

Operational Resilience Training



Mental Health Scale

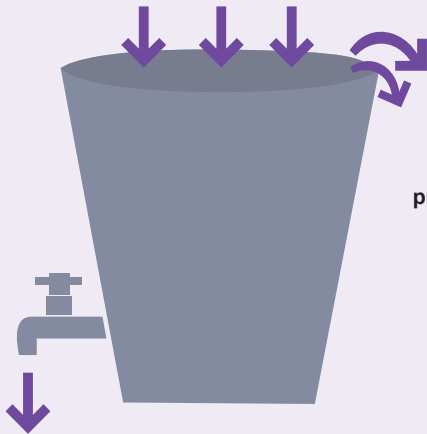
	Optimal readiness	Ready	Reacting	Strained	Combat ineffective
Mood	Self-aware	Normal mood	Irritable/ impatient	Angry	Out of control
	Content	Stable	Nervous	Anxiety	Strong anxiety
	Grateful	Grounded	Sad	Pervasive sadness	Panic attacks
	Optimistic	Takes things in stride	Overwhelmed Touchy	Hopelessness	Depressed or suicidal thoughts
State of amind	Performing consistently well	Performing well	Displaced sarcasm	Negative attitude	Overt insubordination
	Confident and realistic	Capacity for enjoyment	Little enjoyment	Poor performance	Unable to perform duties or concentrate
		In mental control	Forgetful/distracted	Poor concentration	
Sleep	Maintaining good sleep habits	Normal sleep pattern	Restless sleep	Restless/disturbed sleep	Can't fall or stay asleep
	Excellent sleep quality	Little sleep difficulty	Bad dreams or nightmares	Reccurent nightmares	Sleeping too much or too little
Physical	Feeling healthy and fit	Good energy and physical activity levels	Tense muscles	Increased aches and pains	Significant pains
	Feeling flexible, strong, and energetic		Headaches	Increased fatigue	Constant fatigue
			Low physical energy		
Social connection	Building and maintaining strong and deep social connections	Good social connections	Reduced social connections	Avoidance	Active rejection of social connections
		Trusting relationships		Withdrawal	
Behavior	Using mental skills	Little use of alcohol and other intoxicants	Increased substance use and/or gambling	Uncontrolled substance use and/or gambling	Self harm
	Active self-care		Recklessness		Addiction Suicidal behavior

Operational Resilience Skills

	Optimize	Maintain	Counteract	Seek help	
Self care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commit to a healthy lifestyle Practice acceptance Cultivate a growth mindset Focus attention Practice forgiveness Maintain relationships and build social support networks Break daunting tasks into manageable chunks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Know your limits Maintain healthy nourishment, exercise, sleep, and alcohol use Solve problems pro-actively Identify and minimize stressors Use social support Control the controllables Regulate your emotions Engage in self-talk Maintain perspective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notice signs of stress and distress Reach out to others Control the controllables Use "worry postponement" Engage in problem solving Remember the larger picture and purpose Practice deliberate breathing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek social support! Don't withdraw Contact health personnel Talk to your leadership about your situation Seek guidance from someone you trust Reduce anxiety by «grounding» Use «worry postponement» Be kind to yourself 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek immediate assistance from health personnel or other available resource Expect recovery
Buddy care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage goal attainment Inspire team professionalism Build strong cohesion Leverage emotional contagion Cultivate optimism Practice gratitude 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen actively Normalize Communicate effectively Appreciate others Be inclusive Encourage mental skills Engage in "buddy talk" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen actively and acknowledge stress Prompt mental skills (deliberate breathing, muscle relaxation) Challenge negative thinking and use problem solving Lighten the mood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen actively Coach mental skills («grounding») Provide practical support Have a «check-in» conversation Marshal unit resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practice iCover Reach out to resources Escort the person to care Help unit stabilize in aftermath Encourage purposeful action in team

The Stress Bucket

Stress flows into the bucket



If the bucket overflows
problems develop
("snapping")

Good coping = tap working, let the stress out

Bad coping = tap not working, so water fills the bucket

Stress

Challenging Unhelpful Thinking

Under stress, soldiers tend to focus on the negative and get stuck in unhelpful thinking patterns. Being aware of these patterns and counteracting them is a key mental health skill.



