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CANADIAN FORCES COLLEGE / COLLÈGE DES FORCES CANADIENNES  
CSC 31 / CCEM 31

EXERCISE/EXERCICE NEW HORIZONS

USING TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP  
TO MITIGATE OPERATIONAL STRESS INJURIES

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## Abstract

This paper is about how transformational leadership can be used to mitigate operational stress during naval operational deployments. The Canadian Forces (CF) possesses knowledge of stress, including Critical Incident Stress such as post-traumatic stress disorder, for example. It has also identified transformational leadership as the CF's leadership model of the future in *Shaping the Future of the Canadian Forces: A strategy for 2020*, and has recently released two new leadership documents, *Leadership in the Canadian Forces* and *Leadership in the Canadian Forces: Conceptual Foundations*. However, no clear direction exists as to how to apply transformational leadership in certain circumstances, including the mitigation of operational stress. To do so, the commander must carefully map out a plan that transforms a ship's culture from a known starting point to a known destination. The commander must gain the cooperation of all levels of the ship's leadership to implement the plan, which consists of education, team-building, mission training, and enabling of stress mitigation measures. Transformational leadership is also used to overcome the roadblocks presented by military culture hurdles and generational differences.

## **Using Transformational Leadership To Mitigate Operational Stress Injuries**

There'll be no battle fatigue in my command, that's an order...Battle fatigue is a free ride, a yellow belly's ticket to the hospital. I'm not going to subsidize a free ride.<sup>1</sup>

Critical Incident Stress (CIS) potentially threatens mission completion and can negatively affect people and the Canadian Forces (CF) by lowering productivity and causing illness. Long-term disability in the form of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) may also occur. CF Administration Order 34-55 directs leaders to “be familiar with potential Critical Incident (CI) events and be prepared to utilize appropriate (CF) human resources for preventive education...<sup>2</sup>. The CF approach is clearly opposite to the opinion voiced above by General Patton, where severe stress in the soldier is seen as a condition of human frailty. This is due to a re-emergence in the understanding of stress and the means by which it may be mitigated. Since deploying sixteen ships to the Arabian Gulf and Gulf of Oman on Operation Apollo (OP APOLLO) in the war against terrorism, one of them twice,<sup>3</sup> much new information has emerged as to what approaches have succeeded in mitigating stress on operational deployments.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Franklin A. Schaffner, dir. *Patton*. Perf. George C. Scott and Karl Malden. (Twentieth Century Fox, 1970).

<sup>2</sup> Department of National Defence, CFAO 34-55 *Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM)*.

<sup>3</sup> Richard Gimblett, *Operation Apollo: The Golden Age of the Canadian Navy in the War Against Terrorism*, (Ottawa: Magic Light Publishing, 2004), 80.

<sup>4</sup> Lieutenant-Commander Mercy Yeboah-Ampadu, e-mail interview with author, 6 March to 21 April 2005.

Despite the intention that transformational leadership form the backbone of leaders' behaviour in the CF of the future,<sup>5</sup> and notwithstanding the recent release of two leadership documents,<sup>6</sup> little official guidance on how to apply transformational leadership to the challenge of mitigating Operational Stress Injuries (OSI) during deployments exists. This paper will provide insight as to how transformational leadership may be used to this end when preparing for naval operational deployments.

The paper will commence with a discussion of OSI and why stress occurs, followed by an examination of the accepted techniques to mitigate stress. Some observations on the cultural roadblocks that exist in mitigating stress will then be explored. Armed with an understanding of the challenge and its potential solutions, the paper will examine how transformational leadership can be applied to best safeguard against the potential for OSI during a naval operational deployment. The focus will be on stress mitigation measures prior to the occurrence of stress rather than on the treatment of symptoms after they occur. However, at times such treatment will be discussed from the point of view that early basic treatment mitigates against stress developing into more severe levels.

Before discussing the means to mitigate operational stress, it is necessary to first understand its meaning. OSI is the overarching term given to a stress-related injury incurred while deployed on a CF operation, whether it be anxiety related to work

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<sup>5</sup> Department of National Defence, *Shaping the Future of the Canadian Forces: A Strategy for 2020*, available from [http://www.cds.forces.gc.ca/pubs/strategy2K/intro\\_e.asp](http://www.cds.forces.gc.ca/pubs/strategy2K/intro_e.asp); Internet; accessed 17 January 2005.

