



Headquarters
New Zealand Defence Force
Defence House
Private Bag 39997
Wellington Mail Centre
Lower Hutt 5045
New Zealand

OIA-2025-5543

17th November 2025

[REDACTED]@rnz.co.nz

Dear [REDACTED]

I refer to your email of 22 September 2025 requesting the following information:

Any and all communications about Operation Tieke within the NZDF - relating to morale/ mental health during the deployment, and their return to NZ. This includes but is not limited to emails, texts, signal messages, documents, meeting minutes, email attachments, etc.

Any and all communications relating to accidents/ injuries or incidents to recruits or NZDF soldiers during the Operation Tieke deployment

This response addresses the first part of your request following the decision to decline the second part of your request under section 18(e) of the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

Enclosed is a copy of the Directorate of Psychology pre-deployment PowerPoint presentation for all missions. Its overall intent is to build resilience for missions through the setting of expectations and mental preparation. The key objectives are: explaining stressors and resilience strategies; setting realistic expectations around emotions on deployment; discussing and sharing experiences related to resilience and coping while on deployment; outlining the indicators of mental health; and, normalising help-seeking. Where indicated, staff information for internal Defence Force use is withheld in accordance with section 9(2)(k) of the OIA.

A search of Defence Health Directorate and Joint Forces Health Branch Operation Tieke correspondence produced no relevant information. While *any and all communications* would also include relevant correspondence with individuals, this correspondence cannot be provided. It is recorded in an individual's personal file, some of which will be medical in-confidence. Providing this correspondence would impair the efficient administration of the Defence Force, under section 16(2)(a) of the OIA, since a manual review of all files is required.

You have the right, under section 28(3) of the OIA, to ask an Ombudsman to review this response to your request. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Please note that responses to official information requests are proactively released where possible. This response to your request will be published shortly on the NZDF website, with your personal information removed.

Yours sincerely

GA Motley
Brigadier
Chief of Staff HQNZDF

Enclosure:

1. Directorate of Psychology pre-deployment presentation

IN THE MIND OF A CHAMPION

“What you’ve got to focus on is your capacity to control your mind in any given situation.

If you’re not in control of your mind, you’re no good to us.”

Dr Ceri Evans
All Blacks Mental Skills Coach

RICHIE MCCA
CHASING GREAT

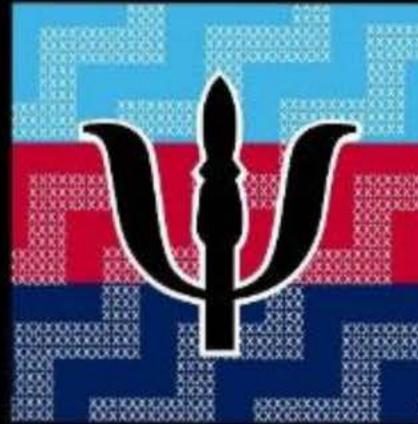


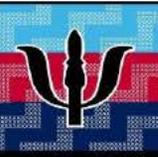
OPERATIONAL RESILIENCE

Resilience Through Action on Deployment



PREPARE





1. Mental Health
2. Expectations and Social Considerations
3. Deployment Demands
4. Operational Resilience and Strategies

Equipping for a COMBAT MINDSET

PREPARE

To PREPARE is to have confidence in one's ability to apply mental skills when it matters the most

MENTAL SKILLS TRAINING

- SELF TALK
- TACTICAL BREATHING
- MINDFULNESS
- GOAL SETTING
- VISUALISATION

- B-LOC
Mental Skills Theory
- D-LOC
Mental Skills Practice
- O-LOC
Mental Skills Application

PERFORM

To PERFORM is to apply the right mental skills when it matters the most

APPLYING THE RIGHT MENTAL SKILL

RECOVER

To RECOVER is to invest in one's own ongoing development of a combat mindset

REFLECTING ON THE APPLIED MENTAL SKILL

- SITUATIONAL AWARENESS
- SELF AWARENESS
- EVALUATE
- ADAPT

Definitions and understanding

- What is the definition of resilience?