Common Patterns of Unhelpful Thinking	Example of Unhelpful Thoughts	Example of Helpful Thoughts
Over-generalizing: conclusion based on single piece of evidence	<i>"I am a bad person because I made this mistake"</i>	<i>"I made a mistake and feel guilty"</i>
Mind-reading: assuming the thoughts and intentions of others with limited information	<i>"My partner hasn't messaged me back right away so they must not care about what I'm going through"</i>	<i>"My partner might be busy and I'm worried because I've been hurt in the past"</i>
Emotional reasoning: using feelings to make conclusions without balance of other information	<i>"I feel incompetent, therefore I must not have what it takes to do this job"</i>	<i>"Even if I feel incompetent, there is no actual evidence that I can't do my job"</i>

Help Soldiers Under Stress:

1. Recognize Unhelpful Thoughts
2. Counter Unhelpful Thoughts

Helpful Phrases for Assessment

Exploring Questions

Clarifying Questions

Confirm or Summarize

Express Concern

Exploring Questions

How have things been going for you recently?

I've heard/noticed..., can you tell me more about what's been going on?

What have you been doing to manage stress?

How do you think you're handling this situation?

Clarifying Questions

Tell me more about that.

What makes you think that?

When did you first notice this?

Is this the first time you've experienced something like this?

Confirm or Summarize

So you are saying...

Do you mean...

It sounds like...

Express Concern (I-Statements)

I worry about how the team is doing.

I'm concerned about how much you are snapping at people.

After what happened, I wanted to see how you're doing.

Mental Status Examination Domains

Use the following domains to guide your observation during a clinical interview.

Appearance and Behavior Do they look put together?	Mood and Affect (Mood) How do they say they are feeling? (Affect) What emotional state are they in?	Motor Activity Are they pacing, wringing hands, unable to sit still?
Orientation Are they able to recognize where they are?	Speech Do they have any notable aspects to their manner of speech?	Thought Process Do their thoughts appear organized and follow a logical train of thought?

Treating Combat and Operational Stress Reactions

To treat soldiers with Combat and Operational Stress Reactions, use the 5Rs and the PIES principles.

5 Rs

- **Reassurance** that what they are experiencing is normal
- **Rest** as close to the front lines as possible
- **Replenish** with sleep, food, and water
- **Restore** confidence by assigning purposeful activity
- **Return** to duty

Treat as close to the unit as possible

Treat as soon as symptoms start



Set expectation soldier will return to duty

Use simple methods to restore Health

Problem Solving

Help soldiers solve problems that add to their stress by coaching them to follow systematic steps.



Problem Solving step	Description
Define problem	Generate alternatives
Generate alternatives	Develop as many possible alternatives as you can
Make decisions about what to do	Compare between alternatives and choose the best solution
Implement action	Make plans and carry out the chosen action
Check back in to reflect	Assess results so you're better prepared in the future

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

The script below is an example you can follow or read to someone. Allow time for tensing and releasing of muscles, without straining yourself.

Make sure you are in a comfortable position, either sitting or lying down with legs uncrossed. Bring your focus to your breathing, and take a few slow full breaths.

Bring your awareness to your head. Breathe in through your nose, and as you do, tense the muscles in your forehead by arching your eyebrows upward. Hold that for a few seconds and notice what that tension feels like. Release that tension as you breathe out.

Lift up your shoulders, trying to touch them to your ears. Hold them there. Now release. Feel their heavy weight as they relax.

Clench your fists tightly — hold — and release. Wiggle your fingers and notice how loose they are. Continue to breathe fully and slowly, noticing any feelings of tension leaving your body as every muscle is released.

Tighten your buttocks by clenching them — hold — and release. Feel the looseness around your hips.

Pull your toes up and towards you, feeling the tension as your calves stretch — hold — release. Curl your toes under, tensing your feet. Hold, and then relax. Feel the weight of your legs sinking down. Take a low and slow breath.

Do a gentle scan through your body — Feel the heaviness and the feeling of relaxation — breathe.

Basic Rules:

1. Focus on muscle groups
2. Work your way through your body
3. Hold tension & then release
4. Pay attention to both sensations



Psychosis

Signs and Symptoms

- Delusions (unrealistic, bizarre beliefs)
- Hallucinations (sensory perceptions unrelated to reality)
- Disorganized thought (tangential or unintelligible thoughts)
- Disorganized behavior (agitated, disconnected, inappropriate, non-sensical behaviors)
- Passive and unresponsive (blunted emotional expression, minimal speech)
- Paranoia (suspiciousness)