<sup>6</sup> *Leadership in the Canadian Forces*, and the extended discussion of its underpinnings, *Leadership in the Canadian Forces: Conceptual Foundations*.

conditions and separation from family or a reaction to a particularly traumatic event.<sup>7</sup> Before discussing the more commonly recognized forms of OSI, such as PTSD, for example, it is important to understand the natures of stress.

A stress is a factor that causes a reaction in a person's body (although it may also be used to describe a therapeutic application of some sort, whose purpose is to promote such a reaction).<sup>8</sup> Stress factors, or stressors, can come from a variety of sources, however those of most relevance to the deployed sailor are physical, psychological, cultural, and occupational stressors. Although stress affects different people in different ways, anyone can be overcome by stress through a prolonged or severe exposure, regardless of an individual's adaptive abilities.<sup>9</sup>

Stress can result in various degrees of conditions. Anxiety is an apprehensive state where the individual responds to tension arising from a real or perceived threat. An anxiety attack is intense and acute anxiety. When persistent and chronic, anxiety neurosis can result.<sup>10</sup> Separation from home and loved ones can cause fear and apprehension in the form of separation anxiety,<sup>11</sup> and new situations can cause situational anxiety. Many anxieties are quite normal responses to abnormal events, and often require

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<sup>7</sup> Department of National Defence, CANFORGEN 003/02, *Operational Stress Injuries (OSI)*.

<sup>8</sup> Lawrence Urdang and Helen Harding Swallow, eds., *Mosby's Medical & Nursing Dictionary*, (St. Louis: The C.V. Mosby Company, 1983), 1026.

<sup>9</sup> Joan Luckmann and Karen Creason Sorensen, *Medical-Surgical Nursing: A Psychosociological Approach*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders Company, 1980), 50-60.

<sup>10</sup> Urdang and Swallow, *Mosby's...*, 74.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 979.

no treatment. Sometimes, however, individuals have difficulties adjusting to changed situations, and anxiety results.<sup>12</sup>

When anxiety results from a feeling of loss and causes an emotional state that is characterized by an exaggerated feeling of sadness, emptiness, and hopelessness, the individual suffers from depression.<sup>13</sup> When the depression is so extreme that normal functioning is disrupted, an individual may suffer a nervous breakdown.<sup>14</sup> Anxiety and depression symptoms may also be indicative of the existence of Critical Incident Stress (CIS) in the form of PTSD and Combat Stress Reactions (CSR).

CF doctrine describes CIS as a normal, but very strong physical and emotional reaction to a Critical Incident (CI) of some type. A CI is a sudden, abnormal, and unexpected event that disrupts an individual's sense of control. The perception of a life threat must also exist. A CIS can include elements of physical or emotional loss, and can interfere with one's ability to function after the event.<sup>15</sup> The severity of the reaction is related to the factors influencing the incident (the event's suddenness, intensity, and duration, for example), and to factors related to the person (previous experience, perception of threat, for example). Severity and duration of the reaction are also related to the level of human support available after the event has occurred.<sup>16</sup> When acute CIS

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<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 993.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 316.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 732.

<sup>15</sup> Department of National Defence, A-MD-007-144/JD-004 *Preparing for Critical Incident Stress* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 1994), 1-2.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

occurs in combat or near combat, it is considered a Combat Stress Reaction (CSR).<sup>17</sup> CSR has also been described as shell shock (“...any of a number of mental disorders...owing to a traumatic reaction to the stress of combat”)<sup>18</sup> and combat fatigue (“...resulting from exhaustion, the stress of combat, or the cumulative emotions and psychological strain of warfare or similar situations”).<sup>19</sup> What differentiates CSR from shell shock and combat fatigue, however, is the acknowledgment that it is a normal reaction to an event, as opposed to a shock or fatigue, which could imply a personal weakness on the part of those afflicted.

When such a reaction is chronic and interferes with work and social life long after the event, it is called post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).<sup>20</sup> PTSD may be accompanied by other health problems,<sup>21</sup> and its signs may not appear until long after the event<sup>22</sup> (which differentiates it from a CSR, which normally occurs shortly after the event). However, a CSR can develop into PTSD, therefore the cessation of CSR symptoms does not necessarily signify resolution of the disorder.

The symptoms of CIS are similar to those of lower-level stress and anxiety, although its severity is greater. Such symptoms may include nightmares, withdrawal

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<sup>17</sup> CFAO 34-55 – *Critical Incident Stress...*

<sup>18</sup> Urdang and Swallow, *Mosby's...*, 985.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 251.

<sup>20</sup> DND, *Preparing for Critical...*, 13.

