ROAD TO MENTAL READINESS
Building a Resilient Mindset

LCol Suzanne Bailey, MSM, MSW, RSW
Resilience

noun

1. the capacity to recover quickly, resist and even thrive in the face of adversity  2. the power or ability of an object to return to the original form, position, etc., after being bent, compressed, or stretched; elasticity.

*The ability to modulate and harness the stress response*
Resilience in modern society

- We take in approximately 39 GB of information a day
- We have 60,000 thoughts/day
- We talk to ourselves at a rate of 300-1000 words a minute
- 47% of the time our attention is not focused on what we are doing
- Our greatest human need is to connect with others
Optimizing Performance

Prepare: Knowledge and Training
- Understand the stress response
- Manage the stress response

Perform: Skill application
- The Big Four+

Recover:
- Optimal performance includes active recovery, an intentional activity aimed at returning to pre-performance level
Developmental & Progressive Training

- Advanced Leadership Training
- Intermediate Leadership Training
- Deployment Specific Training
- Primary Leadership Training
- Occupation Specific Training
- Recruit Training
Explanatory: How and Why?

- ↑stress = ↑ likelihood of choosing a risky alternative
- ↑stress = ↓ tolerance for ambiguity
- ↑stress = ↑ tendency to make hasty choice
- ↑stress = ↓ productive thoughts
- ↑stress = ↑ in distracting thoughts
- ↑stress = ↑ distortion in perception

Stressful Event

Amygdala sends distress signals to the hypothalamus

Hypothalamus triggers defence response

↓Hypothalamus activates the SNS by sending signals to the adrenal glands

Adrenal glands release epinephrine (adrenaline) into the bloodstream

Increased Arousal
- Heart Rate
- BP
- Breathing rate
- Sweating
- Digestion

Increased Vigilance
- Senses sharper
- Body less sensitive to pain

Stress and Performance

Performance

No Growth

Optimal Performance: Above Comfort Zone but Manageable

Weakening / Physical Breakdown

Low

Medium

High
1. Focus on your performance objectives through **goal setting**
2. Manage stress through **tactical breathing**
3. Create and use experiences in your mind through **visualization**
4. Use your awareness of your beliefs and their consequences through **self talk**
5. Concentrate on the task at hand and minimize irrelevant distractions through **attention control**
Emotion & The Stress Response

**Feeling** – physical sensation, automatic response to internal or external stimuli, relatively short lived

**Emotion** – expression of a feeling, a cognitive response

Causes shifts in:

- Cognition: your thoughts change
- Physiology: breathing, heart rate, temperature
- Expression: body language, facial expression, vocal tones
- Behaviour: approach or avoid
Emotion

• We are fundamentally emotional creatures
• Emotions are signals that something requires our attention
• We use them to make sense of life, give meaning to our experiences
• Emotions are an integral part of decision making; they also play a significant role in memory
• Failure to acknowledge and address our emotions will create imbalance between thoughts, feelings and actions
Role of emotions

- Emotions are part of the filter between ‘us’ and the ‘world’: help determine our response
- Emotions affect our perception of people, situations and the environment we live in – they also affect our relationships with people, events and our environment
What is Emotional Fitness?

• The ability to recognize, understand and appropriately express our emotions
  – Recognize the emotion(s): I am clenching my fist, my shoulder muscles feel tight – am I angry? frustrated?
  – Understand the source of the emotion: what is going on that might be leading me to feel this way? What am I telling myself about this situation?
  – Express it appropriately: what can I do or say to change the situation?
Emotional Fitness

• Accept emotions: cannot control them, so stop resisting and learn to be comfortable with them
  – Replacing rumination or resistance with acceptance and awareness decreases the intensity of emotions
  – When we try to avoid experiencing emotions they come to the surface in other ways – moods, behaviours, physical symptoms

• Name the emotion
  – Labeling our emotions significantly reduces their intensity
  – The more specific the word choice, the better insight you will have into how you are feeling, what caused it, and what you should do about it
Emotional literacy?
Emotion Regulation

- The ability to influence the types of emotions, when they are experienced, how they are expressed
- Which emotion will enhance our performance?
  - It depends of what the objective is
- Competitive advantage, heightened awareness, passionate advocacy?
- Creative problem solving?
- Focus, reasoning, critical analysis, careful editing?
- Self reflection, consensus building?
Emotion Regulation

**Goal setting:** engages prefrontal cortex, quiets amygdala, gives control – What’s important now?

**Tactical breathing:** a slow deep breath activates the parasympathetic nervous system, enhances composure, poise and self control, improves precision, accuracy and motor control

**Visualization** creates neural pathways, increases familiarity, decreases anxiety, primes performance

**Self talk** can contextualize the experience, calm amygdala, thoughts influence emotional & physiological responses
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Enraged</th>
<th>Furious</th>
<th>Frustrated</th>
<th>Shocked</th>
<th>Surprised</th>
<th>Upbeat</th>
<th>Motivated</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Frightened</td>
<td>Nervous</td>
<td>Restless</td>
<td>Hyper</td>
<td>Cheerful</td>
<td>Inspired</td>
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<td>Disappointed</td>
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<td>Ashamed</td>
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<td>Apathetic</td>
<td>Humble</td>
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<td>Relaxed</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Down</td>
<td>Bored</td>
<td>Tired</td>
<td>Relieved</td>
<td>Restful</td>
<td>Tranquil</td>
<td>Serene</td>
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Emotional Agility

• The ability to react appropriately to negative events, but less likely to ruminate, able to quickly shake off threats that do not materialize
• Important to keep emotion regulation system in good working order – impairment to system can be a risk, especially if environmental hazards are prolonged
• Ability to self-generate positive emotions is critical to resilience
• Over time, daily experiences of positive emotions build enduring resilience