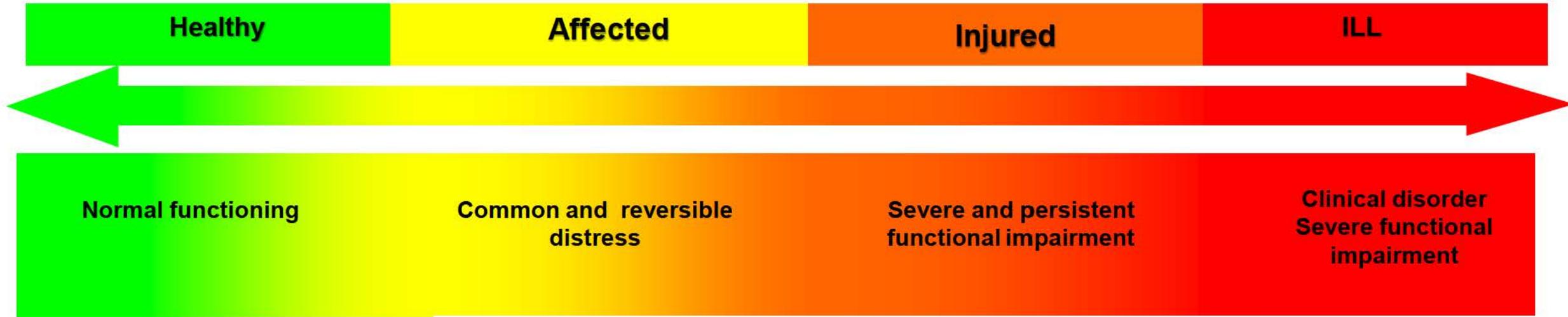
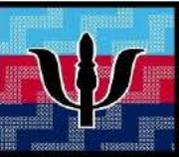
- Resilience is the process and outcome of successfully adapting to difficult or challenging life experiences. Through mental, emotional, behavioural flexibility and adjustment to external and internal demands

-American Psychological Association 2024

- What is the definition of mental health?

- Mental health is about how we think, feel and act as we deal with life's ups and downs. It helps to determine how we handle stress, relate to others and make choices. Being mentally health is not being free of problems, it is around identifying problematic thoughts and behaviours and being able to replace them with ones that are more congruent with our goals