<sup>21</sup> Department of National Defence, *Fact Sheet on PTSD for CF Members*, available from [http://www.forces.gc.ca/health/information/engraph/fact\\_sheet\\_ptsd\\_e.asp](http://www.forces.gc.ca/health/information/engraph/fact_sheet_ptsd_e.asp); accessed 9 December 2004.

<sup>22</sup> Kay Marie Porterfield, *Straight Talk About Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder*, (New York: Facts on File, 1996), 5.



from the outside world, being easily startled, irritability, or the disorder can manifest in other health problems, such as vertigo or alcohol abuse, for example.<sup>23</sup> Notwithstanding the potential for OSI during a deployment because of the stresses it imposes, applying numerous recognized techniques and strategies can mitigate stress.

Stress mitigation techniques work because they reduce the body and mind's adaptation responses to stressors. To understand how this effect occurs, it is necessary to examine Hans Selye's model of the General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS). When subjected to stress, the body or psyche responds in defence, first reacting in an initial stage of shock or alarm, followed by an adaptation phase using a variety of defence mechanisms of the body or mind, and culminating in either a successful adjustment or exhaustion, and potentially, physical disintegration. The process can be best seen through the use of a diagram:

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<sup>23</sup> Urdang and Swallow, *Mosby's...*, 872.

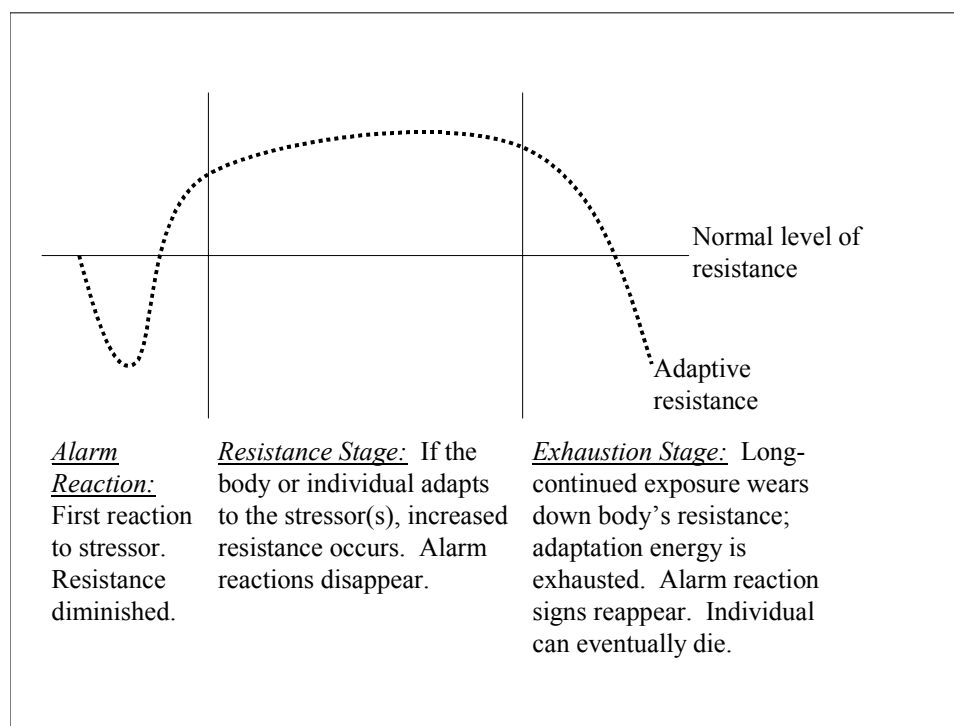


Diagram 1 – Hans Selye's General Adaptation Syndrome<sup>24</sup>

Stress mitigation serves to lessen the impact of adaptation on the body and mind in the resistance stage. The lesser the adaptation required to counter a stressor, the less chance that the individual will proceed to the exhaustion stage, because adaptation requires an expenditure of energy, in the form of increased resistance, beyond one's normal state of resistance.<sup>25</sup> Depending on the level of stress encountered, the adaptation effect could be small or very large. If high levels of resistance are required to adapt to a stressor, and if the adaptation ultimately fails, the body enters the exhaustion stage and illness, including mental illness, can result. These effects are seen for a relatively short

<sup>24</sup> Luckmann and Sorensen, *Medical-Surgical Nursing...*, 32-3.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 32-7.

period during a CSR, and then the body may adjust to the CI. However, if adjustment is unsuccessful, then PTSD can result (although a CSR is not a prerequisite to PTSD occurring).<sup>26</sup>