Interventions



1. Establish safety & observe

Bring soldier to a quiet, safe place

Observe to ensure they don't harm themselves or others

Do NOT challenge their beliefs

Use strategies to reduce symptoms of anxiety

Minimize ability to act on psychotic symptoms

Determine suicidal or homicidal risk



2. Assess cause of psychosis

Rule out drug use

Determine and stabilize influence of substance



3. Evacuate soldier

Use short-term meds until symptoms lessen if available

Facilitate evaluation by professional healthcare provider

Transfer to nearest medical facility

Suicide Risk Assessment



Assess:

Current suicidal thoughts

A plan for suicide

Intent to die by suicide

History of prior suicide attempt(s)

Protective factors (hopefulness & social connections)

Considerations:

Talking with someone about suicide will not increase the chance of them attempting

Plans or intent increase risk

Self-injurious behaviors

Risk Indicators:

Persistent suicidal thoughts or intrusive thoughts

Strong intent with plan to act on suicidal ideation

Recent suicide attempt

Unit exposed/impacted by suicidal event

Alcohol as coping strategy

Suicide Interventions

	Low Risk	High Risk
Signs of Low Risk Vs. High Risk	<p>Occasional thoughts of suicide</p> <p>No intent</p> <p>No plan or rehearsal</p> <p>No history of prior attempts</p>	<p>Frequent suicidal thoughts or</p> <p>Strong intent to die or</p> <p>Has plan for suicide or</p> <p>Recent suicide attempt</p> <p>Unit was exposed to suicide</p>
1. Immediate Safety	<p>Reflective Listening</p> <p>Find things that bring hope</p>	<p>Remove access to lethal means</p> <p>Limited Duty</p> <p>Frequent Check-ins</p> <p>Consider continuous monitoring</p>
2. Provide Counseling	<p>Address ongoing stressors</p> <p>Offer support & reassurance</p> <p>Connect with resources</p> <p>Help to put into perspective and normalize</p>	<p>Question them about root of ideation without judgement</p> <p>Persuade them to seek professional therapy</p> <p>Refer them to professional</p>
3. Long-Term Safety	<p>Monitor for changes</p> <p>Develop safety plan</p>	<p>Monitor for changes</p> <p>Develop safety plan</p>

Safety plan





















- Signs of worsening
- Coping strategies
- List of distractions from stressor
- List of persons to reach out to for help
- List steps to make environment safe

Sleep: A Guide For Soldiers

Loss of Sleep = Loss of Performance	Best Sleep Habits
<p>Sleep is critical for sustaining the mental abilities you need for success. Even simple tasks such as communicating, driving or plotting grid coordinates can be impaired by inadequate sleep (less than 7-8 hours every 24 hours). For example, Soldiers may correctly site a target - but it may be the wrong target.</p> <p>Field and deployment operations can create situations where inadequate sleep becomes the norm. Soldiers who don't get enough sleep accumulate a sleep debt that must be paid off. It's mission critical to make sleep a top priority.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sleep 7-8 hours every 24 hours• Go caffeine-free 6 hours before sleep• Finish PT 3 hours before sleep• Establish a decompression routine 30-60 minutes before sleep<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Read or listen to relaxing music– Avoid electronics 1 hour before sleep– Use the bathroom• Prepare a dark, cool and quiet space. Use earplugs or a fan to block sounds and cover your eyes to block light• Wake up at the same time every day• If you practice all of these habits for 2 weeks and continue to have sleep problems, go to your primary care manager
Inadequate sleep impairs these (and other) abilities:	Signs of Insufficient Sleep
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Detecting and appropriately determining threat levels• Requesting indirect fire• Coordinating squad tactics• Integrating range cards	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Struggling to stay awake during breaks, guard duty or driving• Difficulty understanding or tracking information• Attention lapses• Irritability, decreased initiative/motivation
Sleep is CRITICAL for sustaining the mental abilities you need for success in training & on the battlefield.	Overcoming Sleep Distractions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use naps to get 7-8 hours of sleep per 24 hours• Only use medications for sleep if your primary care manager determined they are necessary

Selected Sleep-Related Apps and Settings

There are many smartphone applications designed to help you relax, fall asleep, track your sleep, or wake you up. Here are a few that you may find useful.