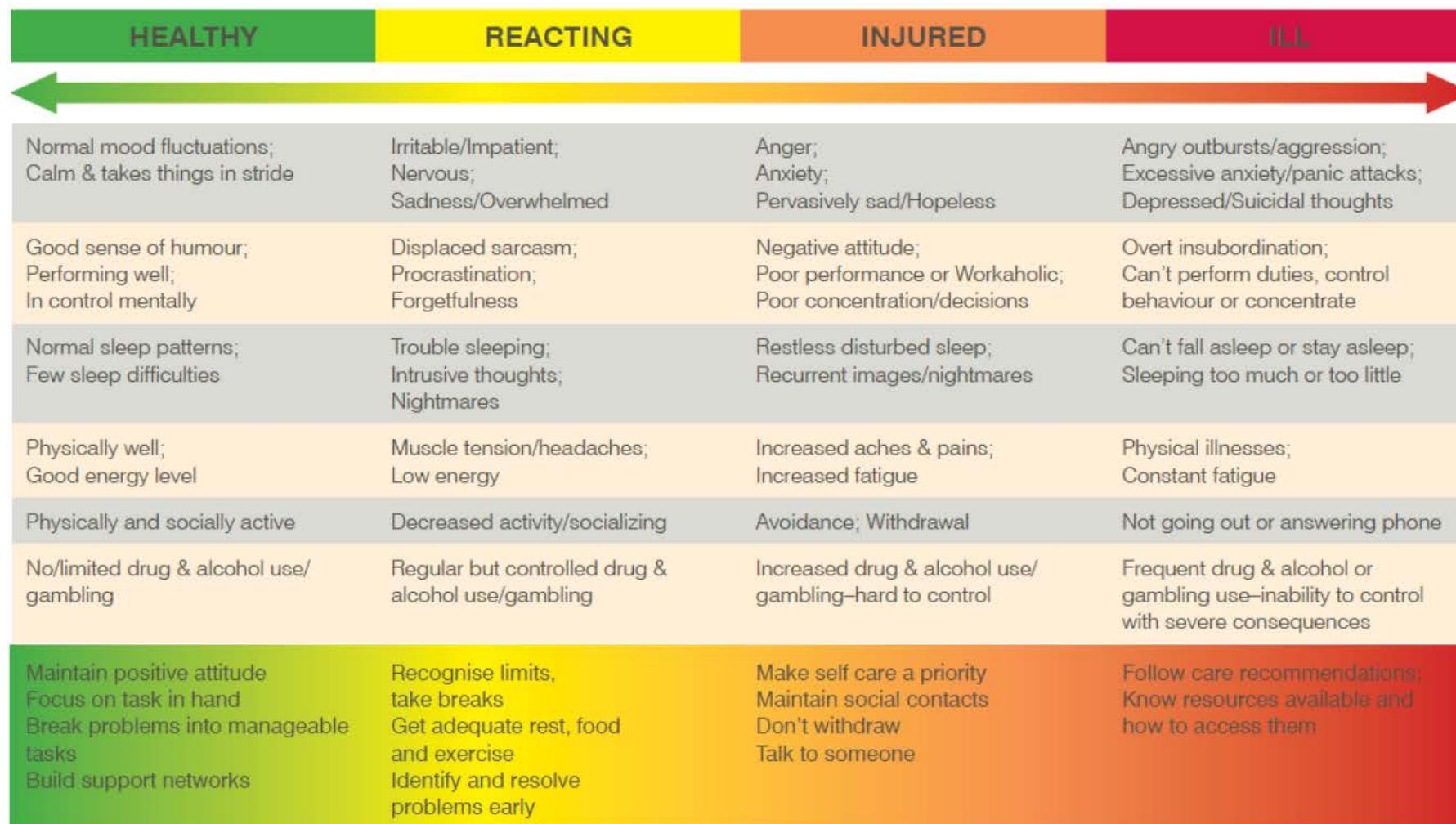
- NZDF health hub



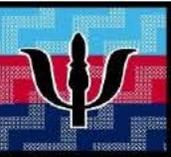
From Canadian Forces – Road 2 Mental Readiness

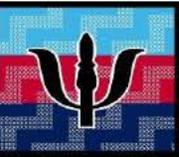


Mental Health Continuum Model



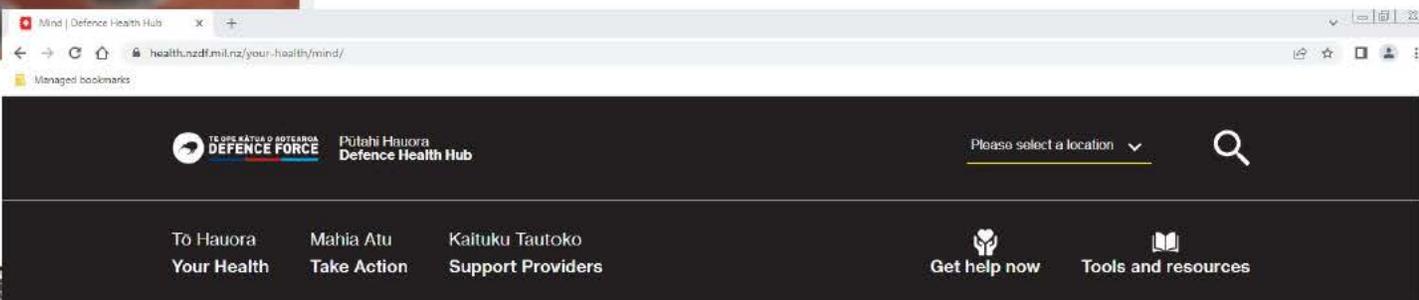
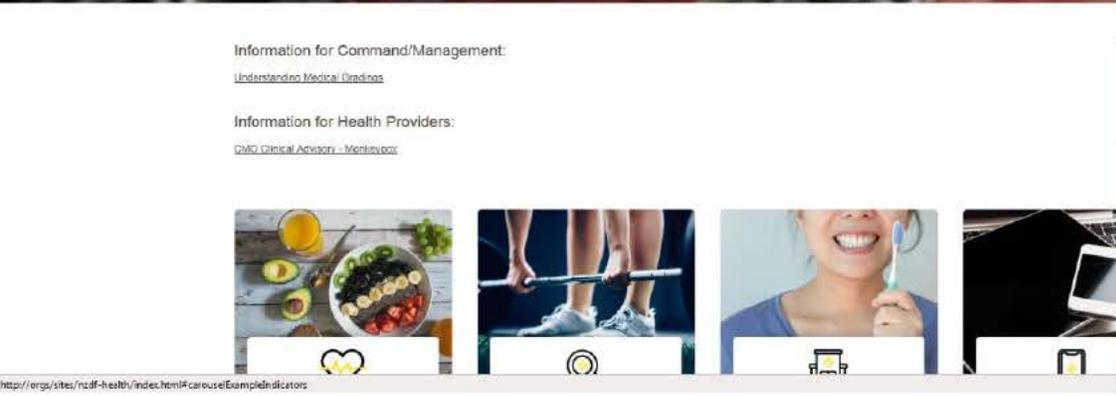
WHY IS THE MENTAL HEALTH CONTINUUM RELEVANT?