Steven Hobfoll's conceptual theory of stress is useful in understanding why the mitigation techniques can succeed in reducing the potential for stress. Hobfoll's theory states that stress occurs because an individual loses resources, which can consist of material possessions, conditions (marriage, for example), and energies (time or money, for example). Loss of a resource can cause the loss of another resource in what is called resource spiral, such as the condition of separation causing a perceived loss of the love of a partner. Stress mitigation serves to bolster condition and energy resources, thereby dampening the effects of stress and the chaos of resource spiral.<sup>27</sup>

Stress can be viewed as lying upon a spectrum from light stress to full PTSD with no clear dividing lines between the various stress levels, as shown in the following diagram:

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<sup>26</sup> Department of National Defence, *Stress Injury and Operational Deployments*, Dispatches Vol. 10 No. 1 February 2004 (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2004) 5.

<sup>27</sup> Fran H. Norris and Martie P. Thompson, "Applying Community Psychology to the Prevention of Trauma and Traumatic Life Events," in *Traumatic Stress: From Theory to Practice*, ed. John R. Freedy and Steven E. Hobfoll, 49-72 (New York: Plenum Press, 1995), 50-1.

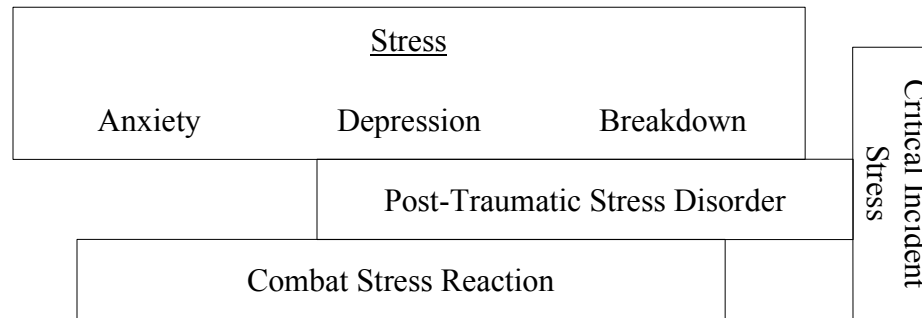


Diagram 2 – The Stress Spectrum<sup>28</sup>

Therefore an overarching plan to mitigate OSI requires a consolidated approach that considers all aspects of stress mitigation across its entire spectrum. Before constructing such an approach, however, it is first necessary to identify the recognized stress mitigation techniques for the individual stress types discussed thus far.

Stress can be mitigated through the use of three primary tools – selection of life choices, education and understanding, and identification of high-risk individuals. These tools are interrelated; one must be educated as to which life choices assist in stress reduction in order for the individual to apply them, for example. Nonetheless, the choices one makes in life and the use of “non-avoidant, problem-focused methods of coping with stress”<sup>29</sup> can greatly influence how one reacts to stressors. Those most easily under the individual’s control include the maintenance of a proper diet, taking time for

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<sup>28</sup> Steven E. Hobfoll, Carla A. Dunahoo, and Jeannine Monnier, “Conservation of Resources and Traumatic Stress,” in *Traumatic Stress: From Theory to Practice*, ed. John R. Freedy and Steven E. Hobfoll, 29-48 (New York: Plenum Press, 1995), 29.

<sup>29</sup> Frank W. Weathers, Brett T. Litz, and Terence M. Keane, “Military Trauma,” in *Traumatic Stress: From Theory to Practice*, ed. John R. Freedy and Steven E. Hobfoll, 103-28 (New York: Plenum Press, New York, 1995), 123.

rest and relaxation, regular physical exercise,<sup>30</sup> ensuring illnesses are treated as they occur, and by adopting a balanced and rational life philosophy. Other means to mitigate stress require program implementation or enabling by leadership, such as the accessibility of time and resources for physical exercise and conduct of relaxation techniques (such as meditation or yoga, for example), development of unit stress reduction programs,<sup>31</sup> provision of general education (including financial, legal, and other education to prepare families for separation), political action (in the sense of interpersonal relation training, such as cultural and gender issue awareness training, for example),<sup>32</sup> availability of spiritual resources, ready access to social and medical support, reduction of repetitiveness in work assignments,<sup>33</sup> promotion of communication skills learning and team-building,<sup>34</sup> and reduction of swings between heavy and light activity.<sup>35</sup>

Although the mitigation measures for less severe forms of stress can help mitigate CSR and PTSD,<sup>36</sup> additional measures play a critical role in these more severe CIS forms. First, the provision of sound mission preparation and training can result in reduced stress through the generation of faith in leadership and a sense of personal security. Secondly, the development of strong unit cohesion and morale generates a

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<sup>30</sup> DND, *Preparing for Critical...*, 6.

