

INVESTIGATOR'S DISPATCH

RESILIENCE AND MAXIMIZING POTENTIAL

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Institute of Research

WRAIR PROTECTS YOUR SIX

Protecting your brain - the most important
six inches on the battlefield

CENTER FOR MILITARY PSYCHIATRY AND NEUROSCIENCE



Blast Induced Neurotrauma
and Neuroprotection



Sleep & Resilience



Team Performance and
Mental Fitness



Military Psychiatry

Protecting the most important six microns
between you and the threat of disease

CENTER FOR INFECTIOUS DISEASE RESEARCH

Vaccines & Entomology



Viral & Bacterial Diseases



Military HIV Research Program



Experimental Therapeutics &
Emerging Infectious Diseases



WHETHER YOU'RE AT HOME STATION OR SIX THOUSAND MILES AWAY

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Discover, design, and develop solutions for military relevant infectious disease and brain health threats through innovative research protecting and optimizing warfighter lethality.

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- #CompassionateCare #SmallTeams
- #GotYour6 #BeMindful



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RESILIENCE AND MAXIMIZING POTENTIAL

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WRAIR DELIVERS TRAINING PRODUCTS

DEPLOYMENT CYCLE

- » PERFORMANCE AND RESILIENCE ENHANCEMENT
- » ICOVER

UNIT-BASED

- » TEAMCORE
- » LINKS
- » MINDFULNESS

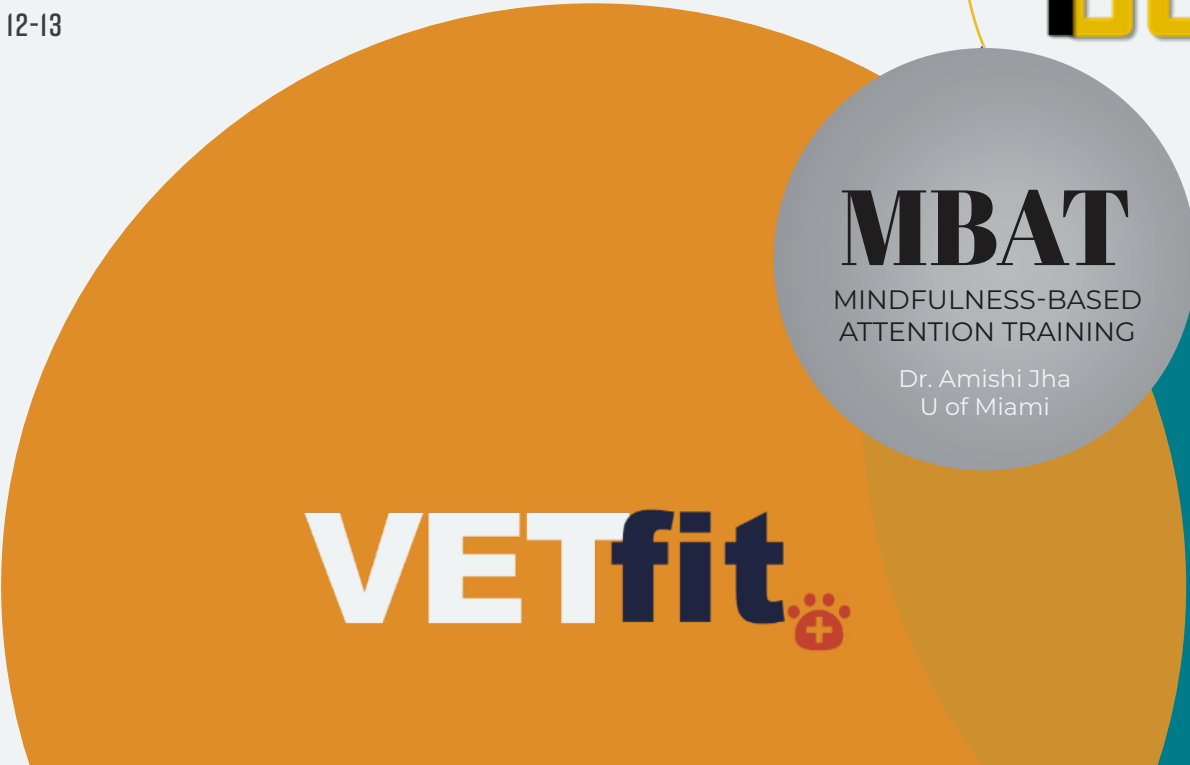
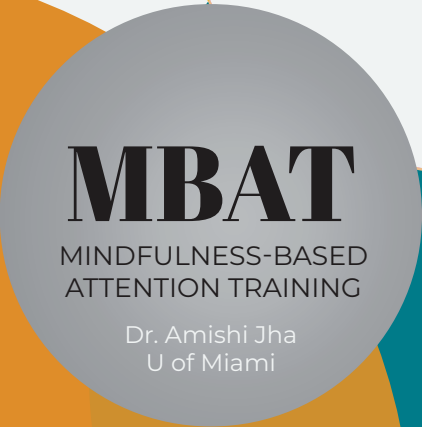
LEADERSHIP