DoD-Endorsed Apps		Platform	
	Tactical Breather can be used to gain control over physiological and psychological responses to stress. Through practice you can learn to gain control of your heart rate, emotions, concentration, and other responses that can help you wind down before bed.		
	Breathe2Relax is a portable stress management tool; a hands-on diaphragmatic breathing exercise. Breathing exercises can decrease stress responses, and help with mood stabilization, anger control, anxiety management, and winding down before bedtime.		
	CBT-i Coach is for people with symptoms of insomnia that would like to improve their sleep habits. It guides users through the process of learning about sleep, developing positive sleep routines and improving their sleep.		
Non-DoD Apps		Platform	
	White Noise Lite features ambient sounds of the environment that will help you relax during the day and sleep at night. It generates sounds over a wide range of frequencies, masking noise interruptions, so you can fall and stay asleep.		
	Twilight applies a filter that dims blue light during night hours according to darkness levels. Using the current location, the filter smoothly adjusts based on the sun cycle.		
	iOS Night Shift is an internal iOS feature that lets you adjust the color temperature of the display. This adjustment shifts away from blue spectrums of light to warmer spectrums of light.		
	Blue Light Filter (Samsung) or Night Light is an internal Android setting that uses a blue-light filter that is automatically activated at sunset and switches to "normal" light at sunrise.		
	AMdroid can set multiple alarms, each with independent settings, from single to recurring alarms and countdown timers. Alarms can be location enabled and include wakeup challenges.		

Applications are listed for informational purposes only; inclusion does not imply DoD endorsement unless specifically stated.

There are hundreds of apps, just search for "sleep"!

Sleep Under Stressful Conditions: Quick Guide

The challenge

Being in an environment that is dangerous or tense and being uncertain of what tomorrow brings can cause worries and anxiety that can make it difficult to sleep. Stress can cause difficulty initiating and/or maintaining sleep. Losing sleep when under stress is common.

- **If you are having feelings of anxiety and you are having trouble sleeping, use this guide to learn about strategies, tips, and techniques to reduce stress and improve your sleep.**

Strategies to combat daytime stress and bedtime worries



- Journal thoughts and feelings of that day and of the future.



- Make a list of reminders of tasks needed to be accomplished the next day to have some level of control and get it out of your head.



- Try these relaxation techniques: Focused attention, progressive muscle relaxation and self-guided imagery.

Tips to improve sleep when possible

If you are in an environment where you have situational control, use the tips below to help improve your sleep. If not, prioritize the relaxation techniques to address stress and anxiety when trying to sleep. If sleep problems persist, especially when the threat or stressful event is over, discuss with your medical care provider.



- Optimize what you can control in your sleep environment (e.g., cooler temperatures or the use of earplugs or eye masks for stimulus control).



- Add elements from your bedtime routine to help signal your body to prepare for sleep.



- Limit screen time near bedtime as light can disrupt sleep.



- If you are worrying and can't shut off your thoughts and/or you have trouble falling asleep for more than 15 min remove yourself from your sleeping environment and return when you feel tired again.



- To prepare for anticipated future sleep loss or to be able to better process an upcoming stressful time, bank sleep by sleeping more than the recommended 7+ hrs.



- During the day if you can, exercise regularly, avoid caffeine before bedtime, reduce use of alcohol and nicotine, and maximize daylight exposure.



- Sleep when you can. Use a tactical nap to achieve the recommended sleep amount of 7+ hrs per 24 hrs to help sustain performance during continuous operations.

Did You Know That Relaxation Techniques Can Help Improve Your Sleep?

Focused attention exercise

Try this breathing exercise to steady the mind and prepare for sleep:

- Breathe in and out, feeling the belly rise and fall with each breath.
- Now count each breath cycle from 7 to 1...
- Inhale 7... Exhale 7...
- Inhale 6... Exhale 6...
- Continue counting your breaths from 7 to 1.
- If you lose count or get distracted, start again at 7.
- Repeat this practice 3-5 times.

Progressive muscle relaxation

Try this technique that involves tensing and relaxing one muscle at a time to release bodily tension, manage mental stress, and improve sleep:

- Tense the left leg and foot... then release.
- Tense the right leg and foot... then release.
- Tense both legs and hold... then release.
- Tense the left arm and hand ... then release.
- Tense the right arm and hand... then release.
- Tense both arms and hold... then release.
- Tense the muscles of the face, then release.
- Tense the entire body and hold... then release

For advanced practice: inhale while tensing and exhale when releasing.



Self-guided imagery

If circumstances allow, try this self-guided imagery technique to induce calmness and feelings of being at ease:

- Bring to mind a place where you feel grounded and at ease.
- It can be an imaginary place or a somewhere you've been to before.
 - Include all your senses as you create this relaxing imagery
 - Build the sights and sounds that are relaxing
 - Imagine the smells and tastes that invite a sense of calm
- This place you have created can be there for you to return to each time you are getting ready to sleep.

