"?

- **Develop a prototype.** It can be a tangible, working model, but it can also be a drawing, a diagram of anything else that represents an idea on paper that others can easily understand.
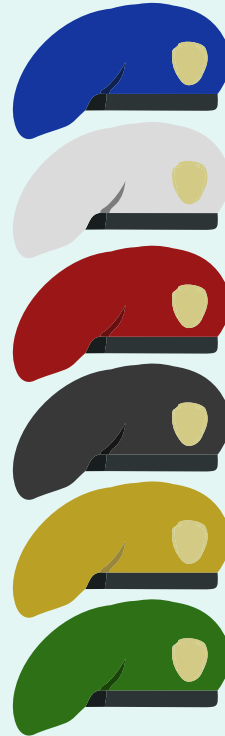
Tip 5: Test and adjust

- Take your idea to the people. What do others think? Do they feel it works? Do they have any ideas to improve it?

- Don't be afraid to modify your idea and go back through the design thinking process. Iterate and improve! Your first idea isn't likely to be your best.

- Be willing to take feedback and test your problem statement time and time again. The more you do, the better your solution will fit the group and the need you are trying to meet.

Mind, Body and Recovery

Mental Health in Rehabilitation

SGT Dez Flakelar and CPL Dave Penglis

Injuries, while hopefully infrequent, are often an unavoidable part of life in the ADF. While most injuries can be managed with little to no disruption, some impose a substantial physical and mental burden. There is a normal emotional reaction that includes processing the medical information about the injury, as well as coping emotionally with the injury.

Those emotional responses may include:

- sadness
- isolation
- irritation
- lack of motivation
- anger
- frustration
- changes in appetite
- sleep disturbance
- disengagement

How people respond to injury may differ, and there is no predictable reaction. The response to injury extends from the period immediately after injury, through to the post-injury phase, and rehabilitation and ultimately a return to activity. It is important for soldiers, their peers, their superiors, and health staff to understand that emotional reactions to injury are normal. Some resolve quickly; others

can take longer and require more assistance. No matter where you – or your mate – are in the rehabilitation process, here are some helpful tips:

Tips for members

Tip 1: Understand the way you are feeling. When you're injured, you're either forced to remain relatively sedentary or even totally sedentary. You may also be limited to a range of cross-training and rehabilitation exercises which can profoundly affect your mental wellbeing. Not to mention, if you usually work out with friends or your section, you may also experience social separation. You might not have even realised how much your regular exercise routine helped you to clear your head.

Tip 2: Control the controllables. Identify what you can control in terms of your recovery and rehabilitation, and accept the things you can't – whether they be timeframes, missed courses, or deployments. Listen to and work with the health staff, and take the time to focus on your rehabilitation so you give yourself the best chance for recovery.

Tip 3: Identify support. Identify where you can access support – maybe it's from friends or maybe it's from your chain of command or a health professional. You can certainly use all sources.

Tip 4: Re-adjust your goals. Be patient and realistic with yourself.

Rather than focusing on performance or results, make your first goal healing. By putting the bulk of your energy into recovery, you'll allow yourself to feel encouraged by progress, instead of discouraged by how far you've fallen from your previous goals.

Tip 5: See the opportunity. Take your rehabilitation as an opportunity to potentially come back physically and mentally stronger. For example, you may be able to spend more time working on your stability, balance, and core. Even if your injury has you totally locked out of physical activity, become a student of your sport or activity by reading, watching instructional videos, and practising mental strength exercises.

Tip 6: Breathe more and stress less. Stress can be a major road block when it comes to the healing process. The more you find your thoughts spinning, your chest tightening, and your heart pounding, the harder it becomes to heal, to think clearly, and even get to sleep. Telling yourself, "relax", is often not that easy or effective. However, one practical way of relaxing and refocusing thoughts, is through the use of controlled breathing. Ordinarily, breathing occurs unconsciously, but controlled breathing is the conscious manipulation of your breathing that acts as a break on overarousal.

Box breathing. One of the popular techniques is known as "box breathing." Many of you may already be familiar with this technique, under the heading of "tactical breathing," to bring down your heart rate when under pressure. The basic steps of box breathing consist of four steps:

1. Breathe in for a count of four, pulling air all the way down into your lungs, pushing out your belly
2. Pause for a count of four
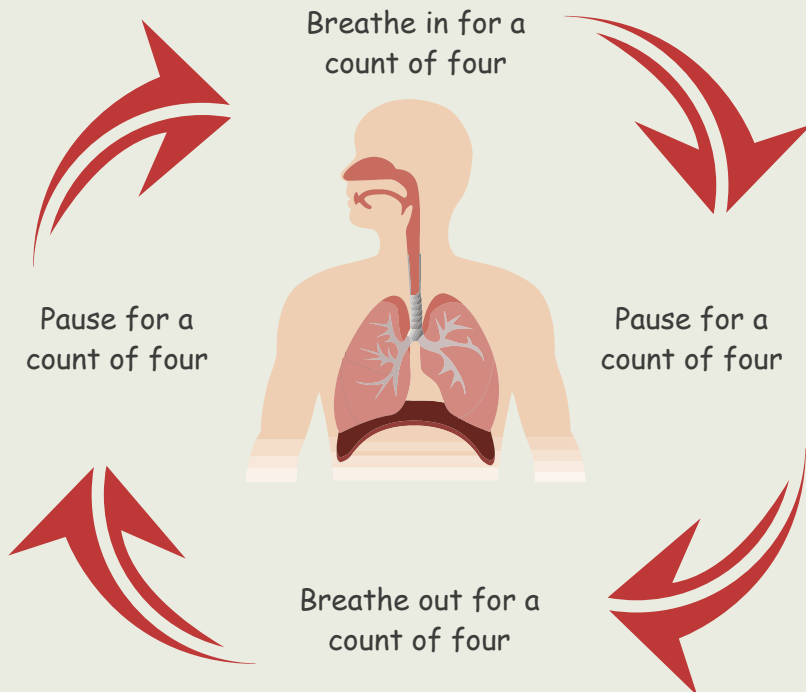3. Breathe out for a count of four
4. Pause for a count of four

Repeat three or four times, which is usually sufficient to restore your composure.

Even when not over aroused, controlled breathing can also be used as a daily meditative exercise. According to available research, it is recommended that you undertake this activity at least once a day for 4 to 5 minutes.

Remember - stay focused, stay positive and stay connected.

Reference:

http://www.ncaa.org/sport-science-institute/mind-body-and-sport-how-being-injured-affects-mental-health

Breathe in for a
count of four

Pause for a
count of four

Pause for a
count of four

Breathe out for a
count of four

FOCUS GROUPS

A grass roots approach for identifying the fixes, improves and sustains

CAPT Aimee Hamer

What is a focus group?

A focus group is a form of qualitative research, first used extensively in the early 1940s to explore issues of morale among American troops during World War II *(Ratnapalan & Hilliard, 2002)*. They are a carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions about a defined area of interest in a permissive and non-threatening environment *(Krueger, 1994)*. The focus group format has also found favour with those doing testing for new products, program improvement, organisational development and outcome evaluation *(Leung, 2009)*.

A focus group involves the gathering of a group of people who are asked about their attitudes toward a concept, issue, product, or idea. A trained facilitator, such as a psychologist, guides discussion, using a pre-agreed set of open-ended questions. Focus groups concentrate on a clearly defined topic, with efforts made to gather information and opinions from all group members *(Mansell et al., 2004)*. Participants are free to talk with other participants as the setting is intended to be interactive.

Focus groups are an organisational tool that have and can be used within the ADF to gather qualitative data including the "how" and "why" and represent an excellent opportunity to engage personnel, identify issues from their perspective, build morale and teamwork and support for solutions proposed.

The focus group format has several advantages: it is inexpensive and time effective. What's more, individuals are more likely to provide candid responses. Through facilitated discussion, participants build on each other's ideas through "piggybacking"; and therefore the focus group is very useful for needs assessment and project evaluation purposes. Given their qualitative nature, focus groups allow researchers to look beyond the facts and numbers that might be obtained via survey methodology- allowing researchers to learn or confirm the meaning behind the facts *(Krueger, 1994; Mansell et al., 2004; Stewart & Shamdasani, 1998).*

Why use focus groups in the ADF?

Within the ADF, focus groups represent an opportunity to quickly and easily gain a snapshot of daily obstacles, areas for improvement and potential solutions, with input coming directly from those involved. They can also be used to support the existing ADF "improves, sustain and fixes" methodology.

Focus groups improve overall organisational effectiveness by:

• Improving employee engagement and empowering individuals. Employees will work harder if their efforts are recognised, they feel their concerns are heard and are empowered to be a part of the problem solving process.

- Focus groups can reduce staff turnover. Employees are less likely to quit their jobs if they feel recognised, appreciated or have the ability to provide input.

- Focus groups obtain specific, relevant and actionable information. They allow for observation of body language, behaviours, team dynamics, experiences, ideas, beliefs, perceptions, attitudes and feelings – unlike surveys and "one on one" interviews. Focus group discussions are more than the sum of individual interviews because participants both query and explain themselves to each other.

- Focus groups allow for clarification and immediate follow up. Groups can brainstorm problems and come up with the "why" and "how". Additionally, participants' insights encourage others to open up and share their ideas and perspectives.

- Focus groups uncover solutions. They gather suggestions to improve processes from those who actually

engage in and apply these procedures on a daily basis.

- They're a flexible tool that can be adapted to suit rank levels, units, corps etc.

- They allow for varying group sizes. The focus group can be a sample of the entire group (e.g. a percentage of the unit) or the whole population of smaller subsets (e.g. a rank group within a unit).