<sup>31</sup> Luckmann and Sorensen, *Medical-Surgical Nursing...*, 69-71.

<sup>32</sup> Norris and Thompson, *Applying Community Psychology...*, 61-6.

<sup>33</sup> Luckmann and Sorensen, *Medical-Surgical Nursing...*, 53-8.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 44-5.

<sup>36</sup> DND, *Preparing for Critical...*, 13.

sense of togetherness and common experience that facilitates the development of internal group social support,<sup>37</sup> helping to dampen stressful events.<sup>38</sup>

Knowing what measures mitigate stress is the first step towards preparing a ship's company for the potential stresses that might be faced during a deployment. However, a plan that successfully incorporates these stress mitigation techniques is required. Before discussing how transformational leadership can be used to successfully implement a stress mitigation strategy, it is important to understand the roadblocks that may interfere with such a plan.

Two attitudinal roadblocks may hamper the ability to successfully implement a stress mitigation strategy – prejudices rooted in the military identity and culture, and perceptions caused by generational differences. Both can be overcome through the application of transformational leadership.

First, identity in the military exists at various levels, including rank, functions, specialties, unit, environment, and indeed, at the CF level.<sup>39</sup> Although the CF, in general, has adopted Canadian norms and values since unification,<sup>40</sup> some particular beliefs with respect to PTSD (and stress, as a whole) permeate among some members and groups in the military culture. This is rooted in the conceptual model of the masculine warrior, a military cultural trait that is shared by both the traditional and newly evolving models of

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<sup>37</sup> CFAO 34-55 – *Critical Incident Stress...*

<sup>38</sup> Yeboah-Ampadu, Interview.

<sup>39</sup> Department of National Defence, A-PA-005-000 AP-001 *Duty With Honour: The Profession of Arms in Canada*, (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2003), 53.

<sup>40</sup> Allan D. English, *Understanding Military Culture: A Canadian Perspective*, (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004), 102-3.

military culture,<sup>41</sup> where PTSD is seen as a sign of human weakness,<sup>42</sup> rather as a medical disorder. These misperceptions must be defeated if one hopes to mitigate the potential for stress.

The second potential roadblock is that presented by generational differences. Michael Adams, President of the leading market research group Environics Research Group, identifies three main Canadian social value groups – the Elders, the Boomers, and the Gen Xers. These are further divided into twelve social value ‘tribes’, each possessing different values, motivations, and life approaches. It is not the intent to define these tribes in this paper, but it is important to understand that ship’s companies reflect Canadians, in general; therefore an understanding of the types of differences that can exist between sailors in a ship is necessary. For example, consider a Division Petty Officer (PO) of forty years of age, belonging to the Boomer tribe of ‘Disengaged Darwinists’, who possess nostalgia for the past and a fear of change. This hypothetical PO may lead a section where half the members are classed in the Gen Xer tribe of ‘Social Hedonists’, who might value the pursuit of pleasure and immediate gratification.<sup>43</sup>

Such generational frustrations were seen in OP APOLLO, where many leaders had difficulties dealing with and understanding sailors belonging to younger generations. For example, some leaders who possessed little prior experience sailing with instant

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<sup>41</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Karen O. Dunivin, *Military Culture: A Paradigm Shift?*, Air War College Maxwell Paper No. 10 (Maxwell: Air University Press, 1997), 3.

<sup>42</sup> André Marin, *Systemic Treatment of CF Members with PTSD*, Report Prepared for Department of National Defence, available from [http://www.ombudsman.forces.gc.ca/reports/special/PTSD-toc\\_e.asp](http://www.ombudsman.forces.gc.ca/reports/special/PTSD-toc_e.asp); accessed 19 January 2005, 93-4.

<sup>43</sup> Michael Adams, *Sex in the Snow: Canadian Social Values at the End of the Millennium*, (Toronto: Penguin Books, 1998), 203-17.

connectivity to home through e-mail and satellite telephones were unable to comprehend the effect that communication interruptions had on those of the Gen Xer group, who had grown up with and expected connectivity on demand. As a result, they were often unable to understand why stress increased under certain circumstances, and were therefore limited in their ability to mitigate it in its early stages.<sup>44</sup>