- » SLEEP LEADERSHIP

MEDICAL

- » MEDFIT
- » VETFIT

PERFORMANCE AND RESILIENCE ENHANCEMENT
PRE



SMALL-TEAM ADAPTABILITY

CHALLENGE

Teams vary when it comes to emotional culture; the right emotional culture can help navigate the stress of combat.

WHAT THIS MEANS TO SOLDIERS

Leaders need tools to help create an emotional culture in which their team members succeed and bounce back under stress.

RESEARCH



In a study of tank crews, teams with positive emotional culture were more resilient – able to bounce back from poor performance during gunnery exercise. Crews with positive emotional culture jumped 30% in final performance score compared to other crews.

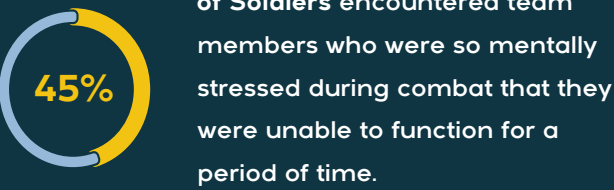
Partnering with The Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania and others in academia, WRAIR is developing tools to promote small-team culture.

How can small teams develop positive emotional culture and look out for one another under acute stress?

Other intervention targets include unit cohesion, emotional contagion, and emotion regulation.

Small-Team Culture & Operational Performance Enhancement

WRAIR DELIVERS
The first component of the Small-team Culture and Operational Performance Enhancement (SCOPE) toolkit is iCOVER, delivered to the Team OverMatch training platform and Security Force Assistance Brigades (SFAB).



iCOVER

- » Peer-based training in rapidly managing acute stress in team members
- » Developed in collaboration with the Israel Defense Forces

- Identify buddy in need
- Connect
- Offer commitment
- Verify facts
- Establish order of events
- Request action

- » 96% of Soldiers at predeployment reported iCOVER training was useful
- » After iCOVER, Soldiers were 20% more confident in managing team members experiencing acute stress during combat

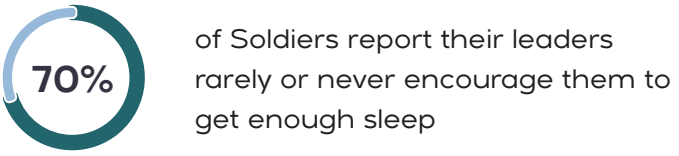
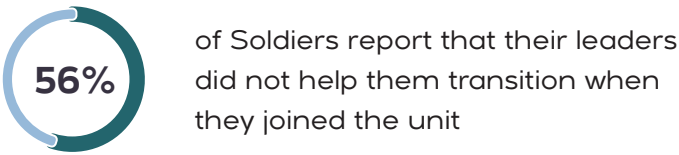
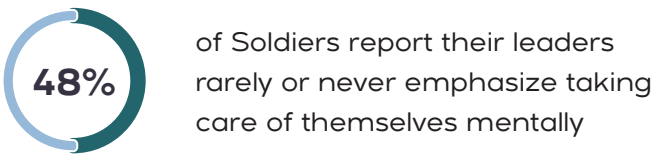
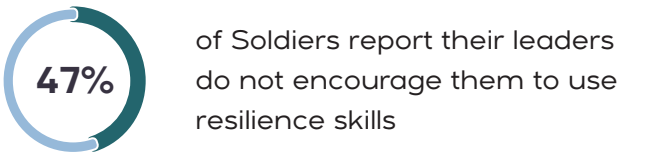


FORGING THE FUTURE

- » WRAIR will deliver a Small-team Culture and Operational Performance Enhancement toolkit.
- » WRAIR will evaluate the SCOPE toolkit to ensure it's effective.

