This module was developed by the Research Transition Office (RTO) of the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research (WRAIR), based on research from the Center for Cognitive and Social Neuroscience at the University of Chicago. Comments or suggestions for the improvement of this module should be made to WRAIR at:

usarmy.detrick.medcom-wrair.mbx.resilience-research@mail.mil.

Team Cohesion and Organizational Readiness Enhancement (TeamCORE)

Introduction

The Army's Ready and Resilient Campaign, in its mission to strengthen personal readiness and optimize performance, encompasses five key domains: physical, psychological, social, spiritual, and family. This training centers around the social dimension.

Team Cohesion and Organizational Resilience Enhancement, or "TeamCORE", is designed to enhance the social fitness of individual Soldiers – and, by extension, units – through the understanding of social influences and the application of specific social fitness skills and exercises. TeamCORE is designed to help Soldiers learn skills and principles toward developing and sustaining healthy individual and group relationships and to equip them with an acute awareness of the indicators of social fitness. The training is designed for Soldiers at the unit level.

This training module was developed by the Research Transition Office (RTO), Walter Reed Army Institute of Research (WRAIR).

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This Trainer's Guide for the following training module has been designed to be user-friendly while containing as much information as possible to help you present this module. The following symbols are used throughout.

| Symbol	Represents	Explanation
	Timing	This symbol indicates the amount of time allotted for a given section of the material.
	Target / Intent	This symbol indicates the main function or rationale for a given slide.
1	Key Point	Numbers and text highlighted in yellow are used to indicate the main points that must be addressed in order to meet a given section's target / intent.
●	Sample Script	Bullets are used to elaborate on key points by providing a potential script that the trainer can use.
[TEXT]	Note to Trainer	Bracketed text indicates a note to the trainer which is not intended to be read aloud. These provide hints on how to present the material and tips to avoid potential issues that may arise within a given topic.
	Multimedia	This symbol indicates the use of supplementary audio/video files. To avoid down-time or technical difficulties, keep an eye out for these and plan accordingly.
	Handouts	This symbol indicates that the participants will use handouts at a given point in the module. To avoid down-time, keep an eye out for these and plan accordingly.
	Exercise	This symbol indicates the start of an exercise or activity. To avoid down-time, keep an eye out for these and plan accordingly.
	Continue	This symbol indicates that the training material for a given slide continues onto the next page.
	Stop	This symbol indicates that the training material for a given slide ends on this page.
[?]	Discussion Question(s)	This symbol identifies when there is a non-rhetorical discussion question(s) in the instructional content that follows.

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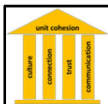
TERMINAL LEARNING OBJECTIVE

• Action:
  • Increase Soldiers' knowledge of concepts and skills to reduce social isolation and enhance unit cohesion
• Condition:
  • In an instructional setting, through group discussions, activities, and/or individual responses (written or verbal) as determined by the instructor.
• Standard:
  • Demonstrate an understanding of methods proven effective to:
    • constructively share unit culture
    • enhance and protect social connection within units
    • strengthen trust within units
    • reinforce communication between unit members

Outline the course objectives.

1.	Explain Course Terminal Learning Objective (TLO) Action.

- Welcome to the training in Team Cohesion and Organizational Resilience Enhancement (TeamCORE).
- This course is designed to increase Soldiers' knowledge of concepts and skills necessary to reduce social isolation and enhance unit cohesion.

2.	Summarize the (TLO) Condition.

- In an instructional setting, through group discussions and/or individual responses (written or verbal) as determined by the instructor.

3.	Summarize the (TLO) Standard.

- Demonstrate a solid understanding of methods proven effective to:
  - Constructively share unit culture,
  - Enhance and protect social connection within units,
  - Strengthen trust within units, and
  - Strengthen social communication between unit members.

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🕐 **Length of the training 3 hours**

◎ **Introduce the course and the trainer.**

1. **Introduce the course and the trainer.**

- Good morning/afternoon my name is _____. I am a _____ from _____.
- Welcome to Team Cohesion and Organizational Readiness Enhancement - TeamCORE.
- Much like there are specific physical exercises that strengthen the core of your body, our goal through TeamCORE is to provide you with specific skills or "exercises" to strengthen the "core" of your unit.

2. **Provide an overview of the training.**

- The training will last 3 hours, including a 10-minute break.
- We'll talk about the basics of team cohesion and then talk about specific skills you can use to increase unit cohesion.

3. **Explain the importance of class participation.**

- This is an interactive module.
- The more you participate, the more you'll get out of this training.

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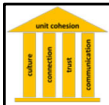
FORTIFYING UNIT COHESION

Pillar #1: Consider unit culture

> Skill #1: Understanding unit culture

> Skill #2: Sharing unit culture

Pillar #2: Protect unit connections

> Skill #1: Addressing social isolation

> Skill #2: Countering groupthink

Pillar #3: Strengthen unit trust

> Skill #1: Listening Well

> Skill #2: Responding Well

Pillar #4: Reinforce communication

> Skill #1: Tracking Sender and Receiver Skills

> Skill #2: Clearing Roadblocks

🎯 **Provide an outline the course lessons and skills.**

[**SLIDE BUILDS**]

1. Briefly discuss the three main areas that will be covered in the course.

- Here's an outline of what we'll be talking about over the next three hours.
- The overarching structure here is unit cohesion that is supported by four pillars (as pictured at the top right of the screen).

[**CLICK TO ADVANCE**]

- First pillar we will discuss is unit culture: understanding unit culture, and how we share and communicate unit culture.

[**CLICK TO ADVANCE**]

- Next, we will talk about unit connections: addressing social isolation, and how to create Group-mind and protect against groupthink.

[**CLICK TO ADVANCE**]

- Then we will talk about unit trust: listening well, and responding well.

Record your own notes here:

Record your own notes here:

*[**CLICK TO ADVANCE**]*

- Our fourth and final pillar is all about communication: strengthening social bonds and avoiding pitfalls that can lead to conflict.

- Let's start with understanding Unit Cohesion.

To define cohesion and discuss the characteristics of a cohesive unit.

. [**SLIDE BUILDS**]

1. Define cohesion. **[?]**

- [**ASK**]: You've probably heard the term cohesion a lot but what does it mean?

[**NOTE**: *Allow for responses, then provide definition.*]

[**CLICK TO ADVANCE**]

- Cohesion is defined in the dictionary as the act or state of sticking together tightly.

2. Discuss what a cohesive unit looks and feels like. **[?]**

[**CLICK TO ADVANCE**]

[**NOTE**: *Recording responses to the following discussion on a whiteboard or flipchart is optional and can be a helpful visual.*]

- [**ASK**]: What does a cohesive unit look and feel like?

[**NOTE**: *Allow for responses. If Soldiers struggle to come up with examples, prompt with the following-up question on the next page.*]

Record your own notes here:

[**NOTE**: *Focus the discussion on positive examples of cohesion, rather than negative examples of poor cohesion or toxic leadership, for example.*]

Record your own notes here:

- **[ASK]**: In other words, what are some behaviors you might see, or comments you might hear from other Soldiers indicating that a unit is highly cohesive?

[**NOTE**: Allow for brief discussion. Signs of a cohesive unit might include the following:

- Good leadership,

- Two-way communication,

- Goals,

- Trust,

- Roles,

- Recognition of each other's strengths,

- Acceptance of others who think differently,

- Growth mindset or learning environment,

- Sense of urgency, and

- Synergy (better together than apart).]
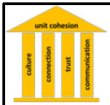
WHY IS COHESION IMPORTANT?

Cohesive units...
✓ train to higher standards
✓ fight better
✓ have fewer battle casualties
✓ have fewer non-battle casualties
✓ do not disintegrate under stress
✓ require less administrative support
✓ provide a higher quality of life

Record your own notes here:

◎ **Highlight the importance of cohesion and establishing communication skills.**

1. Discuss the benefits of cohesion and a cohesive unit.

- If you've worked in a cohesive unit, you know it. All the members work well together towards a common goal.
- Cohesion is not just important because it feels right. Like a properly maintained vehicle, a cohesive unit suffers fewer breakdowns, runs longer, and goes farther.
- Research shows that more cohesive units train to higher standards, fight better, suffer fewer casualties, require less administrative support, and are better at withstanding stress.

[*NOTE: This association is likely correlational; not much research has been conducted on causation.*]

2. Explain that team cohesion can be trained and developed.

- The good news is that unit cohesion is not accidental.
- By using the skills you will learn in TeamCORE, your unit can strengthen the characteristics you just identified.
- TeamCORE training is designed to highlight the information and skills you and your platoon already have and to strengthen them.
- Now let's talk about one thing that can get in the way of unit cohesion – social isolation.

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SOCIAL ISOLATION

Social Isolation
the feeling of not belonging; being disconnected from others

Social isolation is not the same as being alone

Record your own notes here:

◎ **To define social isolation and its impact on the unit.**

[*SLIDE BUILDS*]

1. Define social isolation. **[?]**

- One enemy of unit cohesion is social isolation.

- [*ASK*]*:* When you hear the term social isolation, what comes to mind?

[*NOTE*: *Allow for responses.*]

[*CLICK TO ADVANCE*]

- Social isolation is the feeling of not belonging or of being somehow disconnected from others.

- This feeling can result from being physically apart from others, from not having enough social interactions, or from feeling excluded from a group.

- It also may be that the social interactions you do have just aren't fulfilling.

- [*ASK*]*:* Do you enjoy spending time on your own?

[*NOTE*: *Allow for responses.*]

- We all enjoy being on our own from time to time, but that's not what we're talking about when we're talking about social isolation.

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*[**CLICK TO ADVANCE**]*

- Social isolation is not the same thing as being alone.

- In other words, social isolation is not always about whether you're around other people, it's about how you relate to other people.

2. Emphasize that social isolation is a unit-level problem.

- Feeling socially isolated affects your emotions, your ability to make sense of things, and your behavior toward others.

- Soldiers who feel isolated have more mental health problems, are angrier, and have more physical pain and limitations, which can affect how they perform at work.

- It's also harder to interact with someone you feel disconnected from, and it's harder to build cohesion if some unit members feel isolated.

- Negative feelings stemming from perceived isolation can spread, so it's not only an individual Soldier's problem—it is the unit's problem.

SOCIAL CONTAGION

Social isolation can spread over time

🎯 **Explain how emotions and attitudes can spread and why it matters.**

1. Define social contagion and explain how emotions and attitudes can spread

- You may have heard sayings like "laughter is contagious" or "a smile is contagious."
- We know that both positive and negative moods, attitudes, and behaviors can spread throughout a group of people.
- Has anyone seen anger spread through an organization or group?
- This is what we call "social contagion"—the spread of attitudes, ideas, emotions, and behaviors from person to person and across a social network.

2. Explain that social isolation can spread and the effect it can have on the unit.

- We also know from research that social isolation can spread across a social network.

- In a social network, if one person starts to feel isolated, over time, this may mean that the individual stops reaching out and connecting with others. This behavior can start to affect others so that over time, other people in the social network start to feel isolated as well.

Record your own notes here:

[**NOTE**: In one study, more than 5,000 people from a community completed a loneliness questionnaire every few years over a 10 year period. By looking at social networks over time, researchers were able to see how loneliness spread across the groups. People were about 50% more likely to experience loneliness if someone they were directly connected to felt lonely. Caccioppo et al., 2009]

- This may cause a lot of problems for units including the loss of individual trust in the group as a whole.

- Then, before you know it, the team is starting to feel disconnected. This is why it's important to pay attention and be aware of verbal and behavioral indicators of social isolation as a means of protecting unit cohesion.

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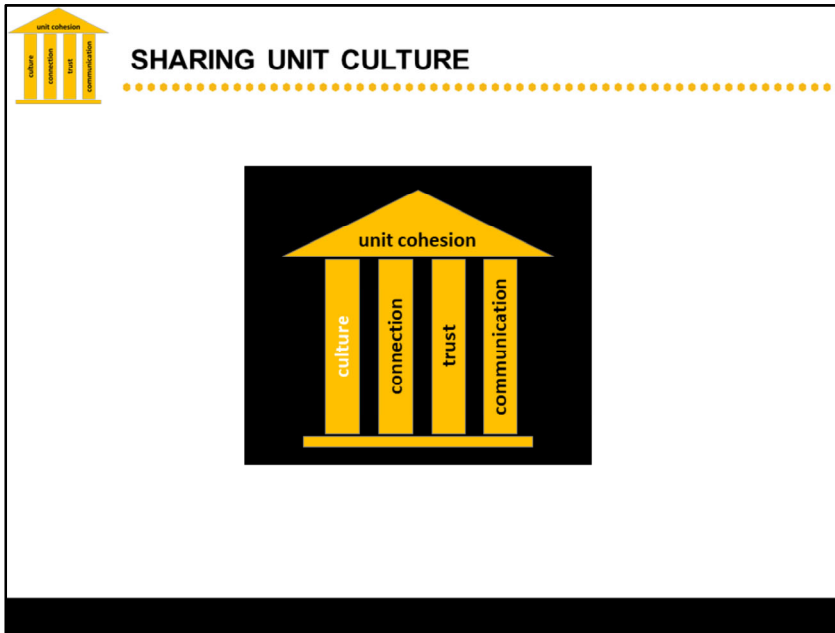
SHARING UNIT CULTURE

🎯 **Outline the importance of sharing unit culture as a means of establishing unit cohesion.**

1.　Discuss Pillar One: Culture **[?]**

- The first pillar supporting unit cohesion is Sharing Unit Culture.

- [**ASK**]: What comes to mind when you hear the phrase "unit culture"?

[**NOTE**: Allow for responses.]

- Culture is the set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterizes an organization like a military unit.

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UNDERSTANDING UNIT CULTURE

- Every unit has its own unique culture
- Unit culture is defined by its identity, its members' roles, and the unit's rules

Who we are	What we do	How we do it
Identity	Roles	Rules

🎯 **Overview the three components of Army unit culture.**

---

1. Discuss the three parts that make up unit culture; identity, roles, and rules. **[?]**

- For our purposes, team or unit culture is made up of (1) identity, (2) roles, and (3) rules.

- [**ASK**]: *What are some* examples of identity, roles, and rules that are part of your unit?

[**NOTE**: *Allow for responses. Responses may include items below:*

- Identity includes things like names, symbols, patches, headgear, mottos, and the shared history that define us.

- Roles include things like ranks, positions, and titles, formal and informal that organize us.

- Rules include things like guidelines for behavior, regulations, SOPs, and procedures for action.]

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TEAM CULTURE: WRITTEN AND UNWRITTEN RULES

What do you do when you see this?