Specifically for the ADF, a focus group is a management tool which can be utilised by command to identify, improve and provide a possible fix in the following common areas:

- morale
- corp/trade/skill specific deficiencies or concerns
- teamwork
- high levels of absenteeism or presenteeism
- high discharge rates
- productivity and burnout
- during times of change such as under a new CO or a new chain of command structure
- surveys such as PULSE or IGADF audits identify areas of concern

Why do we look at the "fixes, improves and sustains"?

We utilise this structure for our focus group, as it is used broadly and understood in the ADF. It is commonly used as an after-action review methodology; in order to identify tasks in which the unit is proficient and tasks that require further development and training. The intent is to focus training on mission-essential tasks and the supporting areas that are new or require improvement. This is built on the principle of identifying and addressing weaknesses to improve overall strength.

It is a solution-focused approach that allows for identification of what is and is not working and ways to fix it.

Fix	Improve	Sustain
Outline areas of concern and corrective actions required.	Identify aspects that were poor and need to be improved.	Name aspects that are good and should be sustained.

Key characteristics of focus groups

Characteristic	Criteria
Size	• Usually 7–10 people per group • Each group is a single unit • 2–4 units are often needed
Participants	• Need not be randomised • Can be homogenous (groups of the same), heterogeneous (different groups), or both, depending on the topic
Group moderator	Trained facilitator impartial to the study (i.e, psych team)
Setting	Interactive
Data collection	Notes (collated by the facilitator and/or development by the participants i.e., butcher's paper, whiteboard)

How are focus groups conducted and what planning is required?

The first step is to clarify expectations - what is the purpose of the focus group and what information are you hoping to gather? Participant selection follows. Participants are selected based on common or diverse characteristics, depending on the research question. After the participants are invited, efforts must also be made to encourage attendance and ensure participants understand what they are undertaking. It is important to choose a convenient location and to provide reminders before the focus group meets.

The questions developed for the focus group must be short, natural, and open-ended. Questions in focus groups have been noted to fall into five general categories:

• opening questions
• introductory questions

- transition questions
- key questions (focusing on the main areas of concern)
- concluding questions

Most of the focus group time is devoted to exploring and examining the key questions. In general, focus group discussions are 60 to 90 minutes long. Throughout the session, the facilitator must aid the discussion and attempt to elicit participation from all members, ensuring that appropriate direction is maintained. To obtain valid and meaningful results, focus groups must be conducted with a suitably defined purpose, proper structure, and appropriate rigour.

When planning a focus group, we look at multiple factors to ensure that discussion is relevant. Engagement with command is essential to ensure the facilitator knows the audience and obtains information of corps, trade, and background including work tempo. It is also important to organise groups with a common purpose, such as looking at a rank level, or other characteristics that define a group within the workplace.

Finally, a member within the command is encouraged to talk to the audience prior to the focus group commencement. This allows command to share their involvement and highlight the importance and value of the task. This is also important for participants
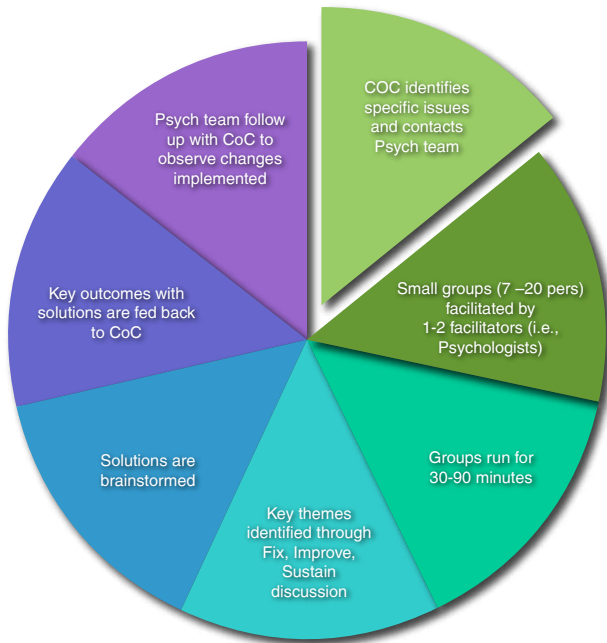
to understand the purpose of the focus group and have ownership in the process.

Once the focus group is completed, key themes and potential courses of action in line with the fix, improve, sustain model are discussed with command. Follow up with the unit in an appropriate time frame will be undertaken by the facilitator to monitor progress and changes made. This also allows opportunity for the facilitator to provide further recommendations for ongoing improvement and further interventions as appropriate.

The focus group format has several advantages: it is inexpensive and time effective. What's more, individuals are more likely to provide candid responses. Through facilitated discussion, participants build on each other's ideas through "piggybacking"; and therefore the focus group is very useful for needs assessment and project evaluation purposes. Given their qualitative nature, focus groups allow researchers to look beyond the facts and numbers that might be obtained via survey methodology - providing opportunity for researchers to learn or confirm the meaning behind the facts.