BEHAVIOR HEALTH LEADERSHIP

CHALLENGE



WHAT THIS MEANS FOR SOLDIERS

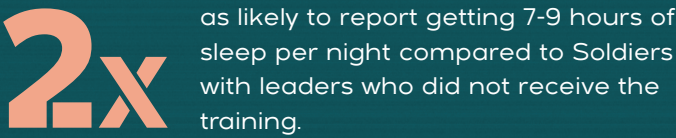
Even after taking general leadership skills into account, leaders who do not prioritize these kinds of specific behaviors have Soldiers who report more difficulties and have units with lower unit climate.

RESEARCH:

WRAIR developed a brief sleep leadership training module and trained platoon leadership teams. Results from this group-randomized trial demonstrated:

- » Improved leader knowledge about sleep
- » Improved leader attitudes about sleep
- » More unit members reporting healthy sleep

SOLDIERS WITH LEADERS TRAINED IN SLEEP LEADERSHIP WERE



LEADERSHIP DURING COVID-19

- » WRAIR is able to pivot quickly to address emerging national threats.
- » In the case of COVID-19, WRAIR developed a "Leader Checklist: Mitigating Team Stress" that provided practical recommendations for leaders based on WRAIR's behavioral health leadership research.



WRAIR is developing "conversation starters" for behavioral health officers to encourage targeted behaviors based on issues relevant to their unit.



WRAIR DELIVERS:

- » Measures across a range of behavioral health leadership domains
 - » Sleep leadership
 - » Health-promoting leadership during quarantine
 - » Combat operational stress leadership
 - » Post-traumatic growth leadership
- » Sleep Leadership Training delivered to the U.S. Army's Medical Center of Excellence (MEDCoE)

COVID-19 LEADERSHIP CHECKLIST

MITIGATING TEAM STRESS



SHARE INFORMATION

Sharing information establishes communication and trust with your team.

- ☐ Stay up-to-date on the latest developments
- ☐ Share what you know with the team
- ☐ Let them know when you don't know the answer

Self Check: Have you updated your team recently?

CONNECT

Connecting with others can help prevent people from feeling isolated and alone.

- ☐ Run regular meetings to provide structure and stability
- ☐ Strengthen your team's sense of community and shared purpose
- ☐ Set up a group text to check in regularly with all team members including those without government phones

Self Check: Are you connecting with your own leaders and teammates?

RECOGNIZE LIMITS

Stress can diminish people's ability to process complex information.

- ☐ Remember to repeat whatever is important and over-communicate
- ☐ Be patient if someone makes a mistake or isn't tracking
- ☐ Build in redundant checks for critical pathways to reduce errors

Self Check: Are you making simple mistakes?
Do you need to take a minute to recharge?

MAINTAIN PHYSICAL RESILIENCE

When people take care of themselves physically, they can handle stress better.

- ☐ Prioritize sleep
- ☐ Encourage good nutrition
- ☐ Get regular exercise

Self Check: Are you remembering to take care of your physical health?

MAINTAIN PSYCHOLOGICAL RESILIENCE

Using mental resilience skills can help people manage stress and stay strong.

- ☐ Encourage a balanced diet of news to avoid feeling overwhelmed
- ☐ Keep a detailed to-do list to keep things manageable
- ☐ Use positive self-talk or buddy talk to get through stressful moments
- ☐ Use "Grounding" (name three things you can see, hear, and physically feel) to reduce anxiety spikes and orient yourself to the moment

Self Check: What mental resilience skills are you practicing?

NORMALIZE STRESS

It is important to acknowledge the impact of stress, letting unit members feel more connected and less emotionally isolated.

- ☐ Recognize your team's stress ("This is uncharted territory")
- ☐ Remember there are individual differences in how people cope with stress
- ☐ Give permission to talk about stress to the team
- ☐ Recognize that high-achievers are likely to feel even more stress during crises

Self Check: Have you acknowledged your own stress level to someone?

SEIZE THE MOMENT

Leaders can reframe this moment as a critical opportunity for the entire team to contribute to the shared mission of finding solutions to the crisis.

- ☐ Remind your team of the important mission at hand
- ☐ Everyone has an essential role to play, no matter their rank or occupation

Self Check: How can this challenge provide you a leadership opportunity?

CONTROL THE CONTROLLABLES

Reduce stress and save energy by focusing efforts on what can be controlled and accepting what can't be controlled.

- ☐ Encourage your team members to identify what they can control
- ☐ Have team members practice deep breathing and mindfulness when things start to feel like they are out of control

Self Check: What is within your control? What do you have to accept?

TAKE THE LONG VIEW

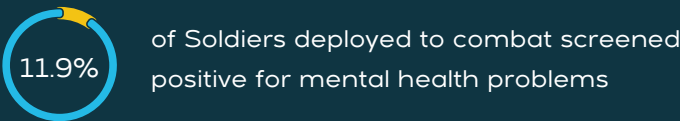
THIS ISN'T A ONE-TIME PROCESS.