...now what about this?

🎯 **Identify the importance of written and unwritten cultural norms.**

[*SLIDE BUILDS*]

1. Define written and unwritten cultural norms. **[?]**

- In every team or organization, there are written and unwritten rules.

[**CLICK TO ADVANCE**]

- [**ASK**]: What do you do when you see this?

[**NOTE**: *Allow for responses/reactions.*]

- We all know to stop at a stop sign. The rule is written right on the sign just in case we don't know that a red octagon means "stop."

[**CLICK TO ADVANCE**]

- [**ASK**]: *...*now what do you do in this situation? If you're a Soldier, do you walk on the SGM's grass?

[**NOTE**: *Allow for responses/reactions.*]

- Sometimes the rules about what to do are not always clearly written for us. In these situations, we rely on unwritten rules.

- For example, it is typically assumed that Soldiers shouldn't walk on the grass, even though there is no written rule against it.

Record your own notes here:

▶

9-A

- *[**ASK**]:* How do we learn unwritten rules? How did you learn not to walk on grass?

*[**NOTE**: Allow for brief discussion and record responses on a whiteboard or flipchart (optional). How to learn unwritten rules might include the following:*

  - *Watch what other people do,*
  - *Ask others,*
  - *Read about the culture, and*
  - *Make mistakes and get corrected.]*

Record your own notes here:

*[**NOTE**: Another unwritten rule is not double-dipping chips.]*

*[**NOTE**: One reason for the unwritten rule about grass is that if Soldiers think it's ok to take shortcuts between paths, they might think it's ok to take shortcuts in other ways too. Taken from: wearethemighty.com/why-troops-keep-off-grass]*

LEARNING THE CULTURE

1 in 5
New Soldiers report feeling moderately or extremely alone

🎯 **Normalize difficulty in transitioning to a new unit.**

1. Discuss difficulties of integrating into a new unit. **[?]**

- What about joining a new unit? Learning the unwritten rules of a new unit can make adjustment challenging.
- *[**ASK**]:* How hard is it to integrate into a new unit?

[**NOTE***: Allow for responses].*

- If you said that transitioning to a new unit was hard, you are not alone.
- Research with more than 2,000 soldiers found that 1 in 5 soldiers who had recently PCSed to a new unit reported feeling moderately to very alone.
- This difficulty with transition was the same, regardless of marital status, rank, or how long someone had been in the military.

2. Explain that integrating should be intentional and may need to go beyond the sponsorship effort.
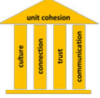
- In order to bridge the integration gap, the Army created the Total Army Sponsorship Program.
- But let's face it, integration takes more than the Sponsorship program, and Soldiers may feel lonely or isolated long after the initial adjustment period. Therefore both the new Soldier and the unit members should be attuned to the issue of loneliness.

Record your own notes here:

Adrian, A. L., Adler, A. B., Thomas, J. L., & Britt, T. W. (2018). Integrating new soldiers: The role of leaders and unit members. Military Psychology, 30(2), 131-141.

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LEARNING THE CULTURE

Skills for newcomers

- Watch and observe
- Ask questions
- Show up on and off duty
- Be socially aware

Discuss what newcomers can do to integrate.

[*SLIDE BUILDS*]

1. Discuss behaviors that can help new soldiers integrate into the new unit. **[?]**

- [*ASK*]*:* What can new Soldiers do to help themselves integrate into a new unit?

[*NOTE: Allow for brief discussion and record responses on a whiteboard or flipchart (optional).*

   - *Ask questions,*

   - *Show up – on and off duty, and*

   - *Pay attention to social cues – how the unit's culture works.]*

[*CLICK TO ADVANCE*]

- These skills will also help them learn the written and unwritten rules of the unit.

- So there are things that individuals can do to make the transition easier.

- Now let's talk about the impact of other unit members in that transition.

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SHARING THE CULTURE

48% | 52%

Half of new Soldiers said that unit members provided support during transition…

…which led to stronger unit cohesion.
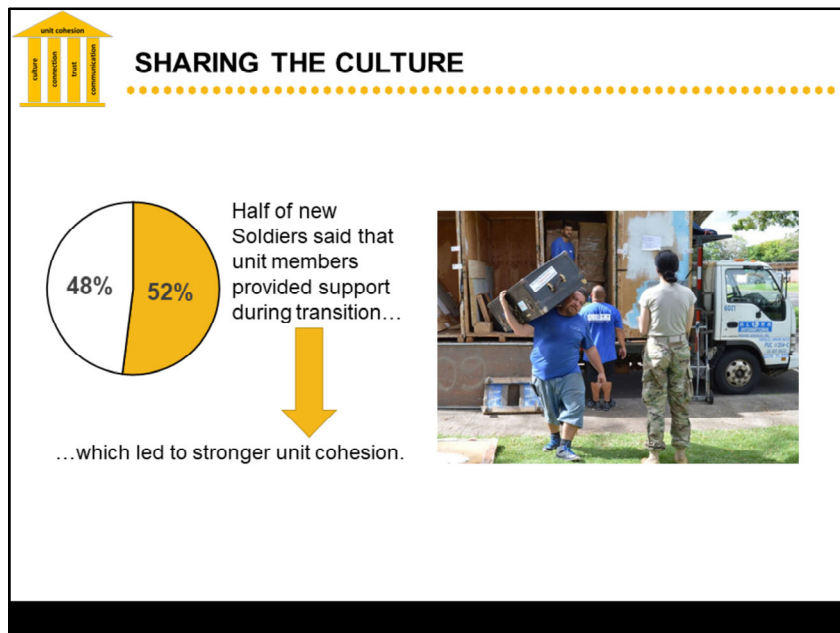
🎯 **Explain impact of existing unit members on Soldier integration into a new unit and highlight helpful behaviors.**

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1. Explain the impact of existing unit members on Soldier integration.

- In that same study of newcomers, around half said that unit members provided support during the transition and this support was associated with better ratings of cohesion and unit climate. So this investment paid off for the whole team.

- However, about half of them said that other unit members did **not** provide them support.

- And not getting support was associated with lower ratings of cohesion and unit climate. That is going to cost the unit.

- Two points here: first, how units respond ultimately matters to the unit itself, and second, there's plenty of room for improvement depending on what kind of unit you want to be in.

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SHARING THE CULTURE

ACTIVITY
in small groups, come up with a list of what you can do to help integrate new unit members

Photo credit: Patricia Dubiel

https://www.dvidshub.net/image/5107097/march

🎯 **Apply new skills to a hypothetical scenario.**

1. Conduct the sharing culture activity. **[?]**

- Soldiers who have been in a unit for a while will understand its identity, roles, and rules better than newer unit members.

- By reaching out to new members of your unit, you can build unit cohesion by creating a shared identity.

- This activity is about setting new members up for success. Imagine a Soldier has just joined the unit.

- [**ASK**]: What are you going to say to get them on board?

  - What do they need to know in terms of unwritten rules?

  - What can you do to help integrate them?

  - What should you avoid doing?

[**NOTE**: Have students take 2-3 mins to discuss and brainstorm in pairs or small groups then share their responses with the class. Include the following in your debrief key points:

  - Include unit members in activities on and off duty,
  - Educate soldiers about the unit's identity, roles, rules, and history,
  - Tell them key stories or share unit jokes, and
  - Give them a chance to participate in shaping the culture.]

Record your own notes here:

- Doing these things that you've just discussed can be crucial to a more efficient process of integrating new Soldiers into the unit.

- This will help the group and pay off in terms of developing unit cohesion.

TeamCORE

TEAM CULTURE: SUMMARY

Disconnection undermines cohesion
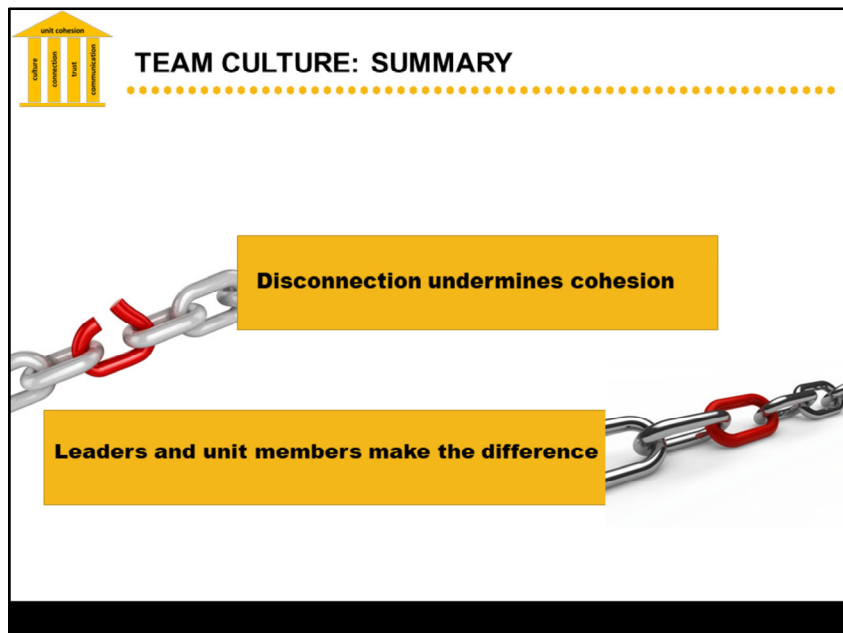
Leaders and unit members make the difference

◎ **Summarize the importance of support from unit members and leaders during transition.**

1. Discuss importance of support from unit members and leaders during soldiers' transition. [?]

- *[ASK]:* So what are your key takeaways from the first pillar - Culture?

[NOTE: Allow for responses.]

- Units with socially isolated members do not benefit from cohesion which will cost the unit.
- Supporting new and isolated unit members makes the entire unit stronger.
- How the unit manages it's integration matters.
- Be the unit you want to be.
- **A chain is only as strong as its weakest link.**

2. Transition to next slide

- Now we're going to talk about the second pillar.
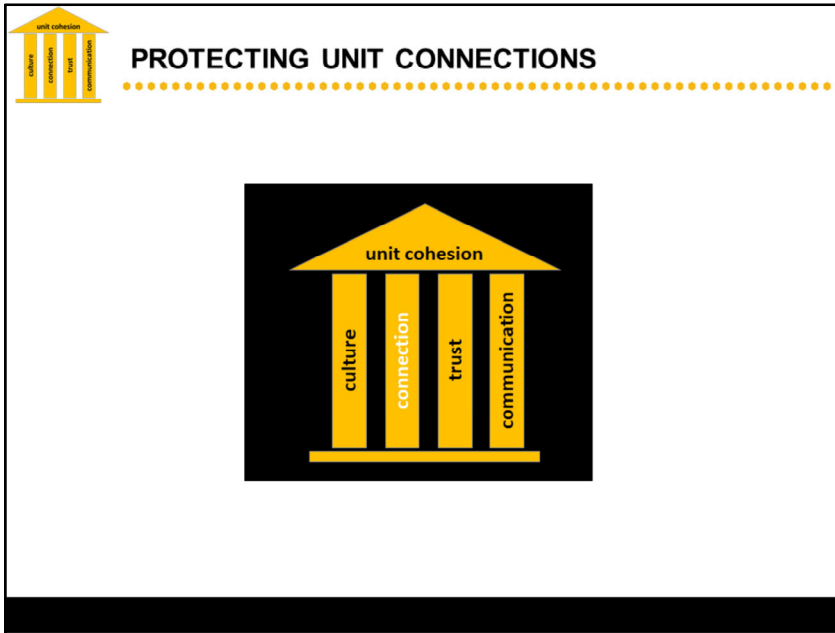
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PROTECTING UNIT CONNECTIONS

🎯 **Outline the importance of protecting unit connections as a means of establishing unit cohesion.**

1. Discuss the different components of unit connections.

- The second pillar is protecting unit connections.
- We're going to cover:
    - Addressing social isolation
    - Developing Group-mind and guard against groupthink

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CONNECTIONS: AWARENESS

What happens if someone isn't new to the unit, but starts to disconnect?

What might you notice?

🎯 **Identify signs of a unit member beginning to disconnect.**

---

1. Brainstorm what happens when someone who is not new to the unit starts to disconnect. **[?]**

- *[**ASK**]:* What happens if someone who isn't new to the unit starts to disconnect?

*[**NOTE**: Take 3-4 responses.]*

- This could be bad for the individual.

- This could be bad for the unit.

2. In small groups, brainstorm and discuss signs and cues you may notice when a unit member starts to disconnect. **[?]**

- *[**ASK**]:* What are 5 signs and/or cues you might notice when a unit member starts to disconnect?

*[**NOTE**: Have students discuss and brainstorm in pairs or small groups for 2-3 minutes. Have each group provide a list of possible responses. For example:*

- *Withdrawal,*
- *Changes in behavior,*
- *Not responding to invitations or questions, and*
- *Not going outside of the barracks.]*

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CONNECTIONS: AWARENESS

A Soldier who is socially isolated can be

- more likely to blame others
- more reactive
- more sensitive
- more defensive & irritable
- more withdrawn
- less energetic

Identify behaviors associated with social isolation.

---

1. List the ways a socially isolated soldier might act.

- Let's see how you did. Here are some signs and cues that you might see.

[**NOTE**: *Highlight the parts that have not been previously discussed.*]

- A Soldier who is socially isolated can be:
    – More likely to blame others,
    – More reactive,
    – More sensitive,
    – More defensive and irritable,
    – More withdrawn, and
    – Less energetic.
- Some signs are more obvious than others but all of them can be seen.

[**NOTE**: *Some of these signs have overlap with depression but depression can happen as a consequence of social isolation or be a cause – it isn't necessarily the same thing.*]

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CONNECTIONS: ACTION

ACTIVITY
in small groups, come up with a list of what you can do if you think that someone is getting socially isolated

Connection

Identify ways to help socially isolated Soldiers.

1. Brainstorm different things Soldiers can do to help reintegrate a socially isolated Soldier into the unit.

- In your same groups, come up with a list of what you can do if you think that someone in your unit is getting socially isolated.

- [**NOTE**: *Divide students into the same small groups. Take 2-3 minutes for the group discussions and brainstorming, then have them debrief their responses. Categorize the responses as direct or indirect actions.*]

- One way to think about these possible actions is to categorize them into direct and indirect actions.

- If your responses were primarily direct, consider indirect actions as well and vice-versa.

- Lets discuss direct and indirect actions in more detail.