What does the focus group process look like in the ADF?

The pie chart shows the following stages:
- COC identifies specific issues and contacts Psych team
- Small groups (7 –20 pers) facilitated by 1-2 facilitators (i.e., Psychologists)
- Groups run for 30-90 minutes
- Key themes identified through Fix, Improve, Sustain discussion
- Solutions are brainstormed
- Key outcomes with solutions are fed back to CoC
- Psych team follow up with CoC to observe changes implemented

How do you initiate a focus group?

If you believe your unit could benefit from a focus group, or want more information, utilise the chain of command to contact 1 Psych Unit OP Performance, who will discuss whether a focus group is the best methodology to meet your needs.

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POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

The relationship between happiness and performance

MAJ Tom Heaney

What comes to mind when you think of psychology? Perhaps you think of people seeking treatment for depression, anxiety, PTSD, or other mental health issues? Indeed a lot of work in mental health and psychology is focused on treating people who are unwell or experiencing other concerns in their life. However, there are areas of psychology that look at enhancing the lives of people who are not unwell but simply want to perform and function better in their daily life and career.

In Defence, we see this preventative and performance enhancement approach used within BattleSMART. This training is delivered at Kapooka and RMC Duntroon to help new members of the ADF build resilience and utilise effective coping mechanisms. BattleSMART is also delivered as pre-deployment training to enhance ADF members' ability to cope effectively with deployment. Another area of psychology that has looked at enhancing human experience is known as 'Positive Psychology'.

For over 20 years, Positive Psychology has acknowledged that there is an important difference between being free from mental health issues and living a happy, fulfilled, and productive life. That is to say that the absence of anxiety, depression or other mental health issues does not equal happiness. So why is it important to be happy? What are the benefits of happiness?

There is evidence to support that happiness can in fact cause many social and lifestyle benefits, as opposed to happiness simply being an outcome or result of engaging in positive experiences *(Diener & Tay, 2012)*. Some of the benefits of being happy include: aiding health and longevity, improved social relationships, and increased workplace success. Furthermore, a lack of happiness has been linked to less efficient functioning and increased likelihood of issues in the abovementioned areas *(Lyubomirsky, King, & Diener, 2005)*. The founder of Positive Psychology, Dr. Martin Seligman, has conducted considerable research into strategies that we can all utilise to increase happiness. Implementing these strategies can help us to handle the challenges of life more effectively, and improve our mental health, well-being and satisfaction in daily life.

Dr. Seligman developed the **PERMA** model, which identifies five core elements to psychological well-being and happiness. Not only can this model be used for individuals, but it can also be applied in organisational settings to help people develop new

cognitive and emotional tools. The five elements are: **P**ositive Emotion, **E**ngagement, **R**elationships, **M**eaning, and **A**ccomplishment.

Positive Emotion. This refers to being able to maintain focus on positive emotions, the ability to be optimistic, and view situations from a positive perspective. Focusing on the positive aspects of life and identifying and maintaining a positive view of life can be beneficial to developing good social and work relationships.

Engagement. This is all about participating in activities that need your full engagement. These may be intellectually stimulating or creative activities and could include things such as: playing an instrument, playing a sport, dancing, working on a project, or engaging in a hobby. When we are entirely absorbed in fulfilling work or interesting hobbies we can experience 'flow' (otherwise known as being 'in the zone'). Flow is an intense state of concentration and complete immersion in tasks or activities. With flow of engagement we can stretch our existing skills and abilities to perform better.

Relationships. Relationships and social connections are essential to good mental health and well-being. Making an effort to build and maintain positive relationships with friends, family, and colleagues not only provides enjoyment of interaction but

Image from positivepsychologyprogram.com/perma-model/

also means that you have social support to utilise in difficult times.

Meaning. Dr. Seligman's research has found that the pursuit of pleasure or material wealth does not produce lasting happiness. Rather, he emphasises the pursuit of purpose and meaning in your life as a method to produce happiness. This can involve taking time to reflect on the greater importance of your work and why you chose your particular career. This positive reflection on purpose and meaning helps you to get more enjoyment from tasks and helps you to become happier and more satisfied.

Accomplishments. A sense of accomplishment can come from setting goals, making progress towards these goals, having pride in yourself and your

work, and ambition to achieve in life. When setting goals, these should be SMART. That is, Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound. Working towards goals and experiencing a sense of accomplishment helps us to push ourselves to thrive and flourish.

While mental health support can be of great benefit to people who have mental health issues or are dealing with significant stressors, psychological research can also be utilised to improve performance and other aspects of daily life. By being aware of the PERMA model and applying this to your life, you can work towards building psychological well-being and happiness and experience benefits to your physical health, social relationships, and workplace performance. You can also

try the following five positive psychology activities:

- **Three good things:** Before going to bed, take a moment to reflect on three good things that happened during the day and why you think these things happened. Writing these down or making a note in your phone will train you to start focusing on the positive things in your life.