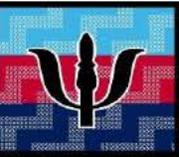


How are you tracking at the moment?
What are you most concerned about right now?
How is that impacting you?
What strategies do you have for managing that?
How are your family feeling about your deployment?





IF SOMETHING IS WORRYING YOU..... DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT NOW



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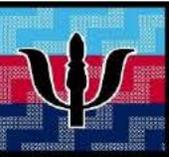
Take your phones out and note the following:

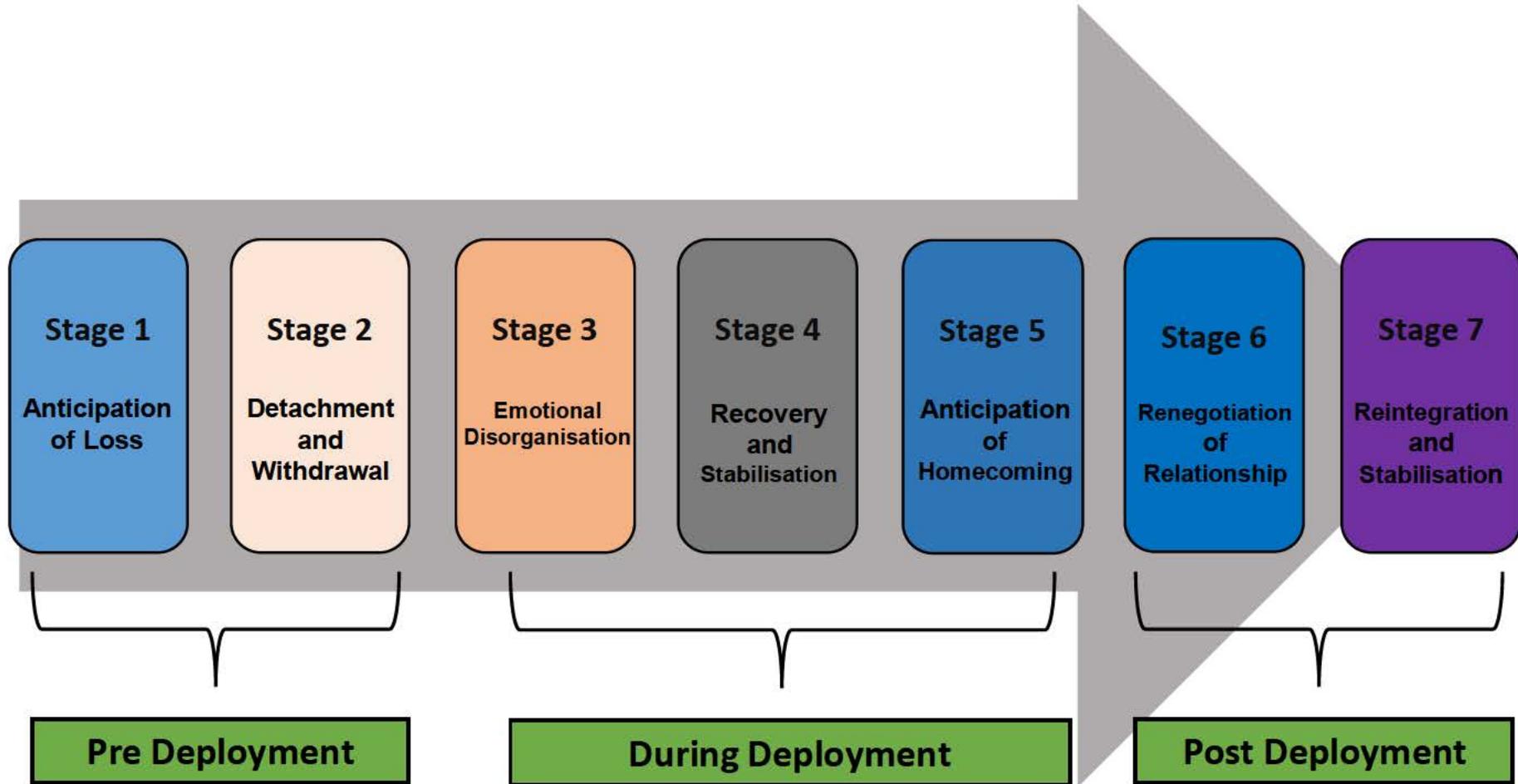
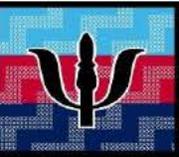
s. 9(2)(k)