PAGE YOURSELF AND YOUR TEAM FOR A MARATHON.
REMEMBER TO BE KIND TO YOURSELF AND YOUR TEAM.

PREPARING FOR MILITARY DEPLOYMENT

CHALLENGE

Service Members face significant stress in preparing for deployment and significant psychological demands during deployment.



WHAT THIS MEANS TO SOLDIERS

Soldiers need field-ready resilience tools that can help them manage the ongoing psychological demands of deployment



PERFORMANCE AND RESILIENCE ENHANCEMENT
PRE

PERFORMANCE AND RESILIENCE ENHANCEMENT SKILLS

Partnering with the Army G-1's Army Resilience Directorate (ARD), WRAIR has developed performance and resilience enhancement skills for pre-deployment training.

MINDFULNESS

CHALLENGE

- ✓ Paying Attention
- ✓ Thinking Clearly
- ✓ Managing Emotions

are all essential components of Soldier performance but Soldiers can become cognitively fatigued over time.



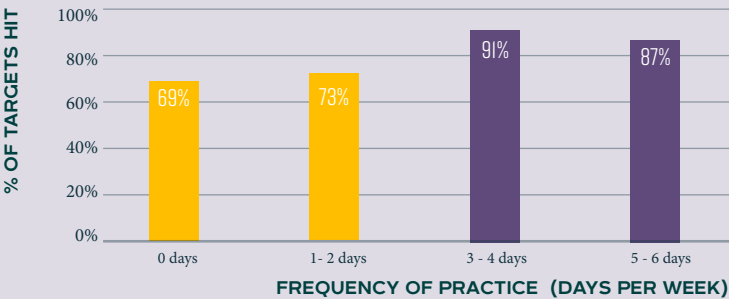
WHAT THIS MEANS TO SOLDIERS

Soldiers may have trouble staying focused and their performance may suffer.

RESEARCH:

In two studies, WRAIR found the more Soldiers practiced mindfulness training, the better they performed on a variety of military-relevant outcomes.

IMPROVED OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE STRESS SHOOT



Soldiers who practiced mindfulness 3-4 days per week scored **20% better on target accuracy** during a stress shoot than Soldiers who practiced fewer days per week.

WRAIR DELIVERS

WRAIR's implementation study of the Army's Deployment-Cycle Resilience Training highlights challenges in the current roll-out of pre-deployment and post-deployment training (funded by Army Studies Program and the Army Resilience Directorate)



MORAL INJURY

Moral injury can take different forms and may involve a sense of transgression and shame or a sense of betrayal by others. WRAIR is initiating research into how moral injury during deployment impacts Soldiers and how leaders can make a difference.



FORGING THE FUTURE

» Deployment Cycle Resilience Training materials will be updated based on program evaluation results

SOLUTION: MINDFULNESS AND OPERATIONAL OUTCOMES

Partnering with the U.S. Army War College, Training and Doctrine Command, and the Army G-1's Army Resilience Directorate, WRAIR has embarked on a series of studies assessing mindfulness in the field.

MINDFULNESS



IS A TYPE OF MEDITATION
Focused attention on the present moment without elaboration or judgment



meditation reduces depression, anxiety, perceived stress, PTSD



meditation lessens aggression, risk-taking behaviors, and alcohol misuse



meditation lowers mind wandering, and sustains working memory and attention under high stress training

A MAJORITY OF MINDFULNESS-BASED ATTENTION TRAINING (MBAT) PARTICIPANTS AGREED THAT



69%
'I wish I had this training earlier in my career'



72%
'The mindfulness skills I learned have improved my well-being'



70%
'The mindfulness skills I learned have improved my performance at work'



77%
'I would recommend this training to other Soldiers'

WRAIR DELIVERS

WRAIR's results will inform decisions about mindfulness implementation.



FORGING THE FUTURE

WRAIR is evaluating the role of mindfulness in senior leader decision making and in Soldier performance during Basic Combat Training.

COVID-19 MINDFULNESS

BOOSTING YOUR CAPACITY UNDER STRESS

THE CHALLENGE

Workload intensity, change, and uncertainty during the COVID-19 pandemic can deplete cognitive and emotional resources, resulting in reduced performance and increased stress.

One technique proven to increase cognitive and emotional resources is mindfulness.

Mindfulness is...