[**NOTE**: *The visual image depicts that there are many different ways to get to the same point.*]

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CONNECTIONS: DIRECT AND INDIRECT ACTION

INDIRECT ACTION	DIRECT ACTION
• Check in with a buddy • Keep an eye out for them • Ask a leader • Create opportunities to have everyone feel included • Provide a role for every Soldier • Mention concern to Chaplain or key unit member	• Check in with them • Ask questions • Invite them to small-group events • Personally invite them to large-group events • Task with specific role • Follow-up (not one and done) • Offer assistance

Distinguish between direct and indirect action.

[*SLIDE BUILDS*]

1. Define direct and indirect action. **[?]**

- [*ASK*]: What do you think is the difference between direct and indirect action?

[*NOTE: Allow for responses.*]

- Direct action is doing something yourself to reach out.
- Indirect action is finding a way to reach out via intervening factors or intermediaries (other people).
- [*ASK*]: Why might you want to use a direct approach sometimes and an indirect approach other times?

[*NOTE: Allow for responses. Possible answers include rank differences, lack of familiarity, feeling awkward.*]

2. Provide examples of direct and indirect action.

[*CLICK TO ADVANCE*]

- Examples of **indirect** action include: check in with a buddy, keep an eye out for them, ask a leader, create opportunities to include everyone, provide a role for every soldier, or mention concerns to the Chaplain or key unit member.

Record your own notes here:

- Examples of **direct** action include: check in with them, ask questions, invite them to small group events, personally invite them to large group events, task with a specific role in event planning, follow up, and offer assistance.

Record your own notes here:

CONNECTIONS: ACTION

ACTIVITY
in small groups,
discuss example

🎯 **Apply knowledge of direct and indirect action to a hypothetical scenario.**

---

1. Review examples in which direct and indirect action can be taken.

- You will now be divided into small groups. Each group will be assigned either examples 1 or 2 for this activity.

- Apply your knowledge of direct and indirect action for your assigned scenario.

- Be prepared to discuss your group's consensus and differences in approach.

 [**NOTE**: Take about 5 mins for this activity. Divide the class into groups and assign them either Example 1 or 2. Provide student handouts for each group. Have participants read and discuss their scenario and actions they would take in their small groups, then debrief to the class.]

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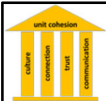
CONNECTIONS: EXAMPLES

Example 1: "Rich Kid"

PFC Lewis comes from a wealthy family but joined the military for the college benefits because he wanted to be independent and not rely on his family's money. He doesn't particularly love the Army but sees his time in service as a means to getting an education so that he can start his own business. The other Soldiers see him as a rich kid because rumor has it that he takes ritzy vacations with his family and that his grandfather has a massive estate. He feels very "different" from the other Soldiers and very lonely at times.

Example 2: "Married Fast"

SPC Garza is a young Soldier in your platoon. He's been a good performer for the last 2 years. Several months ago he began leaving the barracks every evening after work and coming home late or not at all, and he stays gone on the weekend. He's not hanging out with his friends in the unit, and you recently found out he had been dating and then married a girl who has serious financial problems and two children. Between the time he told you about his marriage and the time he was supposed to move out of the barracks, the relationship fell apart. Now he's still in the barracks, feeling lonely, confused, and afraid of what his friends will think about him.

◎ **Debrief application of knowledge of direct and indirect action for the hypothetical scenarios.**

---

1. Group debriefs of direct and indirect actions to be taken for their example. **[?]**

- **For those of you who were assigned Example 1:**
- *[ASK]:* What would be indirect action in this scenario?
- *[ASK]:* What would be a direct action in this scenario?
- **For those of you who were assigned Example 2:**
- *[ASK]:* What would be an indirect action in this scenario?
- *[ASK]:* What would be a direct action in this scenario?

*[**NOTE**: Have participants debrief their discuss from their small groups. Have them identify consensus views as well all differing opinions.]*

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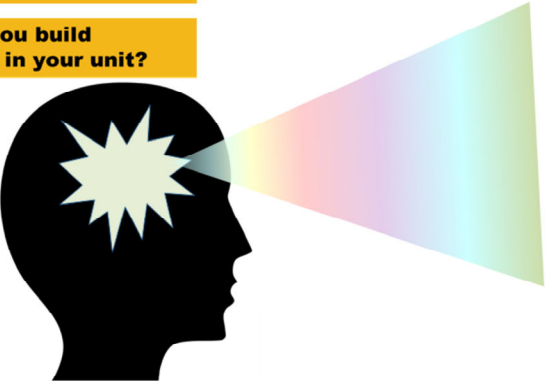
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CONNECTIONS: AWARENESS

What does social connection and social isolation feel like?

How might you build connections in your unit?

Build awareness of social connections and social isolation through visualization.

1. Introduce the Social Connections Exercise.

- This exercise is meant to build awareness of social connections. We will practice portions of two concepts or skills (1) Mindfulness Based Attention Training (MBAT) and (2) Visualization.

- MBAT focuses on paying attention, in a particular way; on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally.

    - We will touch on this concept as we explore what social connection and social isolation feel like.

- Visualization is like leading yourself through an experience or engagement in your mind. It's a lot like the mental rehearsal you do in preparation for a performances or performance based training.

    - We will touch on this concept as well while we explore how you might build connections in your unit.

2. Conduct the Social Connections Exercise.

- Let's begin the Social Connections exercise.

- Take a moment to get comfortable in a stable, upright, seated position with your feet firmly on the floor. Feel free to close your eyes, which may help with this exercise.

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Record your own notes here:

- Bring to mind someone you feel connected with in the unit. It could be a friend, battle buddy, or a mentor.

  - If you are new to the unit, think of someone you might be able to connect with or someone from your previous unit.

- Notice any feelings or memories that come up for you when you are around this person, such as happy, supported, safe, understood, grounded, or at ease.

- Notice that sense of connection. Does it have a certain quality or feel? Do you feel it anywhere in your body – like in your stomach, chest, or head?

- Notice a sense of gratitude for this connection.

- Now bring to mind others in the unit. Visualize what it would be like to expand that sense of connection to include more people in the team. What would that connection feel like? What if these connections involved everyone   in the team?

3. Continue the Social Connections Exercise.

- Imagine that expanded circle of connection, and how your life would feel or look different with these stronger bonds.

- Some parts might be more connected than others but in this circle every person is connected.

- Bring to mind a Soldier in your unit, or someone else, who is isolated or less connected to the group.

- Imagine how that person might feel to be cut-off from the core of the group. Feel a sense of patience and openness as you consider building connections.

- Now, visualize yourself building connections.

- Imagine what you could do to help others feel part of the group. Visualize how you or the group could strengthen and extend bonds to these less connected individuals.

- Experience this sensation of connections for a few moments more…

- Then, when you're ready, return your focus and attention to the class for a debrief.
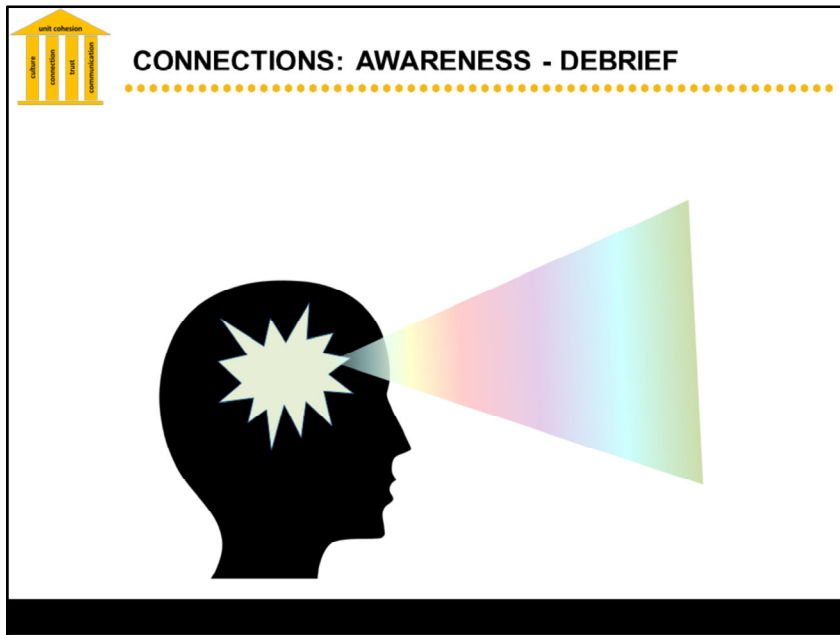
CONNECTIONS: AWARENESS - DEBRIEF

🎯 **Build awareness of social connections and social isolation through visualization (Debrief).**

1. Continue the Social Connections Exercise (debrief)

- *[**ASK**]:* What did you notice during this exercise?

*[**NOTE**: Allow for responses.]*

- *[**ASK**]:* Has this exercise helped you to become more aware of those less connected?

*[**NOTE**: Allow for responses.]*

- *[**ASK**]:* What would it be like if this connection extended beyond your normal group of friends within the unit? How would the unit feel?

*[**NOTE**: Allow for responses.]*

- *[**ASK**]:* What was it like to feel the experience of connection in your unit?

*[**NOTE**: Allow for responses.]*

- Much like any strength you want to develop, awareness of the social environment takes effort.

- In other words, if you want to be more socially aware you have to practice being aware.

- This means you need to be intentional about observing and understanding the social environment.

- You have to train yourself in what to look for and you have to develop a compassion for all Soldiers.

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CONNECTIONS: BALANCING ACT

While cohesive units are important, there's a balance

Cohesion

Tolerating Differences

If being cohesive means not tolerating differences, then the whole team has a problem
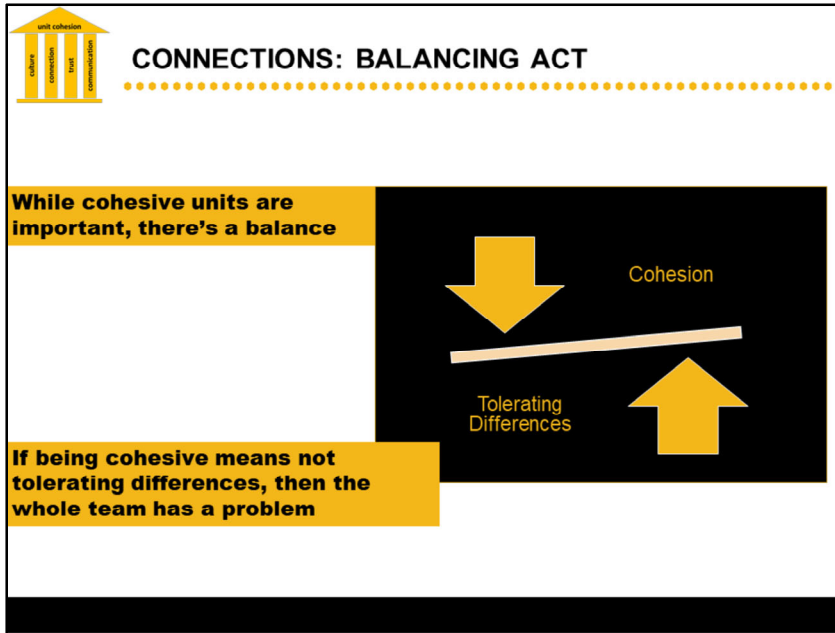
Introduce the concept of balancing teams.

1.   Need for balance.

- While cohesive units are important, there's a balance between sticking together and sticking together too much.

- If being cohesive means not tolerating differences, then what happens if someone has a different opinion? Will they be able to speak up? Will the team be ready to listen?

- How can teams or leaders be impacted in terms of making good decisions with and without balance?

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GROUPTHINK VS. GROUP-MIND

Groupthink
- focusing on agreeing instead of thinking critically
- not disagreeing with the group
- squashing disagreement by others

Group-Mind
- understanding and overall agreement on unit goals
- commitment to the group
- everyone is on the same page
- everyone values their membership in the group
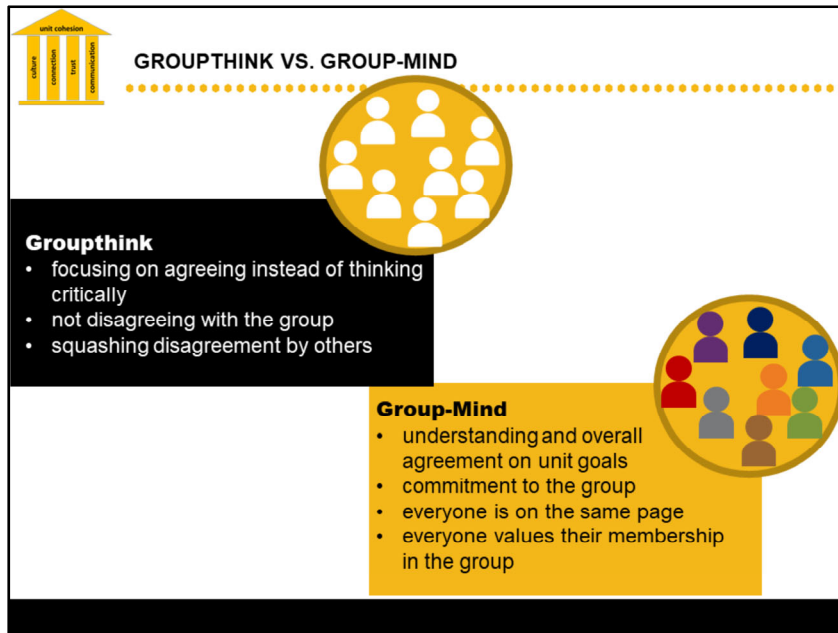
Distinguish between groupthink and group-mind.

[*SLIDE BUILDS*]

1. Define groupthink **[?]**

- By a show of hands, who knows someone who has gotten in trouble for drinking?
- **[ASK]** Did this happen when they were alone or did it happen in a group?
- **[ASK]** Were there others who could have spoken up but maybe didn't.

[**NOTE**: Allow for responses.]

- Why do you think they didn't speak up? Sometimes when groups develop there is little tolerance for differences of opinion or questioning others.

[*CLICK TO ADVANCE*]

- When groups stick together so closely that they squash individual differences of opinion, the result can be groupthink.
- Groupthink happens when the balance between feeling close and respecting individual differences gets out of whack.
- The group focuses on agreeing with one another, rather than thinking critically or considering alternative courses of action.
- Essentially groupthink shuts down someone with good ideas and squashes dissent.

Record your own notes here:

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Record your own notes here:

- Think about examples you know where a group of Soldiers has made a questionable decision together. Things like (1) deciding to go rock climbing when the weather forecast called for thunder, or (2) Encouraging each other to drink more than any of them normally would. Take a few moments and discuss in groups of 3-4.

[**NOTE:** Allow participants to discuss for 2-3 min]

- [**ASK**]: What examples are you thinking of from your own experience?