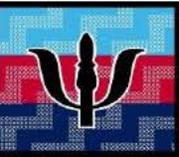


Break

EXPECTATIONS AND SOCIAL CONSIDERATIONS







What are your expectations around this deployment?
How will daily life on deployment differ from your life in New Zealand?

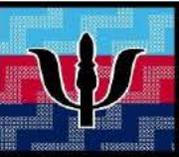
Environmental

Cultural

Social activity

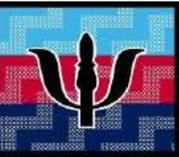
Family and Friends





How will this deployment be challenging for you as a leader?
How might your leader be challenged during this deployment?
How can you support your leader?

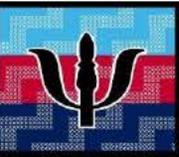




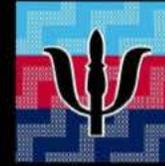
- How does social interaction improve resilience during the deployment cycle? How does it detract?



GETTING ALONG WITH OTHERS



Moral Injury?



“Perpetrating, failing to prevent, and bearing witness to, or learning about acts that transgress deeply held moral beliefs and expectations”

Litz et al., (2009)

Identifying PMIEs



Potentially Morally Injurious Events (PMIEs)

Symptom profile of moral injury: Higher levels of guilt, anger shame, depression and self-isolation (Griffin et al., 2019; Williamson et al., 2019)

Examples:

- Witnessing human suffering
- Having a role in civilian/enemy combatant deaths
- Within ranks betrayal (e.g. bullying, perceived negligent orders by command)
- Actions contradicting the Armed Forces Discipline Act

Potentially Traumatic Events

Symptom profile of PTSD: memory loss, nightmares, flashbacks, and an exaggerated startle response (Bryan, Bryan, Roberge, Leifker & Rozek, 2018).

Examples:

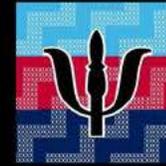
- Being under enemy fire
- Exposure to an explosion
- Witnessing the death of colleagues
- Providing care to wounded civilians
- Experiencing a serious injury following equipment malfunction

Why might NZDF personnel/Ukrainians be vulnerable to MI?



- *Make life or death decisions under pressure*
- *Have high emphasis placed on taking personal responsibility for actions*
- *Have stated values of courage, commitment, comradeship and integrity to live by*
- *Work frequently with other nations that may have different moral codes*

How does Moral Injury Develop?

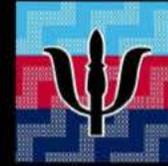


Guilt and Shame are one of the distinguishing features that separates moral distress from moral injury

Shame	Guilt
Involves a evaluation of oneself resulting in negative beliefs about the self (e.g. 'I am a monster)	Adaptive qualities by promoting behaviour change

Problem-focused rumination may also explain the link between moral injury and associated mental health problems

How to prevent/treat Moral Injury?



Currently no validated treatment for moral injury associated mental ill health (Griffin et al., 2019).

However...