Mental training to focus attention on the present moment without elaboration or judgment

Mindfulness in the military

Mindfulness has been trained and researched across the U.S. military¹⁻⁴

Why use mindfulness now?

The stress of the COVID-19 pandemic creates additional demands on our cognitive and emotional resources.

Mindfulness can help you to

- ✓ Recharge mentally and physically
- ✓ Enhance performance and decision making under stress

Mindfulness results in better

- Operational performance⁴
- Attention¹⁻³
- Mental focus¹⁻³
- Emotion regulation³⁻⁴
- Mood³
- Sleep⁵

Fundamental Mindfulness: Mindful Breathing

1. **Take** a moment to get comfortable
2. **Feel** free to close your eyes
3. **Settle** in and let go of any unnecessary tension in your body and mind
4. **Take** deep and slow breaths
5. **Focus** your attention on the inhale and exhale
6. **Notice** when your mind wanders to a thought, feeling, or sensation... then gently bring your attention back to the present moment
7. **Practice** this exercise for 2-3 minutes
8. Gently **bring** movement back into hands and feet, as you complete the practice and return to everyday life



Recommendations to get the most out of your practice

- Accept what comes up without judgment
- Be patient with yourself as your mind wanders
- Mind wandering is normal and expected—just bring your attention back to your breath
- Let go of trying to DO mindfulness
- Strike a balance between alertness and relaxation—some effort is needed to sustain attention, but too much can hinder your practice

Advanced Mindfulness: Open Monitoring



1. Take a moment to get comfortable, and feel free to close your eyes
2. Settle in by taking a few deep and slow breaths
3. On each exhale, relax more deeply, letting go of tension in the neck and shoulders
4. Allow your breathing to continue at its own natural pace
5. Expand awareness beyond your physical self to your surroundings
6. Be aware of sounds, smells, the touch of air on your skin, light through the eyelids
7. Notice when your mind wanders, then gently bring your attention back to awareness
8. Feel yourself to be unchanging and timeless—even as things come and go around you
9. Practice this exercise for 5-10 minutes
10. Gently open and close your eyes a few times as you complete the practice and return to everyday life

Additional Applications

Integrating Mindfulness into Every Day

- Take a couple of mindful breaths throughout the day to recharge mentally and physically
- Take a moment to monitor your inner and outer experience while walking from one place to another
- Accept what can't be controlled
- In response to difficult situations, pause and act with intention rather than react in the moment

Using Mindfulness to Connect

- Focus on sending positive thoughts to yourself and teammates to foster empathy and build cohesion
- Visualize a place in nature or another place that promotes well-being, calm, safety, and stability—feel free to imagine family, friends, or pets that support you in this safe place

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What does mindfulness involve?

A: Mindfulness typically consists of exercises that build capacity to focus attention on inner and outer experience.

Q: Do I need to practice for hours every day?

A: Not necessarily. Benefits have been found with as little as 12 minutes a day and can be practiced a few days a week.

Q: Do I have to sit cross-legged in a lotus position?

A: No, you can practice mindfulness in any position you want, like walking, lying down, or sitting in a chair.

Q: When should I use mindfulness?

A: Mindfulness can be used when you want to manage stressful moments or restore attention and mental focus. It can also be used to build your capacity to operate under stress.

Try these apps to practice mindfulness

Available on Apple and Google Play



Mindfulness Coach

Learn mindfulness skills to manage stress



Breath2Relax

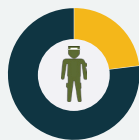
Practice diaphragmatic breathing to reduce tension

Selected References:

¹Jha et al. (2015). Minds "at attention": Mindfulness training curbs attentional lapses in military cohorts. *PLoS one*, 10(2). ²Zanesco et al. (2019). Mindfulness training as cognitive training in high-demand cohorts: An initial study in elite military service members. *Progress in brain research*, 244, 323-354. ³Jha et al. (2010). Examining the protective effects of mindfulness training on working memory capacity and affective experience. *Emotion*, 10(1), 54. ⁴Nassif et al. Mindfulness training and operational performance. Unpublished WRAIR Brief. ⁵Hülshöger et al. (2015). A low-dose mindfulness intervention and recovery from work. *Journal of occupational and organizational psychology*, 88(3), 464-489.

UNIT COHESION

CHALLENGE



More than **30% of Soldiers** report feeling socially isolated

WHAT THIS MEANS TO SOLDIERS


Units that do not successfully manage social connections place Soldiers and the unit at risk for social isolation, which can lead to behavioral health problems, physical health problems, and functioning less effectively.