[**NOTE**: Allow participants respond.]

- [**ASK**]: How does groupthink relate to group cohesion?

[**NOTE**: Allow participants to respond. Listen for answers describing how sometimes the group is too cohesive and there is no room for disagreement, team members are afraid to be rejected].

Explain Group Mind

[*CLICK TO ADVANCE*]

- On the other hand, sometimes groups develop a strong identity and sense of connection that allows for a degree of disagreement. They share what's called "Group-mind."

- Group-mind is when there is an explicit and implicit understanding of group goals, everyone is committed to the group, they share assumptions, they value one another, and they also value differences of opinion.

- When individuals value the individual differences that collectively make up the group, it can drive optimal team performance.

[Note that cohesive units do not have to fall victim to groupthink. It's a choice that the group has to make about how they are going to develop and what they are going to value.]

Activity: Discuss ways to avoid groupthink.

[*SLIDE BUILDS*]

1. Discuss what soldiers can do to prevent groupthink. **[?]**

- [*ASK*]: What can be done to prevent groupthink?

[*NOTE*: *Divide participants into small groups for a table top discussion. Explain that they will have 3 minutes to come up with responses to the above questions then debrief to the class.*].

- [*ASK*]: What were some strategies you came up with that could help prevent groupthink?

[*NOTE*: *Allow participants to respond by group. Additional strategies are provided on the next slide.*]

[*CLICK TO ADVANCE*]

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Record your own notes here:

GROUPTHINK

✓ 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
  • 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

2.   Provide strategies for preventing groupthink. **[?]**

• Here is a list of strategies that can help your group avoid falling into groupthink.

[**NOTE**: review strategies not previously discussed.]

• [**ASK**]: Are these strategies a good fit for every military situation?

[**NOTE**: Allow for responses. The expected response is no.]

• [**ASK**]: What about when you are on a mission or in a tactical environment?

[**NOTE**: Allow for responses. Also, emphasize that all close groups have to guard against this but there may be times when it is not appropriate to challenge given the military context, rank and mission.]

3.   Place groupthink in context depending on the type of group.

• [**ASK**]: Is groupthink a risk only for groups with a designated leader? What about groups of friends, where they all the same rank/standing?

[**NOTE**: Allow for responses.]

• This can happen with any group in which there are strong bonds and a desire to be cohesive.

• Just being aware of this tendency can protect groups and help ensure that they build group mind without running into groupthink.

- For groups with a designated leader, these strategies should ideally be initiated by the leader but it's everyone's responsibility to support a healthy difference of opinion.

- For groups of peers, the strategies can be initiated by the informal leader.

- But everyone should be aware of guarding against alternative ideas. This means that everyone should be willing to explore alternative COAs presented by other group members.

- [**ASK**]: How would implementing these strategies impact unit cohesion?

[**NOTE**: Allow for responses. Issues include: (1) It may take longer to make a decision and frustrate the group, (2) there may be more dissent and disagreement in the teams].

- Teams that are high in trust can tolerate differing opinions, which leads us to the third pillar.

Record your own notes here:

[**NOTE**: Additional considerations include (1) being respectful when stating the disagreement so that individuals don't feel shamed and then want to reject the group, and (2) calling out the possibility that the team is engaging in groupthink.]

TeamCORE
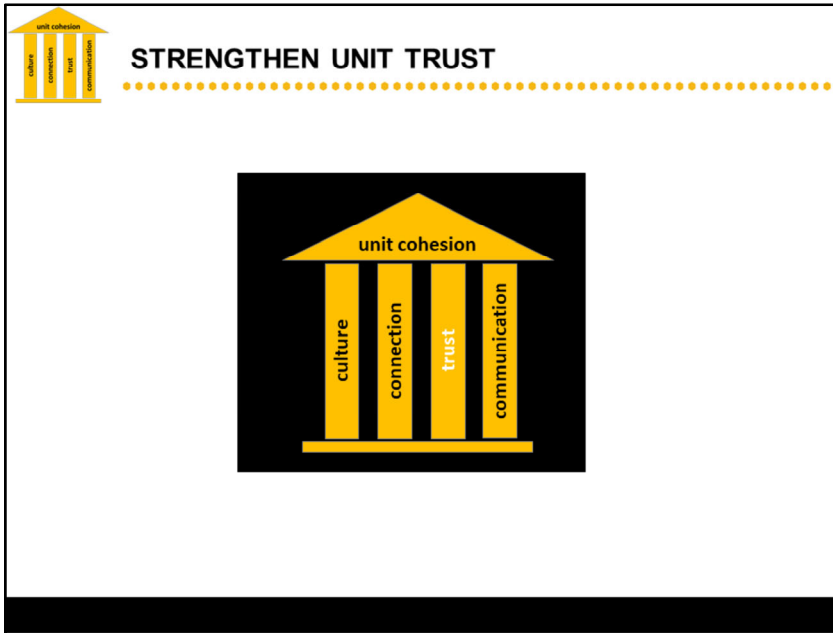
STRENGTHEN UNIT TRUST

🎯 **The importance of strengthening unit Trust as a means of supporting unit cohesion.**

1. Discuss the different skills needed to establish trust.

- The third pillar supporting unit cohesion is Trust.
- Trust is a crucial factor in unit cohesion, culture, and building/maintaining connection.
- In this section we will discuss the importance of listening well and responding well when someone brings you their good or bad news as a mean of developing and strengthening unit trust.

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TRUST

Cohesive units are built on trust

How do groups earn your trust?
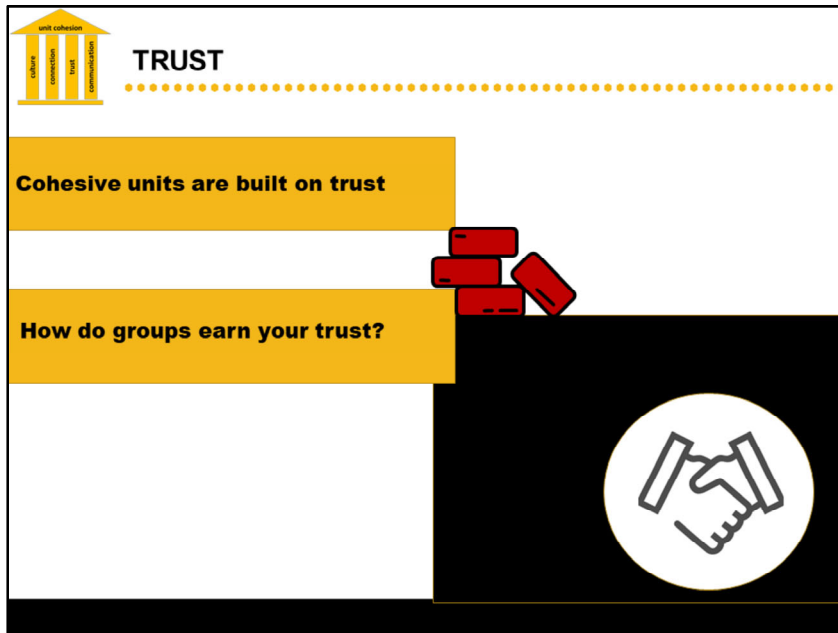
🎯 **Identify what trust means and feels like and how it applies to cohesive units.**

1. Discuss how groups earn individual trust. **[?]**

- Let's look more deeply into our third pillar Trust from a group perspective.

- *[**ASK**]: How do people within a group earn your trust?*

[**NOTE**: *Allow for responses. Key points might include:*

- *People do what they say they are going to do,*

- *You can rely on them,*

- *They know what they're doing or will tell you if they don't,*

- *You can trust them with personal matters, and*

- *They respect your boundaries, and know when to keep personal information private.]*

- A key element of trust is how individuals in the group handle information.

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TRUST

Nowhere is trust more important than when someone brings you bad news about themselves

Opportunities to build trust
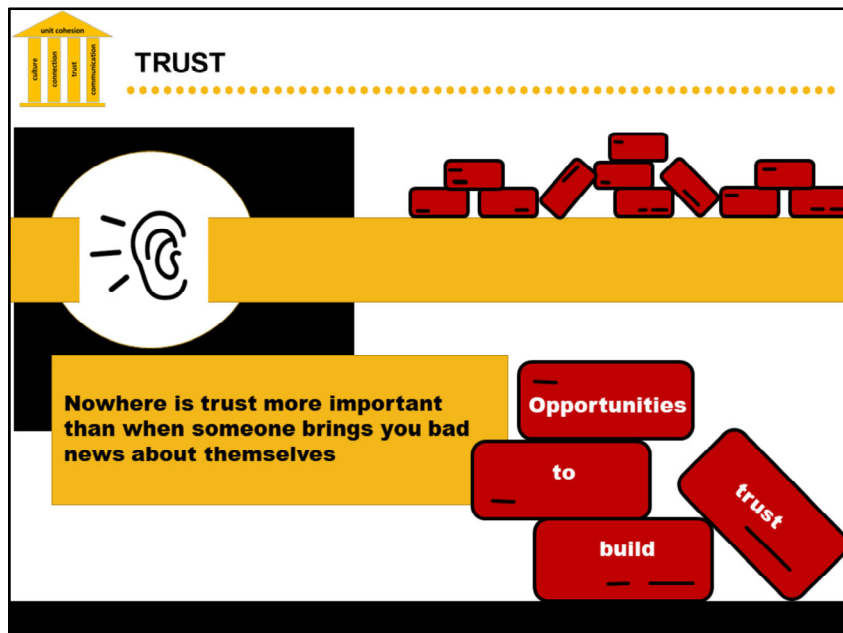
🎯 **Explain why effective listening and responding are important for building trust.**

1. Discuss the importance of listening and responding.

- Responding is most important for building trust when someone brings you bad news.
- Listening well can signal to your team members that you are trustworthy.
- Additionally, responding well will let others know that you are someone who has their six.

2. Discuss what it means to listen well. **[?]**

- *[**ASK**]:* What do you do to show you are listening when someone brings you bad news?

[**NOTE**: *Allow for responses.*]

- Let's look at some key components to listening well.

Record your own notes here:

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LISTENING WELL

- ✓ Pay attention
- ✓ Match posture
- ✓ Paraphrase to check your understanding
- ✓ Reflect back key emotions
- ✓ Ask questions

Identify effective listening strategies and skills.

1. Explain some characteristics of listening well. **[?]**

- When listening to someone, it is important to pay attention – put down your phone, turn off distractions.

- Try matching the person's posture – if they lean forward, lean forward, if they cross their arms, cross your arms – this is a natural process and you probably do it anyway, but it's good to be aware of.

- Paraphrase or summarize what you heard to check your understanding and to demonstrate you are tracking.

- [**ASK**]: What does it mean to reflect back key emotions? What does that look like?

[**NOTE**: *Allow for responses. The following is an example of reflecting back: if someone is describing how upset they are about something, try identifying one of the key emotions, like "that sounds incredibly disappointing" or "seems like you're pretty angry about that."*]

- If you get it wrong, they'll let you know and you can tune in more closely.

- Ask questions (assuming the person wants to talk) – this helps demonstrate your genuine interest.

- Also, at a later time, you'll want to make sure to follow up. Following up demonstrates you were listening and genuinely care.

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ACTIVITY: LISTENING WELL

SGT Smith finds out that his father is ill and he comes to tell you about it as a friend.

- Paraphrase
- Reflect
- Ask
- Follow-up

Record your own notes here:

◎ **Practice listening well.**

---

1. Practice listening well. **[?]**

*[**NOTE**: Have a participant read the SGT Smith sentence on the slide for this discussion. Ask the following questions – suggested responses are below each.]*

- *[**ASK**]:* What would paraphrasing look like?
    – "So your dad is pretty sick?"
- *[**ASK**]:* What would reflecting look like?
    – "Sounds like you're going through a tough time."
- *[**ASK**]:* What would you ask?
    – "How bad is it?"
    – "Are you thinking of taking leave to visit him?"
    – "How's your Mom doing?"
- *[**ASK**]:* What would follow-up look like?
    - Check back with your buddy in a couple of days and ask about his father.
- *[**ASK**]:* Do you have to go into problem solving mode to be a good buddy?
    - You don't have to – you can just listen.
- These steps show your buddy you are really (actively) listening well.

*[**NOTE**: The skills described here are also components of "active listening". Some Soldiers may be familiar with this concept and these skills can be leveraged here.]*

*[**NOTE**: "Follow-up" doesn't mean peppering SGT Smith with a million questions but means checking back in after a day or two.]*

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RESPONDING WELL

Sharing good news matters just as much as sharing bad news

How do you respond when someone shares good news?
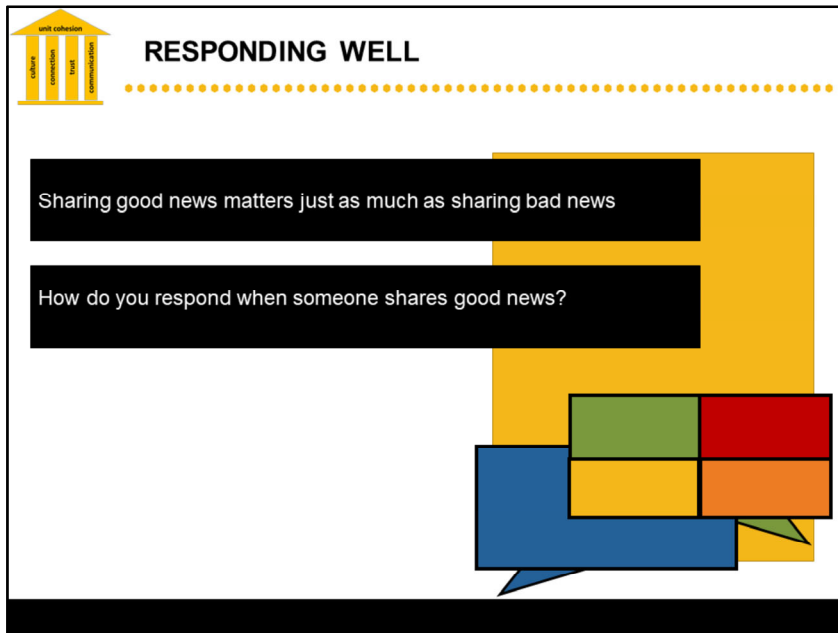
◎ **Identify responding well strategies and skills.**

---

1. Explain the importance of effecting responses. **[?]**

- Sharing good news matters just as much sharing bad news.

- Just as responding is most important for building trust when someone brings you bad news, it is also key to building trust when someone shares good news.

- The way you respond when someone shares a positive experience with you will affect the strength of that relationship.