Cognitive flexibility work shown promise (Acceptance and Commitment Therapy)

Spiritual/Religious support assisted

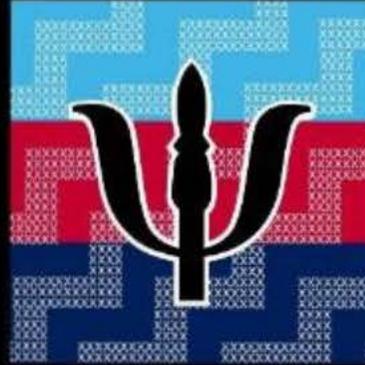
Finding meaning, growth from events helps

Group debriefing helps to provide reassurance, share responsibility and resolve rumination

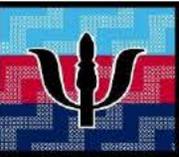
Getting assistance for symptoms generated by moral injury reduces emotional distress

Break

PERFORM



STRESSORS



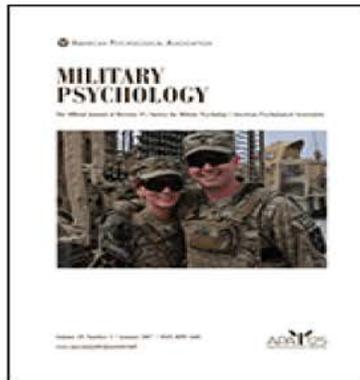
- Combat stressors and Operational stressors



.....and CV-19 Stressors



The Problem: Graphic Material



The Health and Well-Being of Military Drone Operators and Intelligence Analysts: A Systematic Review

[Cherie Armour](#) ✉, [Jana Ross](#)

[+ AUTHOR AFFILIATIONS](#)

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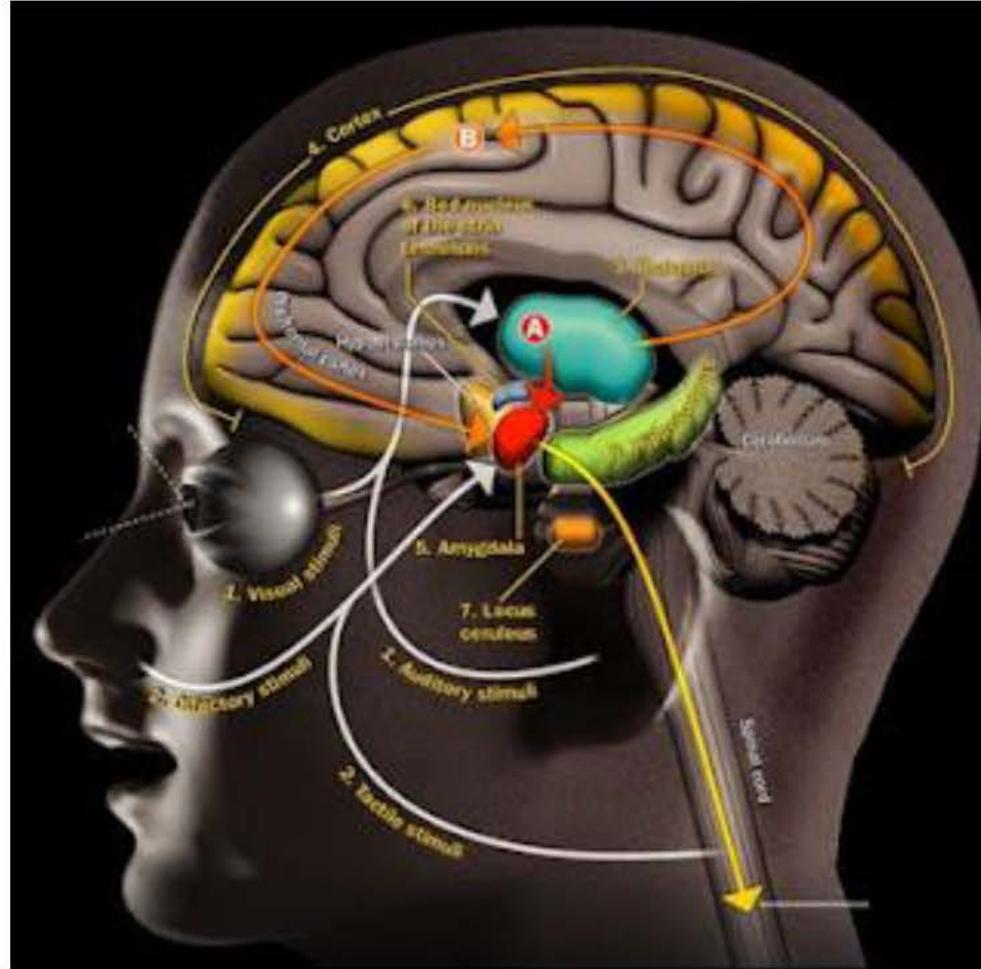
[+ CITATION](#)