RESEARCH

University of Chicago researchers designed training to reduce social isolation in Soldiers. WRAIR adapted and shortened this training, creating the TeamCORE curriculum.

- » TeamCORE training resulted in improved:
 - » ***Soldiers' understanding of the risks posed to the unit by social isolation***
 - » ***Soldiers' attitudes towards social connection by 10-20%***
- » TeamCORE targeted the right behaviors in leaders: Soldiers reported less loneliness when their unit leaders engaged in behaviors that promoted social connection “

WRAIR DELIVERS



Working with Clemson University researchers, WRAIR created the LINKS curriculum based on validated training designed to increased support for behavioral health treatment seeking in Soldiers.

- » LINKS led to improved knowledge regarding mental health treatment seeking
- » Soldiers who received LINKS were more likely to seek mental health treatment
- » LINKS was effective even when trained by non-experts



COGNITIVE FLEXIBILITY

CHALLENGE

Under Multi-Domain Operations (MDO), Soldiers face myriad psychological, social, and physical complexities that tax their cognitive resources.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR SOLDIERS:

The increasing demands of MDO require Soldiers to have optimal “cognitive flexibility” acquired by leveraging novel techniques, technologies, and interventions.

PARTNERSHIPS

WRAIR is working with academia, the Army Research Laboratory and other DOD partners to develop computer-based training that promotes cognitive flexibility.

WRAIR RESEARCH:

Soldiers who show attentional bias on computer-based tasks with images of real and imagined threats are more at risk for PTSD, anxiety, and problems with anger management.

HOSTILE BIAS MODIFICATION TRAINING

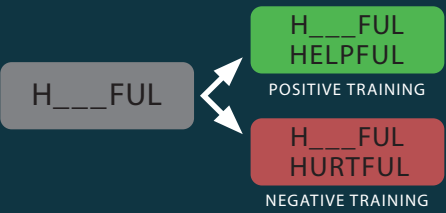
- » Improved the ability of individuals to think adaptively and with less cognitive-bias about ambiguous threats
- » Reduced inappropriate aggressive responding in lab and real-world contexts by over 40%

ATTENTION BIAS MODIFICATION TRAINING

- » Trained Soldiers minds to more adaptively engage with threatening images
- » Four sessions of training prior to deployment **reduced post-deployment PTSD rates by 2/3's** compare to Soldiers who received no training

HOW CAN HOSTILE BIAS BE MODIFIED?

Individuals are asked to fill in the correct missing letters and get reinforced for positive or negative answers. Positive training leads to better cognitive flexibility.



BRAIN-PHYSICAL OPTIMIZATION CONDITIONING: NEW METHODS TO BOOST COGNITIVE FLEXIBILITY

WRAIR is testing Brain-Physical Optimization Conditioning (B-POC) to see if Soldier cognitive flexibility can be enhanced by combining aerobic and mental exercise in order to push psychological barriers that interfere with optimal Soldier performance.

WRAIR DELIVERS:

WRAIR collaborated with the Israel Defense Forces to provide Attention Bias Modification Training to allied forces before deployment. Upon return, those who had received the training had significantly lower levels of PTSD symptoms than those who had not received the training.



FORGING THE FUTURE

WRAIR will assess delivery platforms for B-POC to identify the optimal way to impact brain functioning, Soldier performance and health.

WRAIR will test computer-based training to improve Soldier self-control under high stress to support shoot-no-shoot decision making.

WRAIR is assessing the impact of cognitive bias training on unit functioning of Soldiers in the Security Forces Assistance Brigade deploying to combat

THE COACHING MODEL

CHALLENGE

Mental skills are typically taught in a classroom and not as an integrated part of military life.

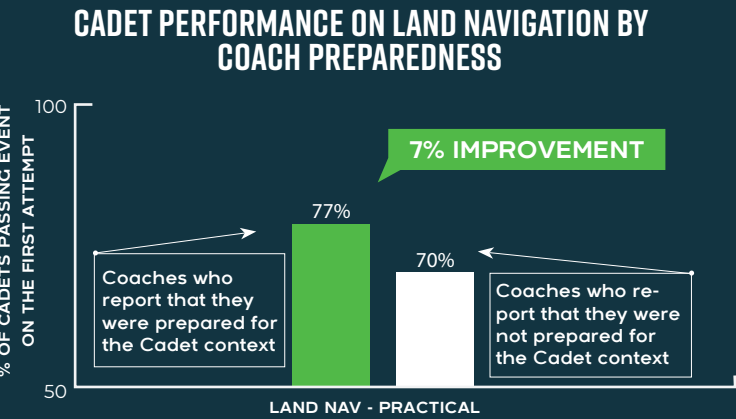
WHAT THIS MEANS TO SOLDIERS

By training skills separately from standard military tasks, Soldiers miss the opportunity to practice these skills in real time and leaders are not being prepared to reinforce these skills.