- [**ASK**]: How do you respond when someone shares good news?

[**NOTE**: Allow for responses.]

- When responding to someone, it is important to respond with authentic, active, and constructive interest to help build relationships and trust.

- Positive experiences can be big or small, but it has meaning to the person who shared it. It is important to be a joy multiplier.

- Active Constructive Responding is a style of communication that you can use when someone shares good news or a positive experience with you.

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RESPONDING WELL

	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
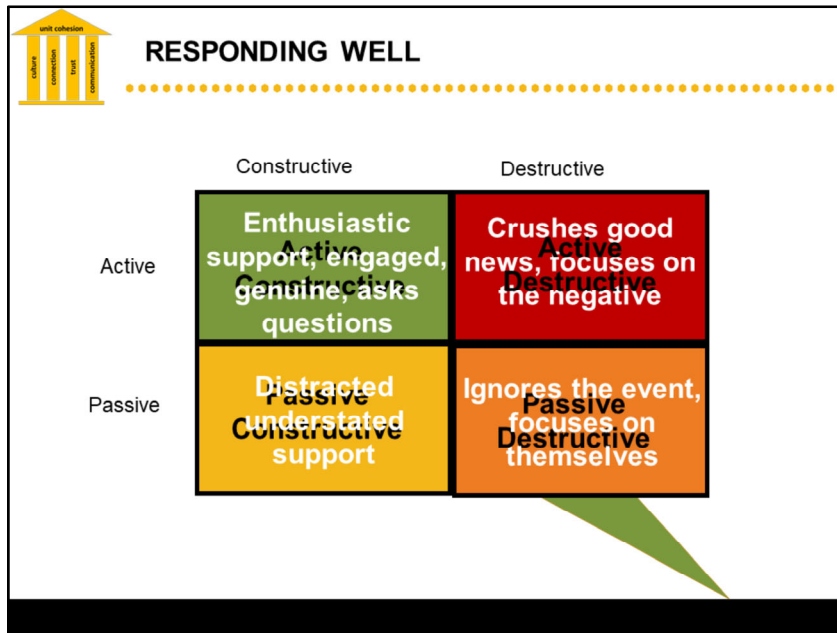
🎯 **Introduce ACR as a means of building trust.**

[**SLIDE BUILDS**]

1. Define and explain the four types of responses.

- There are four ways that people can respond to good news. Think of it along two dimensions: passive-active and destructive-constructive.

- Passive Constructive: Ignores the other person, does not acknowledge news, shows that they don't really care.

- Passive Destructive: Ignores the event, focuses on themselves.

- Active Destructive: Crushes the good news, emphasizes drawbacks, turns positive into negative.

- Active Constructive: Enthusiastic support, genuinely engaged, asks questions, coveys investment in others, and amplifies positive feelings.

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RESPONDING WELL
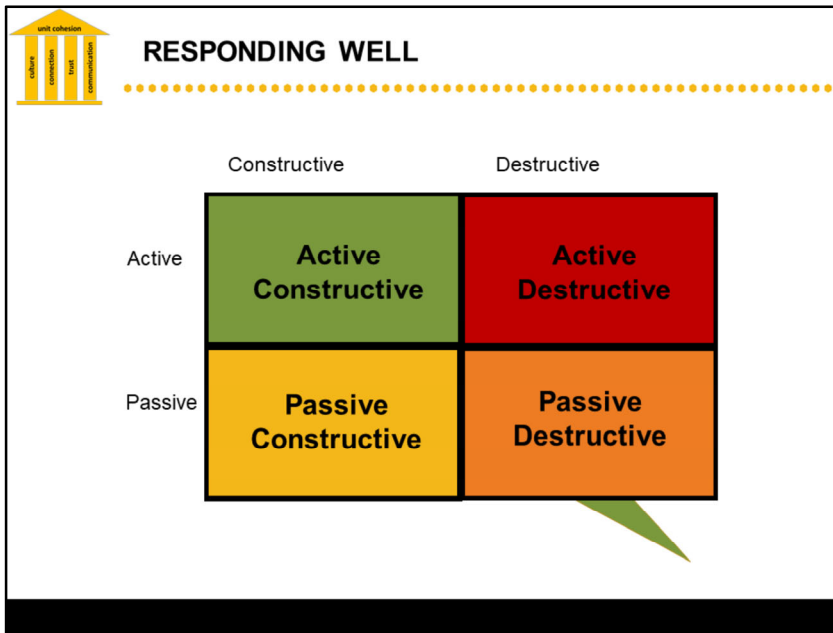
	Constructive	Destructive
Active	Active Constructive	Active Destructive
Passive	Passive Constructive	Passive Destructive

2.   Provide examples of each type of response.

- Let's look at an example of each of these types of response.

- The scenario is that one group member shares with another group member that they just completed their first 10k race.

[*CLICK TO ADVANCE*]

- A Passive Constructive response might be: "Good for you. Let's get back to work."

[*CLICK TO ADVANCE*]

- A Passive Destructive response may be: "Sounds good, I run 10k every weekend and am training for a marathon."

[*CLICK TO ADVANCE*]

- An Active Destructive response might be: "Great, you're lucky you didn't blow out your knees" or "have fun walking in 20 years."

 [*CLICK TO ADVANCE*]

- And an Active Constructive response might be: "That's amazing! How did it feel? How will you celebrate?"

- Using ACR provides enthusiastic support, demonstrates genuine engagement, coveys investment in others, and amplifies positive feelings.

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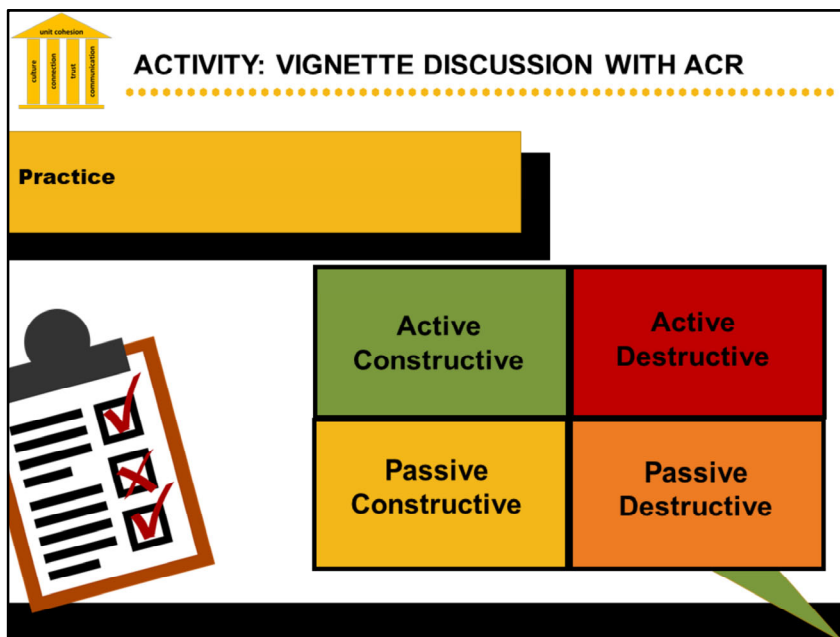
35-*A*

| 3. | **Explain why Active Constructive Responses are most effective for building trust.** |

- The people we trust are not just the ones who are there when things get rough, but also those who are there to help celebrate our successes too.

- How we respond to good news matters just as much as how we respond to bad news and helps build a sense of trust.

Record your own notes here:

ACTIVITY: VIGNETTE DISCUSSION WITH ACR

Practice

| Active Constructive | Active Destructive |
| Passive Constructive | Passive Destructive |

🎯 **Apply knowledge of ACR to a hypothetical scenario.**

1. Introduce a hypothetical scenario in which a unit member tells you something.

- Let's say SPC Rodriguez shows up and tells you they were selected for Soldier of the quarter.

- Work together in small groups to come up with possible answers.

[**NOTE**: Allow 2-3 minutes for this activity. Pair students up or work in small groups. After each group has had an opportunity to work through their responses, debrief in the large group.]

2. Debrief responses for each box. **[?]**

- [**ASK**]: How would you respond for each box?

[**NOTE**: Debrief each box allowing each group to contribute a response.]

- There are many ways to build trust. Listening and responding well are two examples of how to build trust.

- Not only is trust essential for strong teams, but good communication is too.
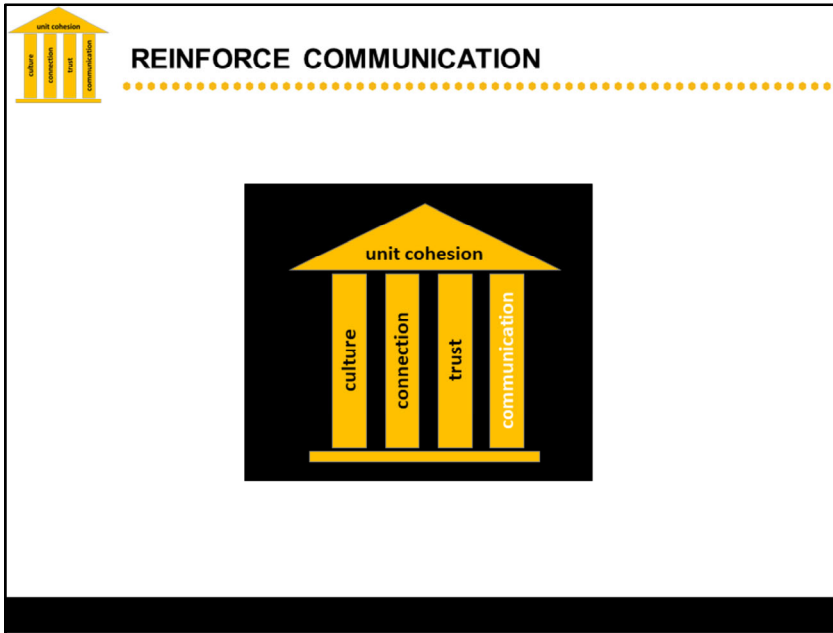
Record your own notes here:

[**NOTE**: Other examples include: (1) Bought a car, (2) Got engaged, (3) Passed APFT/ACFT, (4) Passed ht/wt, (5) Went to the beach and relaxed all weekend.]

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REINFORCE COMMUNICATION

🎯 **Outline the importance of protecting unit connections as a means of establishing unit cohesion.**

---

1. Discuss the different components of unit connections.

- The final pillar in supporting unit cohesion is Communication.

- Communication determines how Culture, Connection, and Trust work together to form a cohesive unit.

- Good communication builds relationships between individuals and also builds relationships within a group.

- In this section, we will discuss the importance of tracking Sender and Receiver Skills, Strengthening Social Bonds and Clearing Roadblocks and pitfalls that can lead to conflict.

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WHAT IS COMMUNICATION?

Form message.

Deliver message.

Filter message.
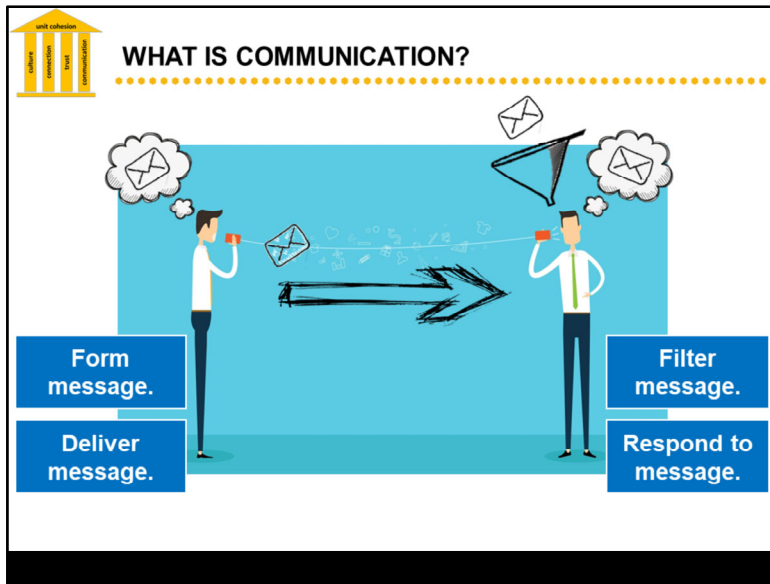
Respond to message.

◎ **To describe the communication model.**

[*SLIDE BUILDS*]

1. Describe the communication model. **[?]**

   • One essential building block for cohesion is good communication.

   • What's something typically communicated in your unit? Talked about or emailed… What's a message that gets sent in your unit?

   [**NOTE:** *Discuss and select one example to use – if no answers, try information related to taskers or details, duty uniform and equipment for the day, priorities of work, Soldiers duty status, equipment status, duty location, time*]

   • Communication is a 4-step process.

   [*CLICK TO ADVANCE*]

   • The process begins when the "sender" forms the message.

   • The message could be a thought, an idea, or an emotion.

   [*CLICK TO ADVANCE*]

   • The sender then has to deliver the message to the receiver.

▶

Record your own notes here:

[**NOTE:** *In this initial discussion, we are focusing on conveying primarily factual information. Communicating emotions may also be something that comes up, and the same processes apply*]

Record your own notes here:

- The sender can choose any number of methods to deliver the message—for example, a face-to-face conversation, a text or email, or even nonverbals.

[**CLICK TO ADVANCE**]

- As the message is received, it's put through the receiver's filter.

  - The receiver tends to listen through their biases, expectations, knowledge, and experiences.

  - This filtration process is happening beneath the receiver's awareness and can affect how we interpret the messages we receive.

  - We're going to talk more about this filter process later

[**CLICK TO ADVANCE**]

- Finally, the receiver decides how to respond to the message, either verbally or nonverbally. In mission planning and execution, we use brief backs to ensure that what came out is what the Soldiers heard and understand.

- As we discussed a moment ago, regarding communication from your leader, as you receive and process their messages, you begin thinking about how to respond to the message, and as you form your message, you take on the role of the sender.

- Four steps – it seems like an easy process, right?

- What could possibly go wrong?

- But as we all know, communication breakdowns are common.

- And they can happen at any point in this process.

- [**ASK**]: Who is responsible if communication breaks down?

[**NOTE**: Allow for responses. Elicit the idea everyone involved in the exchange may have a role in the breakdown.]

Record your own notes here:

- We've all had these types of interactions before.

- We think we've sent the message clearly, but for whatever reason, there's a disconnect. And we end up confused, frustrated, maybe even angry.

- Communication's not always easy.

- So let's talk about some specific skills we can use to improve our communication with other unit members.