Abstract

The aim of this study was to systematically review the existing research on the health and well-being of military drone operators and intelligence analysts in order to provide an overview of research and identify gaps in this area. Six literature databases and 2 databases containing unclassified military reports were searched for relevant papers produced between January 1996 and May 2016. The search criteria were broad to allow for the identification of all relevant studies on the topic. Fifteen studies met the inclusion criteria; all of which were conducted in the U.S. with the U.S. Air Force personnel. The main sources of occupational stress reported by participants across the

The Problem: The Problem: Graphic Material

The How



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The Current Risk

- In times of war (i.e. war in Ukraine) graphic content is higher.
- The NZDF has a responsibility to remain operational with the threats posed.



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Graphic Material Risk Analysis Tool

Factors Most Likely to Generate Distress



Personal Responsibility for Creating Image	Personal connection to the person in the graphic image	High Frequency of Exposure	Real time Images	Images Classified	Having to take action on image	Dynamic Images	Lacking Training on Graphic Imagery	Unexpected	Image is graphic/ threats of violence
*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

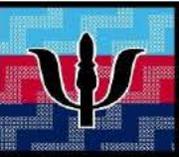
Graphic Material Viewing Strategies



- Mute audio if possible
- Desaturate using monitor settings
- Invert image colours
- Fast forward/increase play speed
- Remove glasses to blur screen
- Do an initial quick scan
- Avoid eye contact
- Don't make it personal

ELIMINATE TRIGGERS

What strategies do you already use?

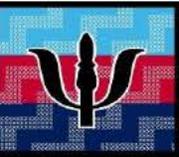


How can you **best** respond to each demand?

How can you reduce the rating on each stressor?



RESILIENCE IN PRACTICE



Equipping for a **COMBAT MINDSET**

NZ ARMY
Kaitiaki Takekōwhiri



SEEDS



Social
Interaction



Education



Exercise



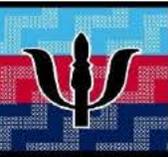
Diet



Sleep



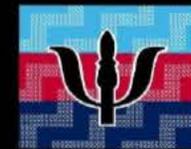
COMMAND INITIATIVES FOR BUILDING RESILIENCE



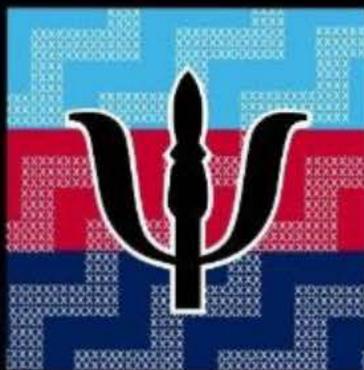
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OPPORTUNITIES ON DEPLOYMENT