Having identified the means to mitigate operational stress and the two major roadblocks to its success, the application of transformational leadership to these challenges can be discussed. It is first necessary to understand its meaning, however, as misunderstanding exists. Captain Thomas St. Denis echoes the thoughts of some when he claims that transformational leadership is incompatible with the warrior ethic because “the impulses that animate the warrior ethic are emphatically not the ones that make transformational leadership possible.”<sup>45</sup> At least part of the reason for this sentiment can be found in the Chief of the Defence Staff’s (CDS) own words, “With transformational leadership and coherent management, we will build upon our proud heritage in pursuit of clear strategic objectives.”<sup>46</sup> In the absence of any amplification as to how transformational leadership would be applied, leaders have been left to interpret the process themselves. However, a very good first step towards understanding it has been achieved with the recent publication of two documents, the doctrinal *Leadership in the Canadian Forces*, and the extended discussion of its underpinnings, *Leadership in the*

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<sup>44</sup> Yeboah-Ampadu, Interview.

<sup>45</sup> Captain Thomas St. Denis, “Transformational Leadership: Not for the Warrior,” *Canadian Military Journal* Vol. 5 No. 4 (Winter 2004-2005): 86.

<sup>46</sup> DND, *Shaping the Future...*



*Canadian Forces: Conceptual Foundations*. (Two further documents are planned for publication in the next year that will provide specific guidance on practice and techniques, *Leadership in the Canadian Forces: Leading People*, and *Leadership in the Canadian Forces: Leading the Institution*.)<sup>47</sup> Notwithstanding the conceptual nature of the two promulgated leadership documents, it is made clear that “the demands and duties of leadership vary according to the setting in which it is practiced.”<sup>48</sup> It appears the CDS did not intend that transformational leadership be the only leadership method for use in the CF; it is meant to be a primary motivational tool, to be sure, but there will often be times in operations where other leadership types are needed (such as the directive approach used when an order must be carried out immediately and without question, for example).<sup>49</sup>

Transformational leadership encapsulates a number of leadership styles that are applied in accordance with the demands of the requirements at hand. It includes influencing decision-making and commitment through persuasion (persuasive approach), coaching and mentoring (facilitative approach), concern for the well being of subordinates (supportive approach), and consultation in decision-making (participative approach). Its essence is that it seeks to transform behaviour in individuals and groups through “insight, imagination, rational persuasion, values-based inspiration, and concern

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<sup>47</sup> Department of National Defence, A-PA-005-000/AP-003 *Leadership in the Canadian Forces*, (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2005), iv.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

for followers in one package.”<sup>50</sup> Given the understanding developed thus far as to stress mitigation measures, the roadblocks that impede their implementation, and an understanding of transformational leadership, the commander can formulate a coherent stress mitigation plan prior to deploying. The challenge is to convince subordinates that OSI is a real threat to one’s health, and that any short-term pain in the form of education is worth the long-term gain in mental health.<sup>51</sup>

Transforming culture requires that one understands where the culture is at today and to where one wants to transform the culture, as well as an acknowledgment that culture change is normal and healthy. Having identified what and to which end state he wants to transform, the commander must map out a coherent plan to effect the transformation<sup>52</sup> that is focused on a persuasive approach instead of the direct approach that has predominated in the past.<sup>53</sup> Such a plan starts with the understanding that all levels of leadership within the ship must be involved so as to generate the synergy that, in turn, aids in transforming the culture and individuals within the ship.<sup>54</sup> Indeed, OP APOLLO experience has shown that there is little chance of generating unit cohesion without all levels of leadership accepting the direction in which the commander wishes to

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<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 22-4.

<sup>51</sup> Noel M. Tichy and Mary Anne Devanna, *The Transformational Leader*, (Toronto: John Wiley & Sons, 1986), 122.

<sup>52</sup> Brian McKee, *Organizational Culture: Basic Concepts and Ideas*, D Strat HR Research Note RN 08/04 (Ottawa: Canada Communications Group, 2004), 16-7.

<sup>53</sup> Morris Janowitz, “Changing Patterns of Organizational Authority: The Military Establishment,” in *The Military and Society: The Training and Socializing of Military Personnel*, ed. Peter Karsten, 237-58 (New York: Garland Publishing, 1998) 238-9.