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COMMUNICATION SKILLS
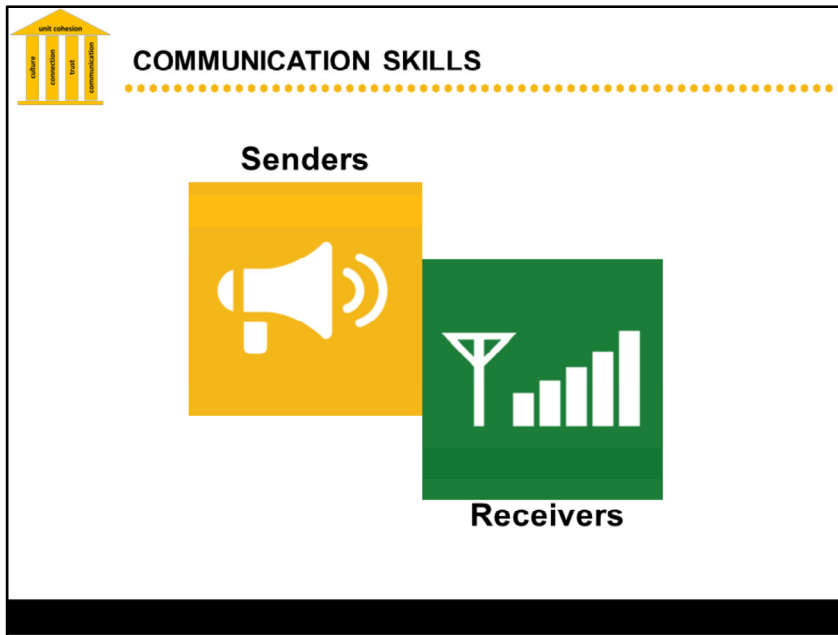
Senders

Receivers

🎯 **To introduce and outline "Communication 101" section.**

1. Introduce Communication section from the sender perspective.

- We will look at effective communication from the viewpoint of both the sender and the receiver.

- First, let's talk about the sender's responsibilities and how to be an effective sender.

Record your own notes here:

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THE SENDER: THE MESSAGE

what?

- content
- method

To discuss the sender's responsibility for the message.

*[**SLIDE BUILDS**]*

1. Introduce the sender's responsibility for the message. **[?]**

- So there are two parts to sending a message: The content and the method.

*[**CLICK TO ADVANCE**]*

- First and foremost, the sender is responsible for the message content. For example, what information does the sender want to provide, how much information should be provided, and what language should be used.

- The sender is also responsible for the method --- *how* the information is communicated. Not just in terms of email vs. in person but also how the information is conveyed.

- *[**ASK**]:* What are ways in which messages can be delivered differently?

*[**NOTE**: Allow for responses, but keep discussion brief. Record responses on a flipchart (if available). Responses may include:*

- *Timing*

- *Tone*

- *Context*

- *Emotions]*

Record your own notes here:

*[**NOTE**: When possible, integrate Soldier's responses into the following discussion.]*

40-*B*

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THE SENDER: THE CONNECTION

how?

- consider receiver, timing, and context
- notice verbal and nonverbal signals

◎ **To discuss the sender's strategies for the connection.**

[SLIDE BUILDS]

1. Discuss strategies for understanding and assessing your connection with the receiver. **[?]**

[CLICK TO ADVANCE]

- So now we're going to focus on how information is communicated.

- How are you going to figure out the best method? Consider 3 factors.

- First, who is receiver? Think about whether it's the right receiver for the message you want to send.

- Second, did you pick the right time? Is the receiver tired, stressed, distracted?

- Third, did you pick the right context? Is the conversation in a public setting? In a quiet setting? This may sound obvious but have you ever just picked the right conversation but the wrong place? It doesn't usually go well.

[CLICK TO ADVANCE]

- The sender also needs to pay attention to verbal and nonverbal cues. Are they signaling to you that they are engaged in what you are saying? Verbally? Nonverbally? What are cues?
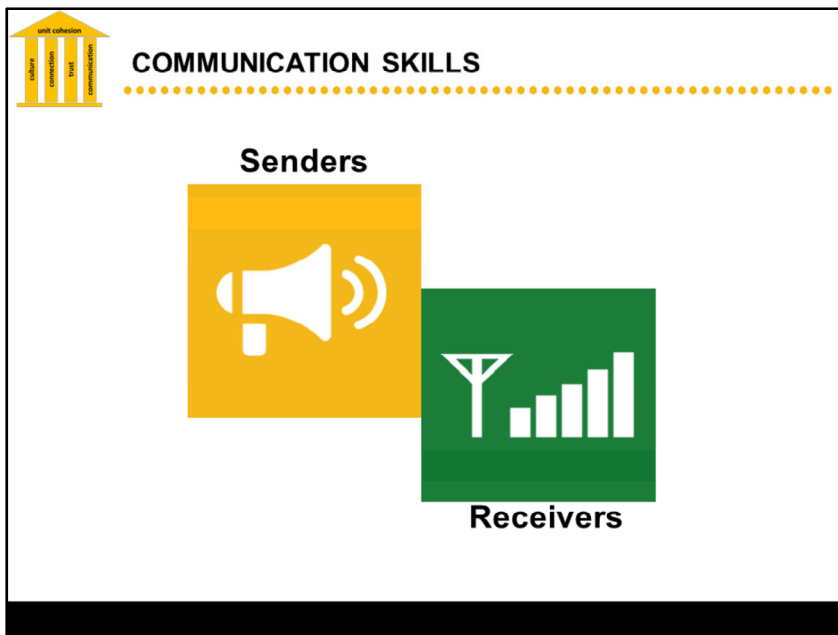
Record your own notes here:

- Choosing the most effective mode of delivery will depend in large part on the situation, the message, and the preferences of both the sender *and* the receiver.

- However, remember when choosing text or email, in the absence of pacing, tone of voice, facial expressions, nuance, etc., there is a danger of being misunderstood and problems result. Even well meaning, good natured sarcasm can backfire.

- [**ASK**]: When might it be more effective to have a face-to-face conversation rather than using text or email?

- Discuss with a partner.

[**NOTE**: *Allow time for discussion, then ask Soldiers to share their responses. Responses might include:*

  - *When the conversation is personal in nature.*

  - *When there are a lot of details to be shared.*

  - *When the message has to do with a Soldier's well-being.*

  - *When there's bad news to communicate.*]

Record your own notes here:

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Senders

Receivers

🎯 **To introduce and outline "Communication 101" section from the receivers perspective.**

[*SLIDE BUILDS*]

1. Introduce section.

[*CLICK TO ADVANCE*]

- Now we are going to talk about the receiver's responsibilities.

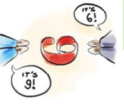Record your own notes here:

42-*B*

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THE RECEIVER: THE ROLE

what?

• match sender's expectations

| Supportive Ear | Wise Counsel | Fixer | Devil's Advocate |

◎ **To discuss the receiver's responsibility for the role.**

[*SLIDE BUILDS*]

1. Discuss the receiver's responsibility for the role. **[?]**

- Now let's talk about the responsibilities of the receiver.

- In a military setting, there are often clear rules around how the receiver indicates they are in listening mode. For example, the receiver may be standing at parade rest. Or the correct response might be simply "Yes, Sir", or "Yes, Ma'am". But there are other times when the rules are not as clear.

- [*ASK*]: In those cases, what are the responsibilities of the receiver to indicate that they are receiving the message? What cues can they provide the sender?

[*NOTE*: *Allow for responses, but keep discussion brief. Record responses on a flipchart (if available). Responses may include:*

- *Match body language (if someone leans forward, you lean forward);*

- *Listen (respond appropriately with relevant comments)*

- *Emotions (provide facial cues, smiling or concern)*

Record your own notes here:

- *Give sender undivided attention (put down cell phone)*
- *Be present (focused)]*

[**CLICK TO ADVANCE**]

[**NOTE**: *When possible, integrate Soldier's responses into the following discussion.]*

- In addition, as a receiver, your primary responsibility is to understand your role in the exchange and to match the sender's expectations.

- Receivers can take many different roles:

[**CLICK TO ADVANCE**]

- For example, the supportive ear – just listening and being there for the other person

- Or the wise counsel – listening and offering advice

- Or the fixer – listening, offering advice, and taking action to fix the problem

- Or the devil's advocate – listening and offering alternative perspectives.

- Oftentimes, we just want our receivers to be the supportive ear.

- But our tendency as the receiver can be to just dive in and start fixing or giving advice, and this can lead to conflict.

- So it's important to clarify with the sender what role you should be taking. If you aren't sure, you can even ask – what role should I be playing here? You don't want to jump in with advice if the person really just needs someone to listen.

- In general, you want to be able to match their expectations.

Record your own notes here:

THE RECEIVER: THE CONNECTION

how?

- listen
- notice verbal and nonverbal signals

◎ **To discuss the receiver's strategies for the connection.**

---

1. Discuss receiver strategies. **[?]**

- It can be challenging to be good at receiving communication and to match the sender's expectations.

- [**ASK**] How many of you would say that it's common for your mind to wander during conversation? What do you typically do to try to help yourself focus?

[**NOTE**: Allow for responses, but keep discussion brief.]

- Active, supportive listening means being completely present and engaged and sending appropriate nonverbal and verbal signals to show your connection to the sender.

- Making eye contact, nodding, asking follow-up questions, and paraphrasing the message, don't only communicate interest but they also help you focus on the sender and their message.

- But a good receiver is also aware of the *sender's* nonverbal and verbal signals.

Record your own notes here:

44-*B*

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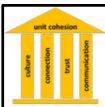
READING SITUATIONS AND OTHERS MORE ACCURATELY

🎯 **To introduce the section on reading situations and others more accurately.**

1. Introduce the skill of reading situations and others more accurately.

- One of the areas in which we can improve social connection skills is how accurately we interpret the words and actions of unit members.

- Oftentimes we sabotage our own encounters with others because we only partly know the situation, and/or we allow the filters of our own life to shape what we hear.

- So in the space between receiving the message and responding, we can -- without awareness -- run into roadblocks that skew our understanding and misinform our interpretation and response.

- The goal is to be as accurate as possible in how we read the situations and people around us.

- Lets look at one way this might work.

Record your own notes here:

45-*B*

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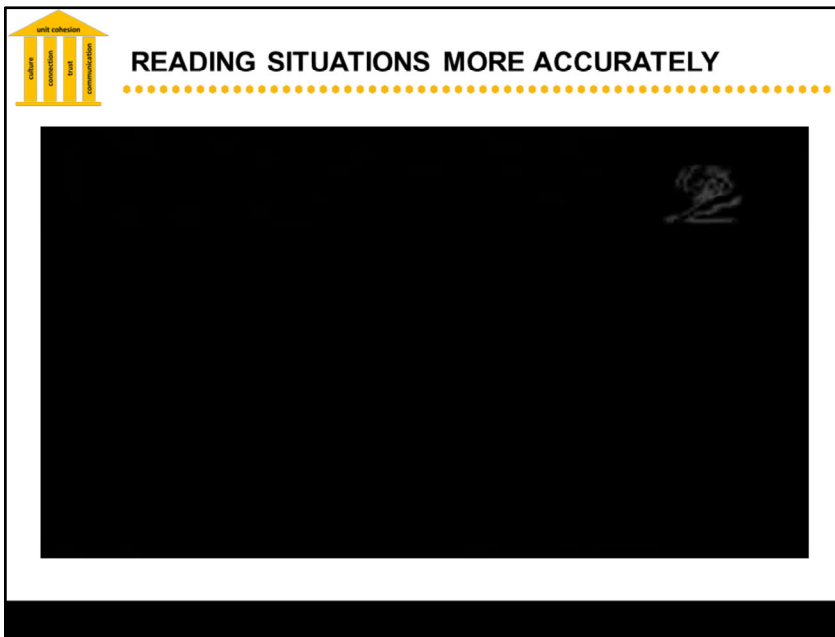
READING SITUATIONS MORE ACCURATELY

To introduce the importance of reading situations and others more accurately.

1. Use **Video** to explain how we can sometimes read situations and others inaccurately. **[?]**

- As we watch this next video, think about how you would react if you were in the situation.

[**CLICK TO PLAY VIDEO**:

Video: *4Judgement_Scenario1_Pt1.wmv; (0:09)]*

- [**ASK**]: How would you react walking into this room?

[**NOTE**: *Allow for a few responses.]*

- Let's take a step back and see if our responses were justified.

[**CLICK TO PLAY VIDEO**:

Video: *4Judgement_Scenario1_Pt2.wmv; (0:09)]*

- We all have a tendency to make assumptions and react without having all of the information.

- Our brains automatically start filling in the gaps about the situation and about other people.

- The problem is that many of these perceptions and assumptions are wrong.

- In fact, there are several road blocks to consider on the way to excellent communication skills.

46-*B*

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COMMON ROADBLOCKS

neglecting/misreading nonverbal signals

self-fulfilling prophecy

first-person bias
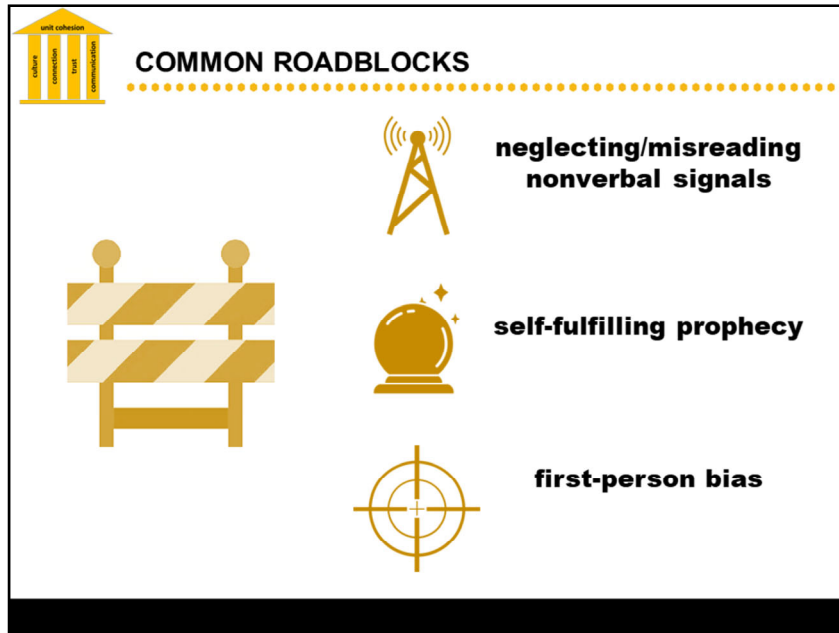
To introduce some common roadblocks to reading situations and others more accurately.

