

Chapter 4 – SUMMARY DISCUSSION

The objective of this NATO Task Group was to develop a resilience building training module that would be suitable for delivery in basic training of all NATO Member Nations. To accomplish this task, the group conducted a NATO survey of recent basic trainee graduates that were representative of the group membership. The purpose of this survey was to identify aspects of basic training that were the most stressful or demanding for the recent graduates, and to learn how basic trainees coped with these stressors. This enabled us to ensure that the NATO resilience training for basic training was relevant and met the needs of the basic trainees. From the survey of basic trainees, and an exhaustive review of the scientific literature, the group developed a comprehensive taxonomy of resilience skills from which we identified four core resilience skills for basic training was identified (see Chapter 2). These resilience skills included acceptance and control, goal setting, self-talk, and tactical breathing. Additional resilience skills were also identified. These additional skills included mental rehearsal, building optimism, grounding, sleep management, and progressive muscle relaxation.

For the four basic training resilience skills, detailed PowerPoint slides and practical exercises to train and reinforce the acquisition of these skills were developed. Together, the PowerPoint slides and the practical exercises comprise the NATO Basic Training Resilience Module. In addition, a Trainer's Guide and an Implementation Guide were also developed to assist in the use of the NATO Basic Training Resilience Module. It is intended that each Nation that utilizes the NATO Basic Training Resilience Module will modify the material to meet the unique culture and needs of their respective military. Additional resilience skills were also identified that NATO Nations might wish to consider including in their basic training, time permitting. These include:

- Mental rehearsal;
- Building optimism;
- Grounding;
- Sleep management; and
- Progressive muscle relaxation.

Principals for how resilience training might best be implemented were also identified (see Chapter 3).

The NATO Task Group also developed four "White Papers" on key topics on basic training resilience, which can be found in Annexes E-F. The first White Paper discusses the benefits of mental health training, including how to measure mental health training and the expected outcomes of mental health training. The second White Paper highlights the demands of military life that service members encounter beyond the demands of military deployment. The third White Paper provides key definitions, including "mental health" and "resilience". The final White Paper outlines the value of using evidence-based mental health training that is grounded in science.

In conclusion, the NATO Task Group on "Mental Health Training" accomplished all their tasks set out in approved Programme of Work. Importantly, a scientifically grounded, basic training resilience module was developed that can be used by all NATO and non-NATO Nations to improve the psychological health and performance of their Nations' military service members.