<sup>54</sup> McKee, *Organizational Culture: Basic Concepts...*, 17.

proceed.<sup>55</sup> Officers and NCMs both are therefore expected today to possess not merely direct leadership skills that are task-oriented, but also indirect leadership skills that support long-term goals.<sup>56</sup>

This can be a difficult task, since one may be asking leaders to turn away from hierarchical leadership styles that they feel have succeeded in the past, and to adopt indirect leadership styles that rely on influence through more subtle means. But if leaders are educated in the realities of generational differences and how they challenge traditional leadership approaches,<sup>57</sup> then the tendency observed in leaders to avoid cultural differences and becoming insular may be avoided.<sup>58</sup>

Therefore before one discusses potential stress or PTSD with a ship's leaders, the commander must first transform the way they perceive and think, and draw them into the decision-making process at all but the very highest levels.<sup>59</sup> Leadership and cultural and generational difference education for all levels of the ship's leadership is therefore a precondition to the success of a ship wide plan to mitigate OSI.<sup>60</sup> If the commander's plan is not supported or understood by the whole of the ship's leadership, then the commander cannot hope for success in his stress mitigation plan, as it takes commitment

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<sup>55</sup> Yeboah-Ampadu, Interview.

<sup>56</sup> DND, *Duty With Honour...*, 19.

<sup>57</sup> McKee, *Organizational Culture: Basic Concepts...*, 12.

<sup>58</sup> English, *Understanding Military...*, 155.

<sup>59</sup> Department of National Defence, A-PA-005-000/AP-004 *Leadership in the Canadian Forces: Conceptual Foundations*, (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2005), 71.

<sup>60</sup> Yeboah-Ampadu, Interview.

on the part of all. The commander must leverage the leaders' innate understanding of their role in promoting the well being to subordinates and how that relates to effectiveness and mission accomplishment.<sup>61</sup> To respond to subordinates and convince them of the need for such training, however, leaders must be skilled in interpersonal communication, since misinterpretation itself may cause stress and hinder what the commander is trying to achieve.<sup>62</sup> Communications training or exercises for leaders is therefore also required.

Once leadership understands the rationale behind the commander's approach and is prepared to respond to subordinates' questions, ship wide education on stress and mitigation can occur. Although the Operational Trauma and Stress Support Centres (OTSSC) currently established across many CF bases<sup>63</sup> are prepared to conduct CIS mitigation and peer support training,<sup>64</sup> experience shows that OTSSC briefers should be augmented by CF personnel suffering from PTSD in order to build credibility<sup>65</sup> and dispel preconceptions that PTSD is a weakness.<sup>66</sup> When subordinates see that their peers

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<sup>61</sup> DND, *Duty With Honour...*, 21.

<sup>62</sup> Luckmann and Sorensen, *Medical-Surgical Nursing...*, 35.

<sup>63</sup> Department of National Defence, MARGEN 045/00, *Operational Trauma and Stress Support Centres (OTSSC) – The Management of Critical Incident Stress (CIS) in the Canadian Forces*.

<sup>64</sup> Marin, *Systemic Treatment...*, 106.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 117-23.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 93-4.

and superiors are susceptible to stress and willing to discuss it, the disorder is demystified and its stigma invalidated.<sup>67</sup>

Screening for potential stress problems before a deployment can also reveal the existence of previous traumas or an individual's potential susceptibility to stress. This currently exists as part of the Deployment Assistance Group (DAG) screening for Maritime Pacific ships,<sup>68</sup> however, the social worker interview portion of the DAG should be scheduled to occur after stress education training has been conducted so that leaders and subordinates fully understand the need for such screening and accept that openness during the interview process is necessary. Enforcing strict adherence to the DAG process will also have the effect of displaying the seriousness with which command treats the screening.<sup>69</sup> This is another example of the need for the commander to have a well-thought out and phased stress mitigation plan, as previously discussed.

The last educational component requiring discussion is that of dependant stress education. In addition to whatever pre-deployment briefing the commander directs for dependants, stress coping strategies for families must be considered as an integral part of those briefings. This has the dual effect of mitigating dependant stress, and therefore increasing the sailors' condition resources, but also contributes to building credibility and faith in command.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 107.

<sup>68</sup> Department of National Defence, MARPACORD 59-2, *Departure/Arrival Assistance Group (DAG/AAG) Process*.

<sup>69</sup> Porterfield, *Straight Talk About...*, 51-2.

It can be seen that the educational component of stress mitigation sets the conditions for much of the remainder of stress mitigation. Before individuals take such things as diet, exercise, life approach, and other stress mitigating measure seriously, they must understand how they relate to stress disorders. Similarly, before leadership at all levels effect stress-reducing measures during a deployment, they must be aware of why such seemingly inconsequential measures are important to the overall stress mitigation plan. Lastly, credibility must be built by relating the issues being conveyed using soldiers and sailors possessing first-hand knowledge of the disorders being mitigated, and by extending education and training to the sailors' families. The commander can now enact the enabling measures that mitigate stress on board before and during the deployment, now that subordinates understand their necessity and role.