[SLIDE BUILDS]

1. Introduce three common communication roadblocks.

- To improve our ability to read situations and others, we'll have to be able to notice, and work around some common roadblocks.

- Here are a few of them:

[CLICK TO ADVANCE]

- Neglecting or misreading nonverbal signals,

[CLICK TO ADVANCE]

- The self-fulfilling prophecy, and

[CLICK TO ADVANCE]

- First-person bias.

- Let's look at each of these roadblocks individually.

Record your own notes here:

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NEGLECTING/MISREADING NONVERBAL SIGNALS

neglecting/misreading
nonverbal signals

words out of
context

🎯 **To introduce the importance of nonverbal signals in reading situations and others.**

[**SLIDE BUILDS**]

1. Use **Video** to introduce an example of how nonverbal signals influence interpretation of the message. **[?]**

- Let's take a look at an example of how nonverbal signals can influence how we read situations.

[**CLICK TO PLAY VIDEO**:

[**NOTE**: Audio of video will play against blank screen]

Video: Video 7_State Farm Commercial.wmv; (0:24)]

- [**ASK**]: What signals made their messages sound different?

[**NOTE**: Allow for responses. Responses may include:

- Tone of voice
- Rate of speech.
- Facial expressions
- Body language.]

Record your own notes here:

48-*A*

Record your own notes here:

*[**CLICK TO PLAY VIDEO**:*

*[**NOTE**: Video will play]*

*****Video**: Video 7_State Farm Commercial.wmv; (0:24)]*

- We use signals such as tone of voice, facial expressions, and body language to send nonverbal messages that can be even more powerful than words.

*[**CLICK TO ADVANCE**]*

- This is why it's important to be alert to the signals surrounding the words as well as to the words themselves.

- Without this context, misunderstandings can easily happen.

- It's also important to consider how someone's role might affect the meaning of nonverbal signals.

  - For example, if your leader takes a stern tone with you, it might mean one thing but if your buddy uses the same tone, it might suggest that something is off and you need to reach out.

- So at the individual level, the key with nonverbal signals is to start recognizing what is normal or abnormal for a particular person.

CONFLICTING MESSAGES

Yeah, I'm good.

What if the messages seem to be conflicting?

words out of context
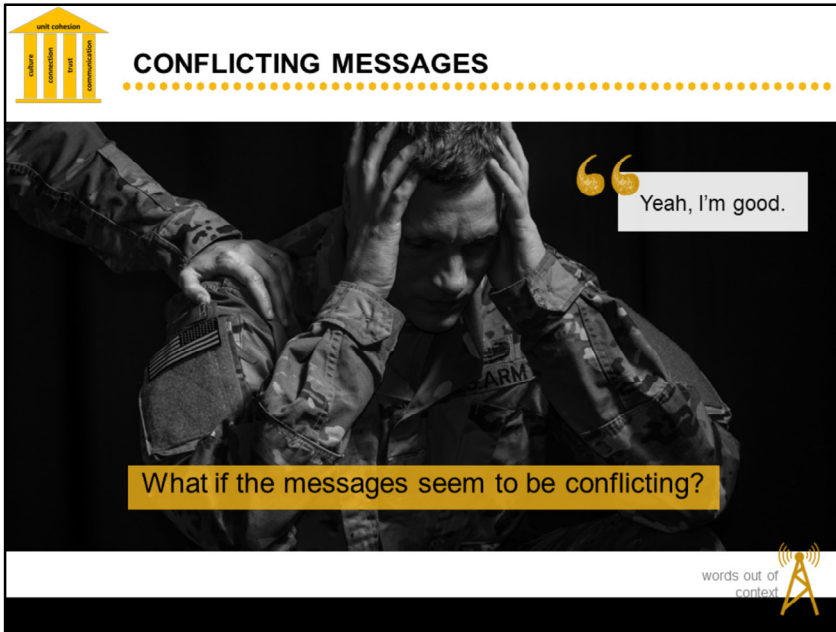
🎯 **To discuss the importance of recognizing conflicting messages.**

[*SLIDE BUILDS*]

1. Explain the importance of comparing words and signals for consistency. **[?]**

- But what if the signals don't line up?

- Nonverbal signals—both on their own and in combination with spoken words—give important information about the feelings and attitude of the person sending them.

- [*ASK*]*:* Take a look at this picture. Based on his nonverbal signals, what do you think this Soldier might be experiencing?

[*CLICK TO ADVANCE*]

- He might be feeling upset or frustrated, or he might just have a headache.

- Nonverbal signals can be a powerful tool for reading situations and others, but they should not be considered the sole source of information.

- They are just pieces of the puzzle.

Record your own notes here:

2.	Explain that conflicting messages should prompt more probing. **[?]**

- So let's say this is your buddy – the guy in the picture -- and you approach him and ask him if he's ok.

*[**CLICK TO ADVANCE**]*

- He answers, "Yeah I'm good".

- His body language seems to be implying something is wrong, but his words are saying he's okay.

- His verbal and nonverbal signals are not sending the same message, so this situation requires clarification.

*[**CLICK TO ADVANCE**]*

- We've all been in a situation like this before.

- *[**ASK**]:* How did you figure out what was really going on?

*[**NOTE**: Allow for variety of responses.]*

- *[**ASK**]:* Does anyone have a good example they'd like to share?

*[**NOTE**: Allow for variety of responses.]*

- Sometimes people do this when they're angry too.

- It can be hard for Soldiers to let others into their private thoughts and emotions but how do you think this works out over the long run for them?

- *[**ASK**]:* What impact could this have on the team?

*[**NOTE**: Allow for variety of responses. Discuss how this approach can lead to reduced sense of connection and trust building]*

- Misreading signals is not the only road block.

- Another is the self-fulfilling prophecy.

THE SELF-FULFILLING PROPHECY

"This unit sucks. No one gets along."

Beliefs

No connections made and the unit remains negative when the next person joins.

Outcomes

Expectations

"They just complain all the time and bring me down. It won't matter what I do and I don't want anything to do with them."

Behaviors

Avoid group activities with unit members

you get what you expect
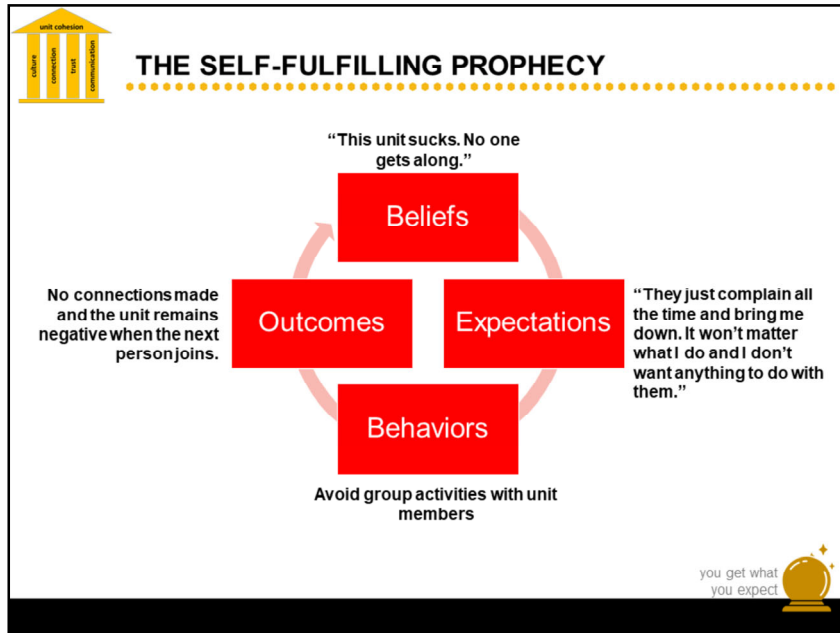
🎯 **To discuss a counterproductive example of the self-fulfilling prophecy.**

[*SLIDE BUILDS*]

1. Explain the self fulfilling prophecy.

- Let's explain the self-fulfilling prophecy, then we'll take a look at how it can work against or for the team.

- Our core beliefs about ourselves and others influence what we expect to happen in social situations. Our expectations influence our behaviors (attitudes and actions), and those behaviors affect the outcome, causing the expectation to be fulfilled. This in turn reinforces the original belief.

- So, a generic example might be, I believe my job is not important. I expect to go to work today and do nothing of value. My attitude is negative, my productivity is low, and my work is poor quality. The outcome is that I produce nothing of impact or value, reinforcing my belief about the low importance of my work.

- What makes the self-fulfilling prophecy so powerful is that most of the time we do not critically examine our beliefs. As a result, we don't even realize that they are affecting the quality of our lives and that by changing our beliefs, we can change our life experiences in dramatic ways.

▶

Record your own notes here:

2. **Discuss the potentially counterproductive side of the self-fulfilling prophecy example on the slide. [?]**

- Now let's look at the self-fulfilling prophecy in the context of a Soldier's social connection and communication.

- First, we'll look at how it can work against us.

*[**CLICK TO ADVANCE**]*

- A new Soldier to the unit thinks "This unit sucks. No one gets along."

*[**CLICK TO ADVANCE**]*
- This leads the Soldier to expect that "They just complain all the time and bring me down. It won't matter what I do and I don't want anything to do with them." *[**CLICK TO ADVANCE**]*

- As a result of these expectations, they avoid group activities with unit members outside of their mission requirements.

*[**CLICK TO ADVANCE**]*

- *[**ASK**]* Then, what happens?

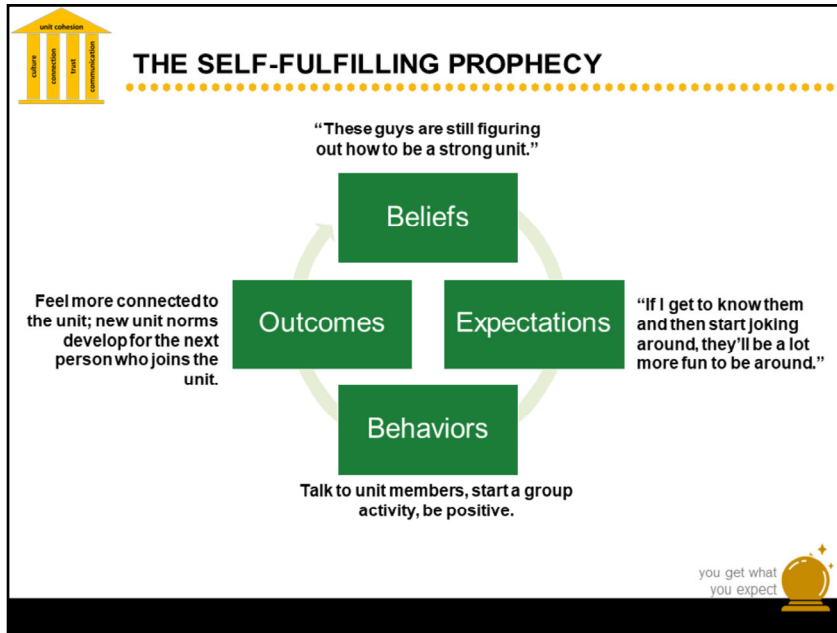*[**NOTE**: Allow for responses, but keep discussion brief. Ask how it impacts the Soldier and unit]*

- No social connections are made and the Soldier feels apathetic.

- The unit stays negative and when the next person joins the unit, they also encounter a negative unit.

- *[**ASK**]* Are there any questions?

*[**NOTE**: Allow for responses, but keep discussion brief.]*

- You can see how negativity is contagious – but so is positivity.

- Now, let's look at how expectations can work in our favor.

THE SELF-FULFILLING PROPHECY

"These guys are still figuring out how to be a strong unit."

Beliefs

Feel more connected to the unit; new unit norms develop for the next person who joins the unit.

Outcomes

Expectations

"If I get to know them and then start joking around, they'll be a lot more fun to be around."

Behaviors

Talk to unit members, start a group activity, be positive.

you get what you expect

◎ **To discuss a productive example of the self-fulfilling prophecy.**

[*SLIDE BUILDS*]

1. Discuss a productive example of the self-fulfilling prophecy. **[?]**

- Now imagine that same Soldier.

[*CLICK TO ADVANCE*]

- The Soldier's belief now is: "These guys are still figuring out how to be a strong unit."

- [*ASK*] So what are their expectations going to be?

[*NOTE: Allow for responses.*]

[*CLICK TO ADVANCE*]
- "If I get to know them and then start joking around, they'll be a lot more fun to be around."

- So if that's what they expect, how will they behave?

[*CLICK TO ADVANCE*]

- They would be purposeful about making efforts to be positive and engage in activities with unit members.

[*CLICK TO ADVANCE*]

- [*ASK*] And how is that likely to play out?

[*NOTE: Allow for responses.*]

- They feel more connected to the unit

- New unit norms develop for the next person who joins the unit.

51-*A*

Record your own notes here:

Record your own notes here:

- So our beliefs inform our expectations which inform our behaviors. And our behaviors inform our outcomes, which reinforce our beliefs.

- [**ASK**] Can you see how the self–fulfilling prophecy can get in the way of communication and connection?

[**NOTE**: Allow for responses.]

2. **Discuss a productive example of the self-fulfilling prophecy. [?]**

- [**ASK**] How can we leverage this knowledge about self-fulfilling prophecies to help build social connections?

[**NOTE**: Allow for responses. Responses may include:

   - We can be on the look out for times we do that to ourselves

   - We can be on the look out for when others do it

   - We can remind ourselves to give everyone a chance

   - We can be deliberate about developing positive expectations for others, which can help build them up and improve our relationships.]

FIRST-PERSON BIAS

looking at another's situation
through your own sights
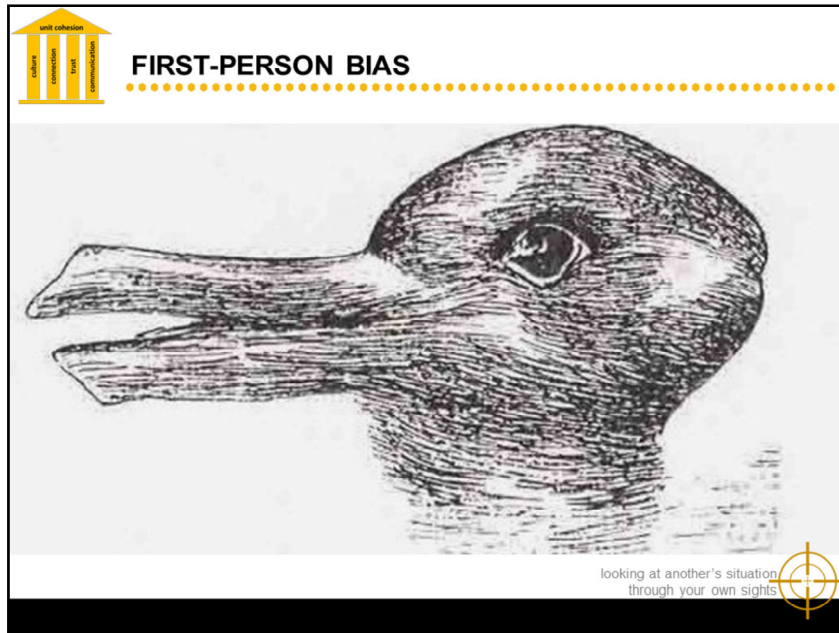
To introduce first person bias as a roadblock to reading situations accurately and provide an example .