RESEARCH

WRAIR evaluated mental skills coaching during Cadet Summer Training, examining what factors made resilience skills coaching most successful. Coaches with more familiarity with Cadet Summer Training were more effective.



WRAIR found that when performance coaches understand the Cadet context in terms of purpose and structure, Soldiers had higher performance pass rates (for first attempts).



Soldiers can be coached by leaders and mental skills experts in real time, creating a more immediate impact on Soldier performance.

SOLUTION: DEVELOPING A COACHING MODEL

Partnering with the Army G-1's Army Resilience Directorate, WRAIR is helping to develop a coaching model so that resilience training can be fully integrated into Army life.

WRAIR DELIVERS

- » Consultation on a model for coaching that can inform the Army's new resilience training platform
- » Specific recommendations for resilience topics by rank and professional military education course
- » A curriculum map to ensure that training objectives are developmental and progressive



FORGING THE FUTURE

- » WRAIR will create new evidence-informed Professional Military Education modules on resilience.
- » WRAIR will evaluate the new coaching model for resilience skills in the Army's revised Master Resilience Trainer course.

RESILIENCE TRAINING FOR MEDICAL STAFF

CHALLENGE

Medical staff report burnout and compassion fatigue. Burnout is associated with turnover, poor performance, and ill health.



1 in 5 military healthcare staff report elevated levels of burnout



50% feel emotionally and physically exhausted



21% feel disinterested in their work



9% feel ineffective at work

WHAT THIS MEANS TO SOLDIERS

Burnout is associated with increased sick leave, decreased job productivity, less job satisfaction and higher levels of health problems.

RESEARCH

- » Surveys of medical staff highlighted key concerns that were integrated into training
- » MEDfit is being evaluated with two different military medical centers to contrast 1 vs. 2 hour training modules
- » WRAIR studied MEDfit implementation across the medical footprint

WRAIR DELIVERS

- » WRAIR provided implementation guidance
- » WRAIR provided results from a program evaluation to inform future training



Partnering with the U.S. Army Medical Center of Excellence and the Office of the Surgeon General, WRAIR has developed resilience skills for medical staff.



regulating compassion



maintaining boundaries



investing in self

iCOVER-Med

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and requests from the field, WRAIR adapted iCOVER for the medical context. iCOVER-Med is a rapid, peer-based response to help medical staff manage acute stress in team members and return the team back to a high level of functioning.



ADAPTING MEDfit FOR VETERINARY STAFF

- » In partnership with the Millennium Cohort Study, WRAIR identified increased risk for behavioral health problems in veterinary staff
- » VETfit has now been delivered to the Veterinary Senior Captain Development Course (VSCDC)

PHARMACOLOGICS TO PREVENT ACUTE STRESS REACTIONS

CHALLENGE

- » Operational environments can be highly stressful, and Soldiers may experience traumatic events that lead to an acute stress reaction (ASR)
- » ASRs are a natural response to high stress events that are extreme
- » Currently, there are no FDA-approved drugs for preventing or treating ASRs
- » WRAIR researchers have found that:
 - » 45% of Soldiers have experienced a team member having an acute stress reaction
 - » Of those surveyed who had witnessed a fellow team member having an ASR, 30% felt that team member put themselves or others at risk

WHAT THIS MEANS TO SOLDIERS

ASRs impair Soldier performance and put the individual, the team, and the mission at risk.

SOLUTION:

WRAIR is developing a data-driven approach to drug discovery for ASRs that will reduce the number of drugs to test and increase the likelihood of identifying effective drugs. We aim to deliver effective drugs at a faster speed and lower cost by leveraging advanced neuroscience research tools like designer receptors exclusively activated by designer drugs (DREADDs).

DREADDs can be used to establish proof-of-concept, reducing the total number of potential targets for testing from >800 to as few as 25.