Such internal stress reduction programs convince subordinates that leadership is committed to ongoing stress maintenance.<sup>70</sup> But the concern for subordinates' well being displayed through the pre-deployment education process must be reinforced by palpable measures that convince the sailor that all feasible measures are being taken to safeguard his or her life. This is not only good operational policy that increases a ship's readiness, but serves to convince the sailor that command values their contributions, and indeed, lives. By insisting upon excellence in mission training, leadership generates a faith that reinforces the concern and caring that the stress education process started, and, as such,

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<sup>70</sup> René Moelker and Irene van der Kloet, "Military Families and the Armed Forces: A Two-Sided Affair?" in *Handbook of the Sociology of the Military*, ed. Giuseppe Caforio, 201-24 (New York: Plenum Publishers, 2003), 215.

<sup>71</sup> Luckmann and Sorensen, *Medical-Surgical Nursing...*, 71.

promotes morale and cohesion<sup>72</sup> as the ships' company starts to recognize that the measures discussed thus far have in mitigating OSI on the upcoming deployment. Sailors start to sense that leadership possesses the loyalty, integrity, honesty, and faithfulness that the military ethos demands.<sup>73</sup>

Nonetheless, cohesion must be maintained by nurturing the relationships developed by the education process. During OP APOLLO, most ships experienced periods of initial high morale, followed by a lull in morale in the middle of the deployment that was related to issues of monotony and time away from home. Some ships experienced upsurges in morale as the deployment neared their end, whereas other ships never regained the levels of morale they possessed prior to leaving home. Success in maintaining morale and cohesion, and therefore mitigating stress, was directly related to command's ability to maintain the morale and cohesion levels with which they sailed.<sup>74</sup> Additionally, unit cohesion reinforces itself, in that a well-formed group looks after itself and provides support to its own.<sup>75</sup> The commander's stress mitigation plan therefore must include measures to maintain morale and cohesion during the deployment.

Cohesion and morale is maintained while deployed by continuing the same efforts that succeeded in gaining the ship's company's support prior to deploying. Conducting dependant briefings during the deployment with personal involvement by command that

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<sup>72</sup> DND, *Duty With Honour...*, 14-5.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>74</sup> Yeboah-Ampadu, Interview.

<sup>75</sup> Giuseppe Caforio, "Some Historical Notes," in *Handbook of the Sociology of the Military*, ed. Giuseppe Caforio, 7-26 (New York: Plenum Publishers, 2003), 15.

are as honest and transparent as feasible relieves family-related stress. Small measures that display concern for sailors on a recurrent basis reinforce trust and faith.<sup>76</sup> Honesty with the ship's company and dispelling rumours as they arise helps to maintain the trust and faith previously achieved.<sup>77</sup> By 'practicing what they preach', leaders display integrity and sustain loyalty.<sup>78</sup> In-theatre stress mitigation can therefore be viewed as the continuation of measures enacted prior to deploying, although new and fresh ideas are required during the deployment to maintain the faith previously realized.

Stress mitigation through transformational leadership, then, is concerned with the establishment of the ship borne cultural conditions that allow stress mitigation techniques to flourish. The commander involves all levels of leadership early in the process using persuasive influence in explaining the nature of stress, its recognized mitigation measures, and the cultural and generational roadblocks that exist. Leaders are invited to be part of the solution through participative influence and group consultation and decision-making. Ship's companies are then educated and the stress mitigation measures enabled through facilitative influence. Extensive mission training then complements these measures to produce group cohesion and peer and leader support networks through supportive influence. Through these four influence behaviours - the foundations of transformational leadership - individuals come to understand the nature of stress and

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<sup>76</sup> In the interview conducted with Lieutenant-Commander Mercy Yeboah-Ampadu, HMCS WINNIPEG was identified as being particularly successful in maintaining high morale through small measures, including Wednesday 'Hot Dog Delivery' nights, and a New Year's Day 'Golden Arches', a McDonald's lunch complete with authentic McDonald's uniforms and packaging. Such measures were reported to have had a large influence on the maintenance of morale.

<sup>77</sup> Yeboah-Ampadu, Interview.

<sup>78</sup> DND, *Duty With Honour...*, 55.



adopt life choices that mitigate stress and promote mental health. But as this paper has shown, a plan must be constructed that identifies what and to where it is to be transformed, and its effectiveness is monitored continuously to ensure morale and cohesion is maintained during the challenges presented by deployments. This is the responsibility of the commander, but all leaders have their role in its execution.

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