RECOVER



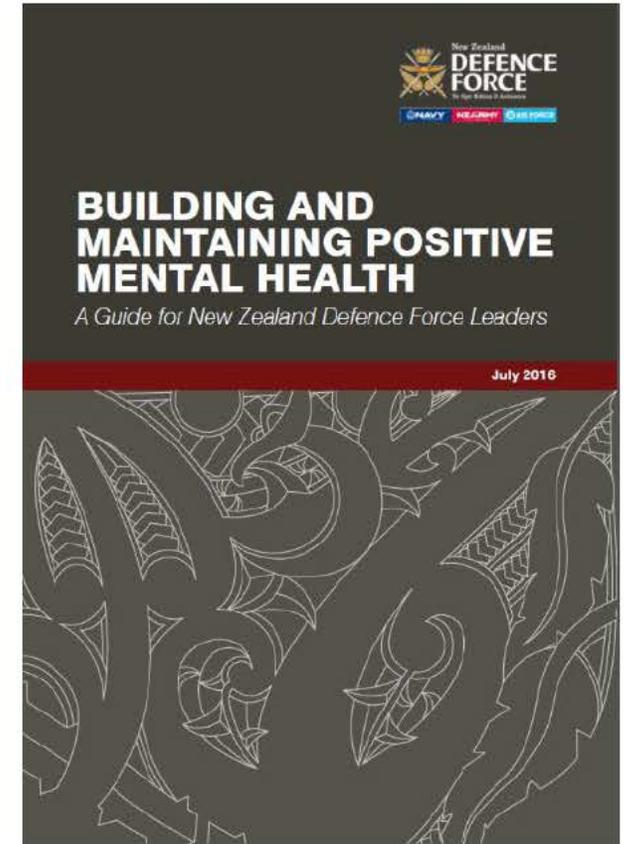
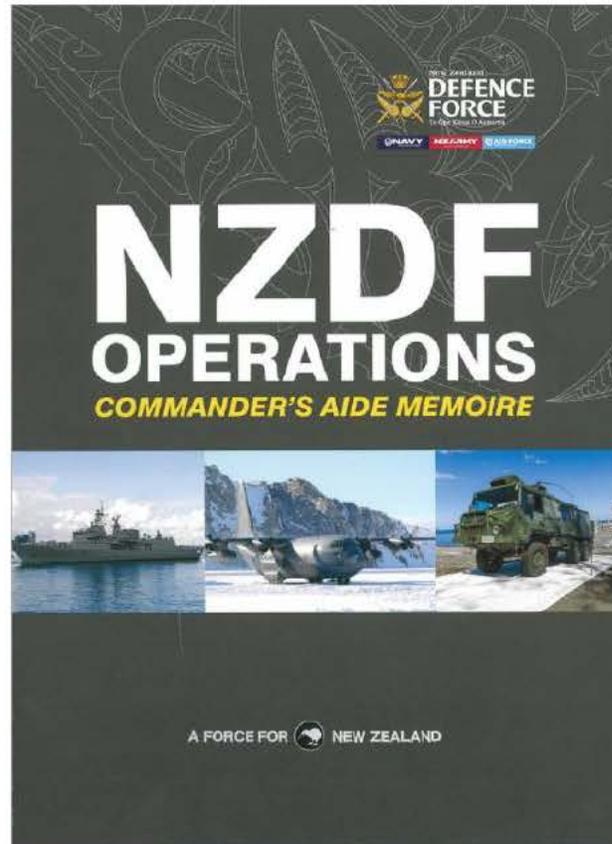
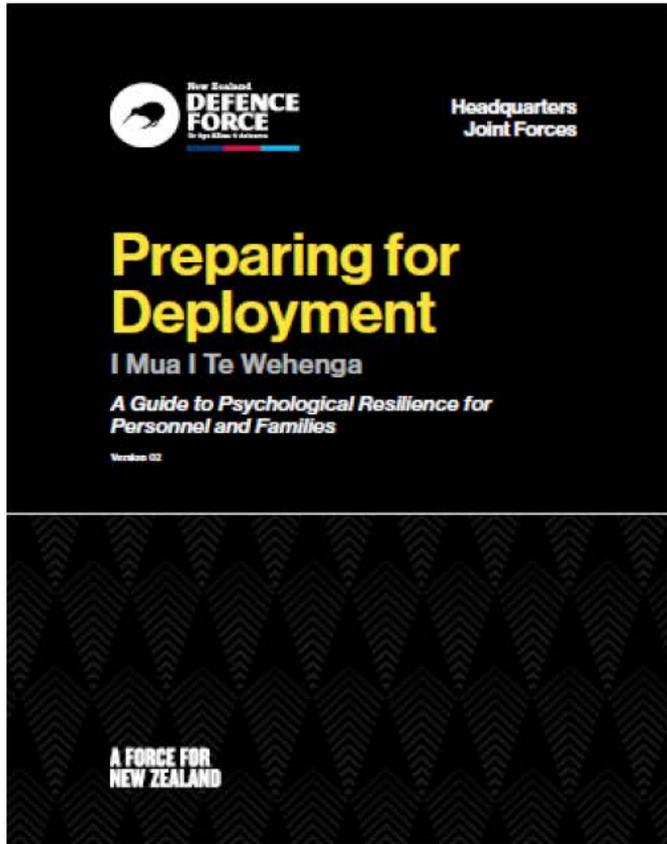
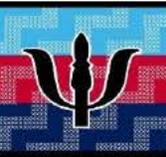


Psychological Support to Deployments



RTNZ

- Receive information from JFNZ Psych Ops team around transitioning home
- Information can be shared with family
- “Opt in” for a RTNZ Screen and debrief with a NZDF Psychologist, no formal TLD



QUESTIONS