- **Use your strengths:** Identify your signature strengths by completing the 'Values in Action' survey at authentichappiness.org and then use one of your strengths in a new way, every day for a week.

- **Be Kind:** Perform five acts of kindness all in one day. These can be as simple as getting someone a coffee, writing a thank you email, or offering to assist with a task. Take time to reflect on how performing these kind acts made you feel.

- **Mindfulness Meditation:** Mindfulness meditation involves paying attention to our thoughts, feelings, emotions, and sensations in the present moment. When doing this, you're not trying to change what you're experiencing, but just notice it with a sense of acceptance and non-judgment. There's also plenty of good apps available to guide you through mindfulness.

- **The Gratitude Visit:** If there's someone who has had a significant impact in your life, someone who went out of their way to help or support you, or someone you feel very grateful to have in your life, write a gratitude letter to that person. State in detail what he or she did and express your appreciation in concrete terms. Then, if possible, arrange so that you can surprise them by reading the letter out to them in person.

Further information regarding positive psychology can be found at authentichappiness.org

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Work-life balance in the ADF

CAPT Pat Smith & SGT Phil Condoleon

The CEO of Amazon recently suggested that the idea of a work-life balance is problematic, because it implies a trade-off between the two concepts. He proposed that we should instead look at personal and professional pursuits as a 'circle' where both aspects meet different parts of our needs. But is this kind of harmony always achievable during service life in the military? Lengthy field exercises, interstate courses, and postings to different locations can be difficult to balance with personal goals and family situations. These five tips will help set you up for the best chance at creating a harmony between work and home.

Tip 1: Recognise burnout indicators. Burnout can happen to anyone, especially high achievers. When there is too much happening for too long at work, home, or both, this will start to have an adverse effect on your functioning. It can be really tempting to crack on and ignore the initial signs, but the flow-on effects in other areas of your life will make it harder to bounce back. Signs of burnout can vary, but the key is to recognise them in yourself and take early action. An important part of being resilient is developing consistent effort, not unsustainable efforts. Sort out the problem at the simplest level possible by refuelling your body and wellbeing. This goes hand in hand with self care.

Classic Signs of Burnout		
Fatigue	Insomnia	Forgetfulness
Low appetite	Anxiety	Low mood
Short temper	Cynicism	Nil motivation
Hopelessness	Self neglect	Helplessness
Poor performance	Social isolation	Poor concentration

Tip 2: Self care. Self care is all about recognising that we're worth investing time and resources into ourselves. We do valuable things for others at work and in our personal life. So, it makes sense to look after ourselves. Self care activities can be anything that leaves you feeling rested and ready to take on the next challenge in life. This readiness becomes really important when the harmony between work and personal life is challenged. Caring for yourself will always set you up to perform at your best when you need to. What have you got to lose by trying?

Self Care Ideas		
Catch up with mates	Cook yourself breakfast	Go to the movies
Get a massage	Ride a bike	See a live band
Eat a nice meal	Revisit hobbies	Read a book
Sleep in	Outdoor PT	Sing in the car
Long hot shower	Plan next holiday	Make a music playlist

Tip 3: Align your spare time with your values. Values are ideals and attitudes that guide our important life decisions. What are your values? Having an opportunity to apply them across your work and personal life is a crucial key to achieving the harmony that Amazon's CEO was talking about. A career in the ADF offers a great chance to live in accordance with strong values like teamwork and integrity. Fulfilling these values, however, can involve time away and unusual working hours, which can conflict with other important values like family and living a balanced life. How you spend your spare time is the more controllable part of that equation where you can create a healthy balance. Write down the most important things in your life. Then write down what you actually do during your spare time. Do the lists match? If not, perhaps it might be worth steering your time and effort in the directions of those values.

Examples of Values		
Courage	Initiative	Respect
Teamwork	Security	Accountability
Patience	Confidence	Mateship
Empathy	Family	Integrity
Balanced life	Happiness	Success
Self-development	Self-reliance	Self-reliance

Tip 4: Catch up with mates or seek trusted support. A career in the ADF is like no other. You can surround yourself with mates all around the country and abroad. So why not use this network to help balance your work and personal life? It's a great way of using those workplace benefits to your advantage in your personal life, and achieving a harmony between the two. Catching up with mates can also be a great example of self care. Did you know that simply talking about issues you've been experiencing can have powerful benefits for your wellbeing? Even if the problems can't be solved, talking things out gives your mind an opportunity to work through the whole issue, rather than allowing the same thoughts to keep spinning through your mind. The person you choose to talk to should be someone who you feel most comfortable around, to talk openly and honestly. That person could be a close mate, a mentor, or even a mental health professional who will ensure your information stays confidential. The great part about the ADF is that it provides a full network of people to connect with.