[SLIDE BUILDS]

1. Provide an example of and introduce first person bias. **[?]**

- Now let's move on to our third roadblock.
- *[ASK]:* What is the first thing you see in this picture?
- Stand up if you see a duck.

[NOTE: Pause to allow Soldiers to stand.]

- *[ASK]:* Those of you who are still sitting, what do you see in the picture?

[NOTE: Allow for responses. Elicit the idea that the picture can also be seen as a rabbit. Allow Soldiers to take their seats.]

- Some of you saw a duck facing the left.
- But others saw a rabbit facing the right.
- It's the same picture, but we all saw it a bit differently.
- And that's the same in our day-to-day interactions with others.

[CLICK TO ADVANCE]

- We don't see things as they are; we see things through our perceptions formed by our beliefs, feelings, knowledge, and past experiences.

Record your own notes here:

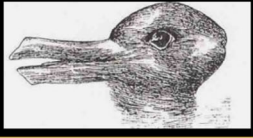52-*B*

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FIRST-PERSON BIAS

Our perception impacts what we see

We look at another's situation through our own sights

looking at another's situation
through your own sights

🎯 **To explain first-person bias as a roadblock in reading situations and others.**

[SLIDE BUILDS]

1. Describe first-person bias and how it interferes with accurately reading situations and others. **[?]**

- Our perception impacts what we see. This can lead us to misread situations, which is the basis of this "first-person bias" roadblock.

[CLICK TO ADVANCE]

- Have you ever thought to yourself, "If I was in his situation, I would react completely differently?"

- *[ASK]* What is first-person bias?

[NOTE: Allow for responses. Use bullet below to respond.]

- In first person bias, you're looking at someone else's situation through your own sights—your experiences, knowledge, and feelings—rather than seeing their situation through their sights.

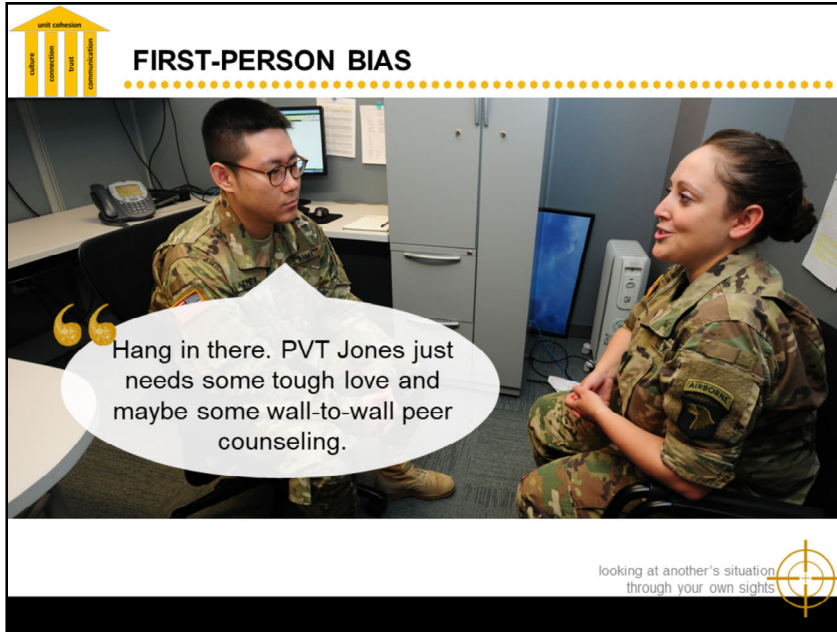- *[ASK]* What happens if no one challenges their first person bias? What happens to the unit?

[NOTE: Allow for responses. Responses should include: diminished cohesion, strained connections, difficulty building trust, etc.]

Record your own notes here:

53-*A*

53-*B*

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FIRST-PERSON BIAS

Hang in there. PVT Jones just needs some tough love and maybe some wall-to-wall peer counseling.

looking at another's situation through your own sights

🎯 **Discuss a military example of first-person bias.**

---

1. Discuss a military example of first-person bias. **[?]**

- Let's take a look at an example of this first-person bias.

- PFC Barrett is talking to SPC Tyner about problems with her new roommate, PVT Jones. PVT Jones is new to the unit and just out of AIT.

- PFC Barrett and PVT Jones were just "gigged" during today's squad leader room inspection because PVT Jones' side of the room and common area were not inspection-ready.

- PFC Barrett is worried that her new roommate will continue to make room inspections a nightmare for her and they will continue to be counseled and re-inspected after hours.

*[**CLICK TO ADVANCE**]*

- SPC Tyner tells her, "Hang in there. PVT Jones just needs some tough love and maybe some wall-to-wall peer counseling."

- This wasn't quite the response PFC Barrett was hoping for, so she leaves frustrated, wondering why she ever went to him for advice in the first place.

- *[**ASK**]:* How might the first-person bias have impacted this interaction?

Record your own notes here:

- *[**ASK**]:* What beliefs, feelings, knowledge, and past experiences might have influenced how SPC Tyner responded to PFC Barrett's concerns?

*[**NOTE**: Allow for responses. Responses may include:*

  - *SPC Tyner expected PFC Barrett's experience with barracks roommates to be similar to his own.*

  - *SPC Tyner may be assuming that it's not a big problem for PFC Barrett because it wasn't a big problem for him*

  - *SPC Tyner may not have thought about the fact that PFC Barrett's personality is more reserved and not confrontational.]*

- This kind of conversational disconnect is why it's so important to understand roadblocks like 1st person bias.

Record your own notes here:

CLEARING ROADBLOCKS

neglecting/misreading nonverbal signals
remember: look for cues

self-fulfilling prophecy
remember: you get what you expect

first-person bias
remember: check your perspective

◎ **To think about strategies for dealing with roadblocks.**

1. Summary of how to unblock roadblocks

- It's easy to run into these roadblocks.

- Each of them can get in the way of effective communication and building relationships in your unit.

- So it's important to think about how they can be avoided.

- When it comes to misreading signals, remember to look for cues. What is the person trying to tell you? Is there a disconnect between what you are seeing and what you are hearing?

CLICK to ADVANCE

- Are you engaging in a self-fulfilling prophecy? Remember, you get what you expect. Changing your approach might surprise you.

CLICK to ADVANCE

- What about first-person bias? Do you need to check your perspective and the assumptions you are making? Are you jumping to conclusions?

- Even if try to do everything right, we are still going to mess up at times. When that happens, it's important to take steps to repair the relationship – whether it's with family or friends.

- What's the best way to repair a relationship? With an apology.

Record your own notes here:

55-*A*

55-*B*

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A GOOD APOLOGY

Secrets to a good apology

Repairing relationships

Apology Rules

1. Own it, using "I" statements
2. Acknowledge impact on the other person
3. Be sure not to deflect by focusing on other person's fault
4. Commit to change in the future

To discuss a good apology.

1. Create a good apology. **[?]**

- Apologies are great. Since all relationships get strained, it's important to know how to repair them. It's another way of changing things if you didn't catch it or check it first.

- There are specific ingredients to a good apology

  – Be specific about trespass (what was the mistake),

  – Take ownership (use "I" statements),

  – Acknowledge what impact it had on the other person,

  – Don't deflect ("but you…")

  – Commit to change

Record your own notes here:

[**NOTE:** *Activity in small groups*]

- In small groups, come up with a scenario where a good apology would be useful.

- [**ASK**]: What might be an apology roadblock?

[**NOTE**: *Allow for responses. Responses may include:*

  – pride,

  – anxiety,

  – anger]

- [**ASK**]: What are the benefits of a good apology?

[**NOTE**: *Allow for responses.*]

Record your own notes here:

ACTIVITY: PFC PARK AND THE PCS

PFC Park has always been slow to make friends. When he gets to his new unit he expects that his fellow Soldiers won't take much interest in getting to know him so he just hangs out in his room, goes to the DFAC and back and generally keeps to himself. As a result of his lack of reaching out and making himself available to others, he ends up with no friends.

PFC Park texts a buddy from BCT and explains that he doesn't like his new unit. His buddy texts back: "don't sweat it."

A couple of days later, PFC Park sees PFC Berger and PFC Franks from his unit at the PX and decides to make an effort and see if he can walk back to the barracks with them. As he begins to walk toward them, he sees them laugh and then they turn around and go in the opposite direction. PFC Park believes they saw him and laughed at him, then darted away to avoid him. He's pretty devastated.

To practice awareness of roadblocks.

1. Introduce the purpose.

   • So now we're going to practice recognizing roadblocks and how to clear them.

   [**NOTE:** *Activity in small groups*]

   [**NOTE:** *Divide into small groups. Instruct half to take PFC Park' perspective and half take PFC Berger's perspective.*]

   – What roadblocks can you see?

   – What can PFC Park do differently (if anything)?

   – or

   – What can PFC Berger do differently (if anything)?

   [**NOTE:** *After 3-5 minutes, have each group report back to the class as a whole.*

   Listen for themes such as: self-fulfilling prophecy (PFC Park' behavior), first-person bias (the BCT buddy), misreading nonverbals (that PFC Park was trying to catch up with the Berger and Franks and was upset afterwards).]

   • Could PFC Park been misreading nonverbals from the two unit members PFC Berger and PFC Franks?

2. Provide additional context to the scenario. **[?]**

Record your own notes here:

- The story continues: An hour or so later, back in the barracks area he sees PFC Berger and PFC Franks. PFC Berger walks over to him and says, "Right when we saw you, Franks realized he forgot to grab one of his bags from the check-out area so we went back to get it. Sorry we missed you, maybe next time."

- [**ASK**]: Does that change your recommendations?

[**NOTE**: Allow for responses.]

- As you can see in the example, communication matters.

- [**ASK**]: Did the BCT buddy know what PFC Park was going through?

[**NOTE**: Allow for responses. Listen for the concept that PFC Park' text didn't really explain what was going on – his buddy used first-person bias in responding]

- [**ASK**]: How well did PFC Berger handle the situation?

[**NOTE**: Allow for responses.

In general, PFC Berger handled the situation well – he must have guessed that PFC Park misinterpreted what happened. He was probably looking at nonverbal cues since PFC Park was "pretty devastated".

PFC Berger also offered an apology. How did he do? Did he "I" statements (he said "we", so that owning it), he didn't blame PFC Park' so that's good, and he said what they would do in the future ("maybe next time") – although could be more specific.

He did not "Acknowledge impact on the other person" – and that might have helped PFC Park feel more understood.

Still, they are on the right track.]

- [**ASK**:] Whose responsibility is it?

[**NOTE**: Allow for responses. Listen for the concept that connection is a shared responsibility across the unit.]

- [**ASK**:] Does PFC Park have to pretend he is extraverted or outgoing even when he isn't?

[**NOTE**: Allow for responses. Listen for the concept that PFC Park does not have to fake his personality. What matters is the disconnect between the connection he wants and the connection he has. His isolation could also start to negatively influence the entire team. He and the whole team will benefit from establishing connections.]

REVIEW

Sharing Culture
understanding unit culture
sharing unit culture

Protecting Connection
dealing with isolation
developing group mind vs. groupthink

Strengthening Trust
listening well
responding well

Communication
sender, receiver, message, connection
avoiding roadblocks
a good apology

🎯 **To wrap-up the module.**

[*SLIDE BUILDS*]

1. Summarize the module.

- We started today by talking about the importance of unit cohesion—this idea that we stick together through good times and bad times.

- We talked about the effects of social isolation on the individual and on the unit.

- We talked about the importance of understanding and sharing unit culture—this idea that we strengthen unit cohesion by sharing the things that make our unit unique.

  - Who we are – the specific characteristics of our unit.

  - What we do – the specific roles that you each fill in your unit.

  - How we do it – the written and unwritten rules that guide our behavior and interactions with one another.

- We then talked about the importance of protecting our connections by including others and recognizing the value of our differences. We also discussed group mind and groupthink, and how they differ.

Record your own notes here:

59-A

- We also talked about how to strengthen unit trust by sharing good and bad times, and by relying on each other when times get tough.

- And finally, we discussed the importance of communication skills as a sender and receiver, and what barriers can get in the way. Then we talked about "catch it, check it, change it", and the power of a good apology.

Record your own notes here:

BOTTOM LINE

Social isolation is a risk to you and your team

By investing in social connection, you can mitigate risk and strengthen your team
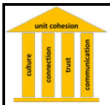
What you chose to do matters

◎ **To remind everyone about the bottom line.**

[SLIDE BUILDS]

1. Reinforce the main point.

- Social isolation is a threat to individuals and to the whole team.

- It's potentially contagious – it can become a cultural norm within the group – affecting the whole unit. And this pattern of behavior can potentially undermine the health and functioning of the whole team.

- *CLICK to ADVANCE*

- But the flip side is also true. Just like isolation is contagious, so is connection.

- By investing in social connection, you can reduce the risk to your teammates and to yourself and even strengthen the whole team.

- Regardless of rank, you can make a positive impact. And you don't have to be someone you aren't -- you can keep ahead of social isolation by reaching out in small ways.

- *CLICK to ADVANCE*

- What you chose to do matters and by investing in others, you can help yourself and your team.

Record your own notes here:

Record your own notes here:

[**SLIDE BUILDS**]

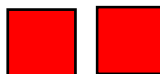2.   Check on learning. **[?]**

• [**ASK**]*: Are there any questions on any of the
   skills or principles that we covered today?*

[**NOTE***: Allow for and answer any questions that
may arise.]*

[**CLICK TO ADVANCE***]*

• Discuss the following questions with a partner.

        - What's the risk if your team does not pay
           attention to the importance of social l
           connection?

        - What's the most valuable concept you
           learned today?

        - What's one take-home point that you can
           use as a team member? As a leader?

[**NOTE***: Allow time for discussion, then ask for
responses. Record responses on a flipchart (if
available), and summarize the Soldiers' responses,
emphasizing the components of the training.]*