

## **Annex G – NATO RTG/HFM-203 (MENTAL HEALTH TRAINING) WHITE PAPER 003**

**21 September 2010**

**SUBJECT:** *Mental Health and Resilience*

1) **Purpose:** To define mental health and resilience in the military context.

2) **The Challenge:** Service members are expected to perform in adverse or challenging circumstances. Resilience sustains mental health in adverse situations. Importantly, resilience can be developed through training and organizational practices.

3) **Definitions:**

- a) **Mental Health:** The World Health Organization defines mental health as “a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.” Mental health is a term that includes cognitive and social functioning, and emotional well-being. A key component of mental health is achieving a dynamic balance between work and personal life.
- b) **Resilience:** Psychological resilience is defined in different ways by different researchers who view resilience as a characteristic, as a capacity, or as an outcome. We view resilience as the ability to adapt to stressful situations, which may also include bouncing back from adversity and growing and thriving from challenges. Resilience can be influenced by both individual and group factors:
  - 1) Individual factors include, for example, accepting things that cannot be changed, viewing setbacks as temporary, seeing things from a different perspective, looking for opportunities for growth, and keeping a sense of humour.
  - 2) Group factors include, for example, providing effective leadership, leveraging group strengths and experiences, providing for physical and social welfare, encouraging cohesion and a sense of group belonging, establishing policy, supporting military families, and providing education and training.

4) **Way Ahead:** A reservoir of resilience holds resources that can be called upon to manage the stress of military demands. Military mental health training can add to the “resilience reservoir” for an individual or group. The RTG/HFM-203 Task Group is tasked with developing evidence-based mental health training to help fill this resilience reservoir.

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