Tip 5: Physical exercise. In addition to being a mandatory part of our job, most of us exercise to obtain the benefits of physical fitness, increased strength, and a healthy weight. In addition, regular exercise can enhance both brain function and mental health.

Exercise improves cognitive function. Exercise promotes the generation of new neurons forming in the brain, leading to new neural connections. Regular moderate-intensity physical activity increases the volume of brain in areas associated with memory, learning, attention, and planning. The benefits of exercise can last decades. Regular exercise in mid-life (43-55) lowers the risk of developing dementia later in life by an average of 52%.

Exercise improves sleep. Regular exercise increases both total sleep time and time spent in restorative slow-wave sleep. Exercise promotes sleepiness at night and reduces sleep onset. Good sleep is essential to daytime alertness, vitality, and good mood. Improved mood promotes better mental performance where the pre-frontal cortex is involved in planning and problem solving.

Exercise allows our brains to unconsciously solve problems. The brain regions responsible for making decisions continue to be active even when the conscious brain is distracted with a different task.   Difficult problems with no immediate identifiable solution may present less of a challenge when exercise is used to distract our immediate attention allowing the brain to work unconsciously.

Intense exercise. Can bring about short-term euphoria, reduction of anxiety, and an increase in pain threshold. These benefits are largely due to the release of endorphins (brain opioids). Exercise can also distract us from our daily worries.

How much exercise do I need and what type?

Aerobic exercise such as cycling, swimming, running, and walking appear to have the most benefits. Mood can be elevated in as little as five minutes after commencing aerobic exercise. Gaining the additional benefits of improved sleep and cognitive functioning requires a mix of longer exercise periods and intensities, including resistance training involving large muscle groups along with aerobic exercise.

WORKPLACE MOTIVATION

CPL Brienne Gibbs

Motivation plays a significant role in the performance of members of a workforce, in our case, the ADF. This article outlines the two key categories of motivation and how they can be influenced.

Intrinsic motivation

Intrinsic motivation is the inner drive to undertake a task in order to achieve the psychological rewards that individuals derive directly from the task. People join the ADF because they are intrinsically interested in the military or they derive a sense of personal meaning from serving. On a day-to-day level, we all know people who work above and beyond essential requirements in order to derive a sense of personal satisfaction from a job done well.

Extrinsic motivation

Extrinsic motivation is when the behaviour is driven by external influences, in particular to gain rewards and avoid punishments. The rewards can be things like pay and promotions, but also recognition in the form of awards and commendations. In other cases, it is necessary to do things to satisfy job requirements, e.g., maintaining a clean uniform and tidy appearance, when you prefer an old t-shirt and jeans.

Mixed motivations

Both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations can drive workplace behaviour in parallel, but they don't necessarily function together. In fact, the use of external rewards can erode a person's intrinsic interest in a task. For example, if a soldier naturally enjoys cleaning and maintaining equipment, that activity can become a chore if the boss implements a maintenance goals system, in which each soldier must repair a certain number of items each week and is only then rewarded for reaching certain goals. This type of extrinsic motivation can change what had been an enjoyable activity into a chore. You may see an increase in the quantity of work but at the expense of the quality of work as intrinsic motivation declines.

Motivation is not fixed. Someone may initially be extrinsically motivated to do an activity and then the more they practise it and get better at it they can start to enjoy it and their motivation can become more intrinsic. For example, some people may initially engage in daily physical activity to simply meet entry and PT requirements, but, with time, they come to enjoy physical activity for the feeling of well-being it produces.

Self-determination theory

This theory provides insight into how it might be possible to maintain intrinsic motivation within a system of extrinsic incentives. According to this theory, we all have three innate psychological needs that underpin intrinsic motivation beyond the specific interest in a task. We function best at work when these needs are being met:

- **Autonomy:** We want to feel that we have control over our actions and the course of our lives.

- **Competence:** We want to be skilled in the things we do and to know what the outcomes of our actions will be.

- **Relatedness:** We want to be connected to and interact with those around us.

What does all this mean for the workplace?

Tip 1: Promote autonomy. This is achieved by allowing, as far as possible, individuals to self-manage the scheduling of their tasks. High levels of self-management can increase intrinsic motivation, which can produce self-reinforcing positive cycles, with individuals becoming increasingly self-managing and energised by their tasks.

Tip 2: Competence and confidence. These are linked to intrinsic motivation. When someone becomes more competent and confident with a task, this can have a positive effect on their intrinsic motivation for that task. So, if someone in the team seems unmotivated in a particular area, it may be worth looking into how confident they feel in that area. It may be that some extra training or advice is required to increase their competence and confidence, which may in turn increase their motivation and productivity.

Tip 3: Value team members. This can be a better reward than money or awards. People are much more productive when they feel their efforts are appreciated and they are valued in the workplace. This recognition costs nothing and can be as simple as thanking a team member for staying back late to cover someone else. You may feel that you shouldn't have to thank people for doing their job, and you don't. However, if showing a bit of appreciation makes for a happier and more productive team and costs you nothing, why wouldn't you?