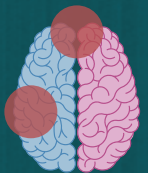
WRAIR DELIVERS:

- » Knowledge about the impact of high stress on the brain
- » Knowledge critical to the development of novel drugs for ASR

DREADDs

Strategic Downselection with Designer Receptors Exclusively Activated by Designer Drugs (DREADDs)

STRATEGIC DOWNSELECTION WITH DREADD-ASSISTED DRUG DISCOVERY

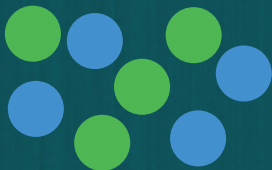


1. IDENTIFY
FIND THE
HOTSPOTS



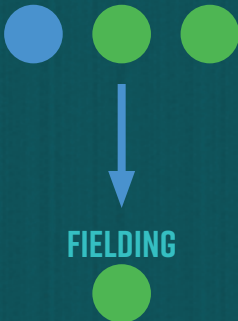
**2. PROOF OF
CONCEPT**
TARGET THE
HOTSPOTS
WITH DREADDs

POTENTIAL DRUGGABLE TARGETS



TEST EFFICACY OF DRUGS
WITH PROFILES SIMILAR TO
DREADDs

CLINICAL DEVELOPMENT



PHARMACOLOGICS FOR ACUTE STRESS IN THE FIELD



WRAIR'S GUIDE TO PERFORMANCE AND RESILIENCE ENHANCEMENT

Introduction:

Two of the most important, and limited, resources during combat are attention and energy. The skills listed below are designed to help you better manage these resources. To maximize your resilience and performance, practice these skills on a regular basis.

ACCEPTANCE Moving attention away from things that cannot be changed.



when :

- » Use this skill when something you cannot control is using up your valuable attention and energy resources.
- » For example, you can use this skill when you are frustrated because you were given orders to work a second shift.

how :

- » Ask yourself: "Can I change it?"
- » Then accept what cannot be changed. Identify what you can change—and focus on these aspects instead.



BUILD YOUR SKILL

- » Write down a short phrase you can use to help remind yourself to let go of the "uncontrollables" and focus on the "controllables".
 - » For example: "let it go"; "it is what it is"; "don't cry over spilled milk."
- » Identify a phrase that is meaningful to you.

W.I.N. Focusing attention on mission-critical tasks.



when :

- » Use this skill when there are many demands for your attention, making you feel overwhelmed.
- » For example, you can use this skill if you need to apply casualty care when under fire.

how :

- » Ask yourself: "What's Important Now?"
- » Then focus your attention and energy on the most important aspects of the mission or task.



BUILD YOUR SKILL

- » Write down a list of tasks you need to complete in the next week. Think about which tasks are most important now. What is one task you can complete today?

DELIBERATE BREATHING Taking slow, deep stomach breaths.



when :

- » Use this skill when you feel overwhelmed or anxious and need to relax or regain composure.
- » For example, you can use this skill if you need to lower your anxiety before clearing a room.

how :

- » Take slow, deep breaths using your stomach, instead of your chest and shoulders.
- » Count to 5 while breathing in; count to 5 while breathing out



BUILD YOUR SKILL

- » Take a few quick, shallow breaths. Notice how you breathe into you upper chest and shoulders.
- » Now practice deliberate breathing for two minutes.

SELF-TALK & BUDDY-TALK Using motivational words and phrases.



when :

- » Use this skill when you or your buddy needs a boost in confidence, motivation, or attention.
- » For example, you can use this skill if you have doubts about your ability to properly complete a nine-line report.

how :

- » Use motivational words or phrases that will increase confidence and improve focus on the task at hand.
- » For example, "I've been trained for this." "I got this." "You got this." "I need your attention on the mission right now; let's go."



BUILD YOUR SKILL

- » Write down a short phrase you can use to increase your or your buddy's confidence when either of you have doubts about your ability.
- » Think about specific doubts you or your buddy have, and identify a phrase that is meaningful to you.

GROUNDING Bringing attention back to the present moment.



when :

- » Use this skill when you find your focus is not on the present moment—you are thinking about the past or the future.
- » For example, you can use this skill if you are having a hard time focusing while on listening post/ observation post duty.

how :

- » Identify three things you see, hear, and feel (externally) in your present surroundings.



BUILD YOUR SKILL

- » Where is your focus right now? Are you in the present moment? If not, use the grounding skill to reorient to the present moment.

PERSONAL AAR Identifying areas to sustain and improve.



when :

- » Use this skill after you have completed a mission or task and have time to reflect in order to build your confidence and competence.
- » For example, you can use this skill after reacting to enemy contact while on patrol.

how :

- » Ask yourself: What did I do well sustain? How can I make sure I continue to do this in the future?
- » Ask yourself: What do I need to improve? What, specifically, can I do to improve this the next time?



BUILD YOUR SKILL

- » Conduct a personal AAR for a recent performance or training event. Think about specific strategies you can use in similar situations in the future.