Assessment of Substance Use Disorder (SUD)

Impaired control

1. Using for longer periods of time than intended, or using larger amounts than intended
2. Wanting to reduce use, yet being unsuccessful doing so
3. Spending excessive time getting/using/recovering from the drug use
4. Cravings that are so intense it is difficult to think about anything else

Social impairment

5. Continue to use despite problems with work, school or family/social obligations
6. Continues substance use despite having interpersonal problems because of the substance use
7. Important and meaningful social and recreational activities may be given up or reduced because of substance use

Risky use

8. Failure to refrain from using the substance despite the harm it causes
9. Repeatedly uses substances in physically dangerous situations, like using while operating machinery or driving a car
10. Continued use addictive even though when aware that use is causing or worsening physical and psychological problems

Pharmacological indicators: tolerance and withdrawal

11. Physical tolerance and withdrawal

Mild SUD
2-3 Criteria

Moderate SUD
4-5 Criteria

Severe SUD
6+ Criteria

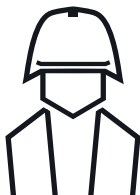
How to Talk to Someone Grieving



- **Provide the facts:** If you are able, provide facts about circumstances of the loss
- **Active listening:** Be present in the moment and listen to the grieving person
- **Normalize:** Without downplaying the loss, tell the grieving person their reactions are normal and understandable
- **Use the name:** Don't be afraid of using the deceased's actual name
- **Tolerate:** Be open to listening to the emotional pain of the grieving person, you do not have to "fix" them
- **Maintain your boundary:** Their loss is not necessarily your loss; you can be effective without absorbing their grief

Performance Enhancement Skills

Preparation	Performance	Recovery
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deliberate breathing (long form)• Visualization• Self-talk• Buddy talk• Worry postponement• Goal Setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pre-mission routines• Cue words• Deliberate breathing (short form)• What's important now• Control the controllables• Grounding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Personal AAR• Reframing• Distancing: 5,5,5 technique• Distraction by design• Active appreciation



iCOVER

identify buddy in need

Connect

Offer commitment

Verify facts

Establish order of events

Request action



Acute Stress Reaction

Active Constructive Responding

	Constructive	Destructive
Active	Enthusiastic support, engaged, genuine, asks questions	Crushes good news, focuses on the negative
Passive	Distracted understated support	Ignores the event, focuses on themselves

Groupthink



Unit Members

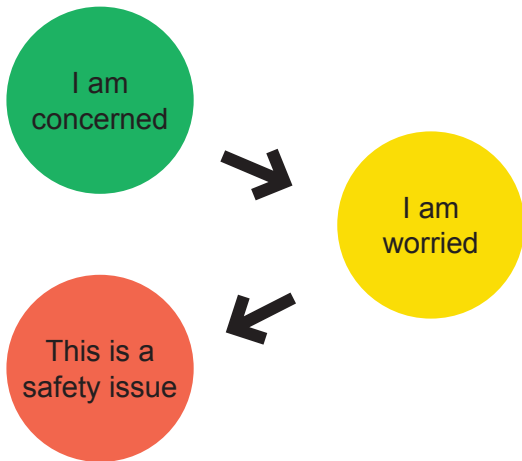
- Take turns playing “devil’s advocate”
 - Thinking critically
 - Punching holes in the plan
 - Offering opposing points of view
- Have everyone say something critical
- Discuss with someone you trust outside the group to get an unbiased view

Leaders (formal and informal)

- State preference last
- Assign people tasks of skeptic – make them responsible
- Set up small groups to work on a specific task at the same time to get different points of view

Alerting to Unnecessary Risks

- There may be times when you need to challenge unnecessary risks
- Use phrases that catch the listener's attention, increasing in intensity
- This approach is essential in medical settings



The Self-Fulfilling Prophecy



Social Isolation: Actions For Medics



Indirect action	Direct action
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Check in with a buddy• Keep an eye out for them• Create opportunities to have everyone feel included• Provide a role for every soldier• Mention concern to informal or formal unit leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Check in with them• Ask questions• Invite them to share meals• Personally invite them to social events• Task with specific role• Follow-up (not one and done)• Offer assistance

**To provide course feedback use
this QR code. Help us improve
the course for the soldiers
coming after you**



Field report 1 (1-6 months after course):

Field report 2 (7-12 months after course):