Compassionate Leadership

Developing a 'command culture' that can improve performance, sustain wellbeing and unlock innovation.

CAPT Duncan Precious

'A true leader has the confidence to stand alone, the courage to make tough decisions and the compassion to listen to the needs of others.'

General Douglas McArthur

Compassion is defined as sensitivity to the suffering/distress of others with a deep commitment to try to relieve and prevent it. This definition refers to several qualities of military leadership: first, a strong moral compass; second, a determination to relieve suffering; third, courage to do what is right, even when others around you may not. A common misconception is that compassion can lead to emotional weakness in leaders whom we desire to possess a ruthless will to succeed on the battlefield. But the two qualities are not mutually exclusive. Although it is fundamentally an emotional instinct, compassion should also be viewed as a rational choice for leaders with emotional intelligence and sound judgement. There is a place for firm and decisive leadership; and there is a time for compassion; a leader need not be one or the other. Arguably, if leaders value and draw on the experience and ideas of others, and explain their decisions and way of thinking when there is time to do so (in barracks); it will ensure their decisions are followed effectively and without question when there is no time to do this (in the heat of battle).

Compassionate leadership can enhance the mental fortitude of a team, particularly in dangerous and life-threatening situations. If subordinates believe a leader cares about their safety and wellbeing; they will also believe the leader would only compromise their safety when absolutely necessary. This level of trust can inspire immense courage and determination to succeed.

Compassionate leadership has a number of other positive side effects. For example, it can aid us in understanding the perspectives, motivations and behaviors of other 'actors' on the battlefield; be they partnered forces, civilians or adversaries. Ultimately, war is about influencing people to achieve political objectives. If we possess the ability to empathise then we also have a greater ability to identify how to shape those perspectives, motivations and behaviors to meet our military objectives.

A further positive benefit is in unlocking innovation. To be successful in the future we must cultivate innovation from the bottom up, recognising that our senior leaders are not necessarily the ones with answers to the challenges of the information/digital age. Conflict is increasingly complex and multidimensional. Our traditional templates do not fit neatly onto theatres, such as the counter-Daesh effort in Syria and Iraq. Within all aspects of our training and force development we must be prepared to consider alternative solutions to problems, to try new ways of operating, and to accept and learn from failure. The renowned US Commander Gen Stanley McCrystal urges us to 'allow people to fail but not to be failures.' We can only do this by creating a supportive and compassionate environment where our younger generation, with a different set of skills and from other walks of life, are motivated to put their hand up and share their ideas and expertise. But they are unlikely to contribute unless they feel valued, believe they will be listened to, and do not feel the weight of failure.

Compassion has a strong association with successful military leadership. The Chinese general, military strategist and philosopher Sun Tzu (6th Century BCE) wrote: 'look on your soldiers as your own beloved sons and they will stand by you even unto death'. David Stirling, the founder of the Special Air Service, was revered by his men for the time he devoted to their well-being. This approach stands in stark contrast to the dark side

of leadership; whereby an anti-social leader displays insensitivity to suffering and carelessly or purposefully causes it. Humanity has a history of intense cruelty and indifference to suffering – commonly orchestrated by anti-social leaders such as Adolf Hitler, Joseph Stalin, Pol Pot and Augusto Pinochet.

Contemporary psychological studies demonstrate that compassionate and supportive environments have numerous positive side effects, including:

- motivated work force

- teamwork

- personal development and wellbeing

- creativity and innovation

Often termed 'pro-social' leadership, leaders that display these qualities are characterised by secure/non-striving competition, shared decision-making and cooperation. They hold a belief system that 'others will accept me even

if I fail' and 'I am valued for what I am and not what I achieve'. They serve others by promoting the team and enjoy supporting and empowering others. They are concerned about relationship quality, fairness and well-being of others. In the military, pro-social leaders have the effect of making those under their command feel valued. They lead through respect and inspiration, and not through fear of failure. If soldiers believe their concerns are listened to and their needs are being met they will follow because they want to; not because they have to.

Anti-social leaders on the other hand tend to operate within a threat-based/competitive system - whereby they avoid feelings of inferiority and loss of control by engaging in insecure/striving competition. They tend to be motivated by their own success and not that of the team or organisation. Research highlights a belief system such as; 'to be valued I have to strive to succeed' and 'people compare me to others to see if I match up' therefore, 'I cannot be seen

to make a mistake'. These leaders are often perceived as aloof, egotistical, emotionally disconnected, self-serving and aggressive. This style has been termed 'toxic' leadership. Unfortunately, such 'toxic' leaders exist within our military today. Toxic leadership can give rise to:

- power dynamics– bullying/control from the top

- making people fearful for their annual reports

- constantly reorganising and breaking up teams

- promoting the incompetent

- stifling innovation and creativity

However, anti-social styles of leadership ignore everything we know about psychology, which shows that we perform better under positive, supportive relationships. For example cardiovascular, immune, emotion regulation and

intelligence systems are optimised when we feel valued and loved. Not too different from the contexts that enable our children to grow and flourish. Here there is a strong link between attachment theory *(Bowlby, 1958)* and leadership. Bowlby developed one of the most influential psychological theories and hypothesised that the nature of our relationship with our caregivers (mother, father, extended family) shapes our 'attachment template' – like a roadmap for how we relate to ourselves and others in adult life. Our attachment template is developed via a number of important processes including: 'proximity seeking' – desire closeness to be with our caregiver; 'secure base' – to go out and develop confidence to explore and 'safe haven' – source of comfort and emotion regulation. If a caregiver provides these formative experiences in a consistent way, the child is likely to develop a secure attachment style. However, a lack of these experiences in early life can seriously disrupt motivation, emotion and self regulation systems and lead to an insecure attachment style.

Research has found that our attachment history is likely to influence our leadership style *(Popper & Amit, 2009)*. Threat based/competitive anti-social leaders are more likely to have an insecure attachment style. As such they feel they must compete for social position and come across as self-serving. They are ineffective in containing and regulating their own emotions. Therefore, are likely to project their emotions onto others, causing subordinates to feel under threat and defensive. In contrast a pro-social leader, who has a secure attachment style, will not be driven by his ego, not intimidated by the abilities of others and therefore be concerned more with serving others. You will probably have worked under both types of leaders and can remember how they made you feel when you interacted with them.

In terms of emotional control – which is vital for a soldier – it is through early attachment experiences that we learn to regulate our emotions. Compassion motivation is biologically set up to organise our minds and bodies in ways that allows us to deal with threat and regulate emotions more effectively. We now have a good understanding of how this occurs in the brain. The Vagus nerve – a long wandering nerve that connects the brain stem to various important parts of the body – slows the heart down (referred to as Vagal Tone). Vagal Tone, it turns out, is predictive of a host of benefits such as; being calm, being better at regulating emotion and generally experiencing more positive than negative emotional states. It also literally drives people to form relationships, to communicate in close proximity, and develop bonds (all aspects of resilience).

Relate this neuroscience to a combat situation. In a dangerous, highly threatening situation, a soldiers' fear, threat and vigilance response will automatically kick in – activated by the Sympathetic Nervous System (SNS). If they are surrounded by their mates – and trust and respect their leader – then their vagal response will

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be more inhibited, promoting a feeling of safeness and containment. As a result, they will have greater ability to contain and regulate their emotions and behave in a calm and professional way. Over time then, the cohesive bonds formed between soldiers, together with the conditions set by supportive leadership, can literally rewire the brain and recreate a secure attachment – leading to feelings of psychological safety and a remarkable ability to endure suffering in the most dangerous of situations. Indeed, there are many examples of how the camaraderie and 'brotherhood' formed between soldiers can motivate individuals to act with incredible heroism and bravery in order to protect those standing next to them.

Arguably, in times of war, compassionate leadership is even more pertinent to sustaining mental wellbeing. In my job, I have had the privilege of listening to the stories and experiences of soldiers returning from war. I have often found those who have been to war, experienced its horrors and born its psychological scars,

have grown from bearing witness to such suffering. They come back changed in a positive sense; with humility, emotional maturity, more appreciation of loving relationships and an enduring desire to alleviate the suffering/distress of others. If these qualities can be coupled with a sense of purpose and achievement, then ultimately these soldiers have positive outcomes, regardless of the trauma they have experienced. This is what has been referred to as post-traumatic growth. In contrast, soldiers that find themselves unsupported, disconnected, alienated from unit life and under unsupportive leadership, can experience considerable distress and feel constantly under threat – as they find their psychological safety structure gone. Sadly, in my experience, it is in these situations that individuals exposed to trauma are more likely to go on to develop symptoms consistent with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

The evidence from neuroscience and psychological studies tells us that in order to create the 'command culture' we

aspire to, we have both an individual and organisational responsibility to create a feeling of psychological safety, connection and belonging at all levels. To cultivate a mindset in which we seek to push boundaries by allowing mistakes to be made. Training leaders to be able to sit with uncertainty – not feeling as though they always have to have the answer. Where leaders have the courage to praise good work and positively reinforce pro-social behaviour. Where we promote pro-social leaders who adopt said qualities and have checks and balances in place to call out 'toxic' leaders for what they are, no matter how difficult and personally confronting this may be. Where our training establishments focus on developing character – role modelling how successful military leaders can lead with the heart and not just the head. Rather than perceiving compassion and kindness as coming from a position of weakness, compassion could be viewed as one of the most important declarations of strength and courage known to humanity *(Gilbert 2015).*

If we truly want to maximise the performance, wellbeing, innovation and longevity of our soldiers, then for me it is a no brainer. We need to lead with compassion.

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